

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILFULL COUNCIL MEETINGCaddsdow Business Support Centre - Caddsdow Bideford EX39 3BEMonday, 15 July 2024 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT                      Councillor D Bushby (Chair)  
                                   Councillor D Smith (Vice-Chair)  
                                   Councillors S Andrews, L Bach, A Brenton, D Brenton, C Bright,  
                                   L Bright, C Cottle-Hunkin, J Craigie, A Dart, T Elliott, S Gibson,  
                                   J Gubb, P Hackett, P Hames, S Harding, C Hawkins, R Hicks,  
                                   C Hodson, S Inch, K James, T Johns, W Lo-Vel, R Lock,  
                                   S Newton, L Piper, P Shepherd, T Tinsley, C Wheatley and  
                                   J Whittaker

ALSO PRESENT	S Hearse	- Chief Executive
	G Bryant	- Finance Manager (S151 Officer)
	S Dorey	- Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
	S Kearney	- Head of Communities & Place
	C Fuller	- Economic Development Officer
	H Smith	- Planning Manager
	T Vanstone	- Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer
	K Brown	- Democratic Services Officer

284. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: L Ford, K Hepple, C Leather, P Pennington and H Thomas.

285. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There was one public speaker.

Mr Ron Skinner addressed the Committee, thanking them for the opportunity to speak and that he was there as a critical friend. Mr Skinner reminded Members of the email he had previously sent inviting them to a public meeting in Clovelly, regarding the other side of Climate Change and of his attendance and information provided at the External Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April. He personally invited all Members and officers to the meeting stating, in his opinion, that it was their responsibility and duty to attend and viewed his disappointment to not having received a response to his email. He indicated the need for a special meeting with Senior Management to discuss the democratic processes regarding public participation and public consultation.

286. 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.

287. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

The Chair reminded Members of the Housing Strategy Workshop being held on 15<sup>th</sup> August and urged Members to attend if possible.

289. TORRIDGE PLACE STORY

The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to obtain approval for the Torridge Place Story. The Chief Executive advised how this report was the first of many on tonight's agenda that detailed work that contributed to the aims and objectives of TDC's Strategic Plan.

Following the presentation Paul Coles, the Chair of the Place Board also addressed the Committee stating how it is a privilege to be the Chair of the Place Board. He expressed his gratitude to all those involved in the work carried out so far and paid a special thanks to TDC's Economic Development Team. He stressed the importance of partnership working in the wider Northern Devon area and how business and commerce is vital to the Torridge Place Story.

The Leader of TDC also stood and addressed the Committee, thanking Paul Coles and stated the positive response from the previous government and hoped that the new government would also recognise the opportunities this project holds for the Torridge area and funding would still be successful.

Councillor K James moved the recommendations in the report, seconded by Councillor S Newton.

A brief discussion took place where Members viewed their opinions and asked any questions.

In response to points raised by Councillor A Dart regarding housing, Hatchmoor Industrial Estate and salmon, mussels and oysters in the Torridge, the Head of Communities & Place advised these would be taken into consideration.

In response to a query, the Chief Executive provided clarity on the principles and metrics used to create the Place Board Story and the reasons why they were the focus.

Councillor A Brenton raised concern to the lack of content in the Place Story and proposed that it be deferred until further information was received from the

Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government on their direction. This was seconded by Councillor D Brenton.

The Chief Executive assured Councillor A Brenton that TDC are writing to the Angela Rayner, The Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State to establish the position to secure funding for TDC.

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

Resolved:

That the Torridge Place Story be adopted.

(Vote: For – 27, Against – 0, Abstentions – 4)

As the first proposal was carried no vote was taken on Councillor A Brenton's proposal.

290. NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2024 - 2029

The Head of Communities & Place presented the report, the purpose of which was to adopt the North Devon and Torridge Economic Strategy.

A brief discussion took place where it was confirmed that the commitment to achieving net zero carbon should state 2030 not 2050.

It was also confirmed that any minor amendments could be made.

Councillor A Dart expressed particular concern regarding the education provisions in North Devon and empathised the importance and need to lobby government for funding for education in the area.

Councillor R Hicks showed his support for the Strategy and moved the recommendation in the report. This was seconded by Councillor K James.

It was proposed by Councillor R Hicks, seconded by Councillor S Newton and –

Resolved:

That the North Devon and Torridge Economic Strategy 2024 – 2029 be adopted and that any minor amendments be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Lead Member for Economy be approved.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

291. NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE CLEAN MARITIME GROWTH VISION

The Economic Development Manager presented the report, the purpose of which was to obtain Member approval for the North Devon and Torrridge Clean Maritime Growth Vision.

As Lead Member for Economy, Councillor R Hicks moved the recommendation in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor R Hicks, seconded by Councillor R Lock and –

Resolved:

That the Clean Maritime and Green Energy Growth Vision be adopted and that any minor amendments be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Lead Member for Economy be approved

(Vote: For – unanimous)

292. XLINKS CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Planning Manager presented the report, the purpose of which was to consider the Council's response to the XLinks statutory pre-application consultation and a proposal for the establishment of a Member Working Group to support the Council's inputs to the Development Consent Order process.

Councillor B Hicks declared a pecuniary interest and left the room.

A discussion took place.

Councillor R Lock thanked the Planning Manager and her team for all the hard work carried out and suggested the amount of TDC officer time and resources be recorded and claimed. Councillor R Lock moved the recommendations in the report, this was seconded by Councillor K James.

The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) advised the membership of the Working Group would need to be reconsidered due to interests declared by both Councillor B Hicks and Councillor P Pennington. It was agreed this would be decided at the Group Leaders meetings.

The Leader advised the community benefits package would need to be reviewed.

In response to a query regarding the shortage of cables, it was confirmed that XLinks are making cables themselves.

Following a query, the Planning Manager explained the role of the new Solicitor and that development consent order process has a provision to compulsory acquire land if necessary.

It was confirmed that the terms of reference for the Working Group could be amended to allow the co-option of external expertise and advice when required.

It was proposed by Councillor R Lock, seconded by Councillor K James and –

Resolved:

That the submission of Representations to the PEIR and general consultation be approved and that the Council's engagement in the Pre-Application state remains ongoing.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

293. PRODUCTIVITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT - TORRIDGE PRODUCTIVITY PLAN 2024

The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was for Full Council to consider the Draft Torridge Productivity Plan 2024, which is required to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

It was confirmed that DLUHC no longer exists and has reverted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

It was proposed by Councillor K James, seconded by Councillor C Hodson and –

Resolved:

That the Torridge Draft Productivity Plan 2024 be approved and published on the Council's website.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

294. TORRIDGE CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to present to Full Council the final report from the Corporate Peer Challenge that took place at the end of April 2024.

The Leader also addressed the Committee expressing his gratitude to the Peer Challenge Team. He commented on the good things the Peer Challenge Team identified, whilst acknowledging the range of recommendations that had been made.

A discussion followed.

Following a query regarding the current Leadership meeting issue, the Leader advised the meeting would be reviewed at the Group Leaders meeting on how it can operate more effectively.

Some Members stood and expressed their opinions, good and bad, regarding the Peer Review Challenge and findings. Comments were made on communication, HR inconsistencies, Member behaviour and the current Leadership meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor K James, seconded by Councillor P Hackett and –

Resolved:

That the Torridge Corporate Peer Challenge report be approved and that it be published on the Council's website and that it be delegated to the Chief Executive to work with Group Leaders to prepare a draft action plan to be reported to Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024, that considers the recommendations in the report, how they should be implemented and the arrangements for monitoring progress against the actions in advance of the LGA Corporate Peer Review progress scheduled for February 2025.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

295. COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP SCHEME

The Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval to allow Pickwell to continue with their Community Sponsorship Application.

Both Councillor J Craigie and Councillor T Tinsley declared a non-pecuniary interest.

It was proposed by Councillor D Brenton, seconded by Councillor C Hodson and –

Resolved:

That support for the application be approved.

(Vote: For – 29, Against – 0, Abstentions – 2)

296. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE A9

Two questions were submitted under Procedural Rule A9.

In accordance with the Constitution a written answer to the questions had been circulated to Members.

**Question from Councillor L Ford**

Please explain our policy regarding the destruction of Legal Documents.

**Answer**

We don't have a document destruction policy as such, which is primarily due to organisations having to determine on an individual basis how long (retention) we are permitted to keep hold of data, information and documents.

This is all part of the GDPR regulations <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-gdpr/>

The regulations identify how long you should keep data and if not required then it is disposed of.

Therefore, each type of information and or document held is considered in light of the legislative requirements.

**Question from Councillor C Bright**

How much money has TDC paid Genie Point to install, to operate, and to maintain the EV charging point in Sydney House Car Park?

**Answer**

The answer is £0.

Councillor C Bright was invited to ask a supplementary question and was advised he would receive a response in 5 working days.

297. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

There was one notice of motion.

298. **WRITTEN NOTICE OF MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR D BRENTON**

It is proposed that in a no overall control Council at least one Councillor from each political group is represented on the Community & Resources Committee.

In order to comply with proportionally and in the interest of democracy the size of Community & Resources Committee will be adjusted accordingly.

Councillor D Brenton presented his Notice of Motion.

It was proposed by Councillor D Brenton, seconded by Councillor A Brenton and –

Resolved:

That the Notice of Motion be approved.

(Vote: For – 6, Against – 16, Abstentions – 9)

The Motion was lost.

299. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

300. PART II - (CLOSED SESSION)

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.20 pm

Chair:

Date: