

Mr John Puddy, Chair of the Steamship Freshspring Trust addressed the committee and provided details of the Heritage Ship itself along with information on the Freshspring Trust. He expressed the importance of Torridge District Council recognising the potential for a heritage fleet especially within its Strategic Plan. He referred to the deprived status of the area and expressed the need to work together and embrace the opportunity available through the Levelling Up Fund.

To summarise his speech Mr John Puddy urged Members, when deciding the Strategic Plan, to think positively of the future of the district and to embrace the vision of a heritage port, heritage interpretation, heritage tourism and retention of skills and to embrace the future with heritage ships in our harbour.

Mr Tim Steer, the Vice Chair of the Tarka Rail Association and a Director of the Bideford Railway Heritage Centre, introduced himself to the Committee and reminded Members of his previous visits and presentations given. He provided the Committee with a brief overview for considering the new rail link between Bideford and Barnstaple.

Mr Tim Steer advised the committee that an independent specialist transport advisor had been commissioned and completed a business case for this project which is being considered by the Tarka Rail Association. A published summary had been reported to Bideford Town Council on 03.08.2023 in the presence of Sir G Cox MP.

Mr Tim Steer advised of railways that had been restored across the Southwest and the help they had received in achieving this. He advised of the ambition of the Bideford Railway Heritage Centre and how the projects align with the economy and environmental aspects within TDC's Strategic Plan and how it also meets Levelling Up criteria.

Tarka Rail Association and Bideford Railway Heritage Centre look forward to collaborating in supporting the new Strategic Plan and in the new Levelling Up Partnership.

180. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

181. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

182. TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE OR OTHER BUSINESS ESPECIALLY BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIR

No matters were brought forward.

183. TORRIDGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

The Chief Executive introduced the report, the purpose of which was to present the draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028 prior to publication for consultation.

Following the Chief Executive's introduction, the ICT, Strategy and Performance Manager continued the presentation of the report giving an overview of the background on the creation of the draft consultation and the way forward if Members approved the Strategic Plan to be published for consultation.

The Leader then addressed the Committee and gave special thanks to the ICT, Strategy & Performance Manager for all his work on the Strategic Plan. He also thanked all Members that attended the Strategic Plan Workshop and all Lead Members who attended the smaller sessions. He expressed how well it had all gone and was proud of the effort made by all.

He urged Members to support the consultation of the Strategic Plan which shows TDC's aims, objectives and ambitions. This Strategic Plan would provide a better environment for local communities and when he meets with the Minister, TDC would be in a strong position.

The Leader moved the recommendation in the report.

The Chair asked for any questions from the Committee.

Councillor Hames suggested an amendment to the Our Environment Our Future part of the Strategic Plan. He proposed the word 'promote' in the sentence - promote carbon reduction and energy efficiency across the existing Council asst base - be replaced with 'achieve'.

The Chair stressed that this is the draft Strategic Plan.

Councillor J Craigie seconded Councillor P Hames' amendment.

Councillor J Craigie added a further amendment that was seconded by Councillor P Hames. He requested that Social Housing be included to the sentence - increase the availability and quality of homes to meet local needs including Social Housing - within the Communities, Health & Housing section in the Strategic Plan.

The ICT, Strategy & Performance Manager advised that when Housing was discussed as a group it was decided that Social Housing would be included within the consultation and implementation of the Housing Strategy.

Councillor C Hodson, as Lead Member for Homelessness and Housing Need supported what the ICT, Strategy and Performance Manager had advised and reiterated that the Housing Strategy would encompass all aspects of housing needs. She expressed how she shared Councillor J Craigie's concerns and reassured him that Social Housing would be included in the Housing Strategy.

In response to a query, the Chief Executive explained the process for the Levelling Up projects, work that was currently ongoing and how TDC Members' input and ideas would feed into this.

The Leader added that a pattern needs to be established on how TDC can move forward in collaboration with other organisations. He advised of joint working and activities that are ongoing surrounding the Local Plan, Housing and Devon Futures. Once a pattern had been established it would be presented to the Minister and then when the focus and allocation of money had been confirmed projects could progress with input from Members. He confirmed that TDC's aims need to align with the Government's aims and urged Members to put their efforts into the consultation of the Strategic Plan.

Councillor Harding seconded the proposal by Councillor K James to approve the recommendations in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor P Hames, seconded by Councillor J Craigie and –

Resolved:

That the word 'promote' in the sentence - promote carbon reduction and energy efficiency across the existing Council asset base be substituted with 'achieve' be agreed.

(Vote: For – 17, against – 12, abstentions – 0)

Councillor J Craigie requested a recorded vote to which five other Members supported.

It was proposed by Councillor J Craigie, seconded by Councillor P Hames and –

Resolved:

That the first sentence within the Communities, Health & Housing section of the Strategic Plan be approved to read - increase the availability and quality of homes to meet local needs including Social Housing.

A recorded vote was taken.

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
ANDREWS, S			X
BACH, L			X
BRENTON, A			
BRENTON, D			
BRIGHT, C	X		

BRIGHT, L			
BUSHBY, D		X	
CHRISTIE, P	X		
COTTLE-HUNKIN C			X
CRAIGIE, J	X		
DART, A		X	
ELLIOTT, T		X	
FORD, L			
GIBSON, S		X	
GUBB, J	X		
HACKETT, P		X	
HAMES, P	X		
HARDING, S		X	
HAWKINS, C	X		
HEPPLE, K		X	
HICKS, R		X	
HODSON, C		X	
INCH, S		X	
JAMES, K		X	
JOHNS, T		X	
LEATHER, C		X	
LO-VEL, W	X		
LOCK, R		X	
NEWTON, S			
PENNINGTON, P	X		
PIPER, L			X
SHEPHERD, P			
SMITH, D			X
THOMAS, H			
WHEATLEY, C			X
WHITTAKER, J		X	
TOTAL - 36			

(Vote: For – 8, against – 15, abstentions – 6)

Motion was lost.

It was proposed by Councillor K James, seconded by Councillor S Harding and –

Resolved:

That the draft Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028 be approved and published for consultation.

(Vote: For – 27, against – 1, abstentions – 1)

184. REVENUES & BENEFITS DOCUMENT IMAGING PROCESS (DIPS)
UPGRADE & CONVERSION

The Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval for funding in order for a conversion of and upgrade of the DIPs system within the Revenues and Benefits team.

It was proposed by Councillor K James, seconded by Councillor D Bushby and –

Resolved:

That Members authorised the funds for the conversion and upgrade of the Revenues & Benefits DIPs system to the Capita product.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

185. PART II - (CLOSED SESSION)

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.20 pm

Chair:

Date: