

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Monday, 15 October 2018 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT Councillor D Hurley (Chair)
 Councillors D Brenton, K Davis, P Hackett, J Himan, S Inch,
 R Lock, D McGeough, R Wiseman, R Julian and J Morrish
 (substitute for J Whittaker)

ALSO PRESENT J Wallace - Head of Paid Service
 S Hearse - Strategic Manager (Resources)
 S Dorey - Solicitor
 S Hearse - Strategic Manager (Resources)
 D Heyes - Finance Manager
 S Kearney - Planning & Economy Manager
 J Wallace - Head of Paid Service
 S Cawsey - Democratic Services Officer
 M Richards - Democratic Services Officer
 A Redwood - Property and Procurement Manager
 S Chappell - Conservation Officer
 H Roper - Service Improvement Officer
 C Fuller - Economic Development Officer

Councillors: A Inch, A Eastman, N Laws, P Christie and
 C Cottle-Hunkin

Approximately 46 members of the public

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dart, J Whittaker and R Hicks.

46. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
 HELD ON 28 AUGUST 2018

It was proposed by Councillor Hackett, seconded by Councillor Himan
 and -

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2018 be signed as a
 correct record.

(Vote: For 6, Abstentions 5)

47. ACTION LISTMinute 39 – Gypsy & Travellers

Councillor Brenton advised he had attended a Gypsy and Traveller Workshop which had been arranged by the Devon Association for Local Councils. At that meeting Councillor Brenton raised the issue of the laybys on the A39 link road being made available for G&T sites. It had been indicated to him that there was a possibility these could become available for potential G&T sites. He was keen for this matter to be pursued.

The Action List was noted.

48. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Mrs Ruth Craigie (Bideford Town Councillor) addressed the Committee regarding the BMX Track, telling Members that the park had originally been built with public money for use by the people of Bideford. It had been enjoyed as such for many years. However, a fence and gates had now been erected around the track, with approval from TDC's Plans Committee, and Mrs Craigie asked why the facility had been taken away from the people of Bideford; why the Council still put money into the club and when did the consultations with the Town Council and the residents take place. The presence of the fence and gates had turned this public facility into a privately held sports club, with about 80 members only, as opposed to the thousands of children previously. Mrs Craigie added that she was not against the club, but felt the facility should be made available to the public.

Rog Flavell, Secretary of the BMX Club, thanked TDC for its support in helping the club move forward. Membership had increased and the club was recognised as one of the biggest and best facilities in the South West, with people coming from across Devon. The club was governed by a constitution and committee and had achieved Rider Accreditation. With reference to public access, the constitution did not permit discrimination to prevent access to the club and residents of East-The-Water were entitled to free membership. Mr Flavell spoke about regional events, opening hours, and sessions offered, which included free beginner sessions. The club inspired young people and adults to be fit and healthy.

Torrington Calf Street Play area - An update on the fundraising activities was given by Danielle, Kim and Sarah. They appealed to Members to further consider supporting their worthwhile project and their goal to have a safe and enjoyable place for children to play.

The final speaker, Denise Plat, recounted her years of involvement with the club, adding that many East-The-Water children had benefitted from the track. She supported the BMX club and was in favour of the gates and fencing.

49. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made when the specific agenda items to which they related were under discussion.

51. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

There were no Part II items.

52. URGENT MATTERS OF INFORMATION TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR AND THE COMMITTEE

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

53. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR COTTLE-HUNKINWritten Notice of Motion from Councillor Cottle-Hunkin

When presenting the Notice of Motion, Councillor Cottle-Hunkin updated the Committee on the monies raised so far. This had been realised from various resources including successful Grant applications, S106 monies, New Homes Bonus, Councillor Grants, Devon County Council, local businesses, charitable Trusts and fundraising by local residents. The total raised to date was £27,442.06.

The Strategic Manager (Resources) explained that should the Motion be approved the Project Initiation Document (PiD) would be submitted with all other PiD's for 2019-2020 budget. The Finance Team look at the monies available for the Capital Programme and Members then consider all PiDs to determine if affordable. It would be brought to this Committee in early February, scrutinised by Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee and then presented to Full Council at the end of February when the budget is approved by Members.

The Planning and Economy Manager addressed the meeting and explained that at the last meeting of External Overview & Scrutiny Committee it had been resolved that a working group be set up to formulate a Play Strategy.

Members acknowledged the hard work Councillor Cottle-Hunkin had undertaken.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor McGeough and -

Resolved:

That Torridge recognises the need to invest in Calf Street Play Area and supports the preparation of a Project Initiation Document for consideration in the Capital Programme.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

54. WESTWARD HO! PARK - NOTICE OF MOTIONWritten Notice of Motion by Councillors Brenton & Christie

“That TDC do not sell any part of the Westward Ho! Park area”.

Prior to the presentation of this item, Councillor Brenton proposed that the Notice of Motion be deferred to allow Northam Town Council to produce a Business Plan.

Councillor Himan declared a personal interest – dual hatted – Northam Town Council.

Councillor Himan gave a brief summary on the reasons as to why a Business Plan had not, as yet, been produced by Northam Town Council. He explained the original Business Plan had been just a “wish list” and a more comprehensive plan was now being prepared. He stated that in light of the above Notice of Motion he could not support this, as it would preclude Northam Town Council from a Community Right to Bid or to purchase Westward Ho! Park in the future.

Councillor Christie left the meeting at 7pm.

Councillor Hurley clarified that if the Notice of Motion was not deferred, the matter would be debated.

Following a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Julian that the Notice of Motion be deferred.

(Vote: For 5, Against 6)

The motion was lost.

The debate that followed included:

- The park to be leased to Northam Town Council, if it cannot be sold
- The accounts of Northam Town Council
- The reasons for the delay in the preparation of a Business Plan by Northam Town Council
- Future proposals for the Cricket Club at Westward Ho! The Head of Paid Service confirmed that it had never been the intention of the Authority to develop on the cricket pitch.
- The Constitution did not allow for an amendment to be made to the Notice of Motion.

Councillors Laws and Eastman addressed the meeting speaking in favour of keeping Westward Ho! park.

It was proposed by Councillor Morrish, seconded by Councillor Hackett that the Notice of Motion be rejected.

Resolved:

That the Notice of Motion from Councillor Christie and Councillor Brenton that Torridge does not sell any part of the Westward Ho! Park area be rejected.

(Vote: For 3, Against 7, Abstentions 1)

55. BMX TRACK - POLLYFIELD

The Property and Procurement Manager presented the report, which he stated was in response to a request from the Plans Committee to provide background information to a retrospective planning application regarding the security fencing to the BMX facility at Pollyfield, East the Water.

Councillor Lock enquired as to whether Plans Committee members sitting on this Committee should declare a prejudicial interest. The Solicitor advised that this would not be necessary as the report was an update on one of the Council's land holdings and was for noting only.

Councillor Morrish referred to comments made by a speaker and sought clarification from the Property and Procurement Manager. It was confirmed that the BMX Club do pay rent to the Council, discussions had not been held with the Pollyfield Trustees as it is a separate Lease and the BMX Club itself had initiated a lot of the works.

Councillor Brenton strongly opposed the erection of the fence and maintained the facility should be used by everyone.

Members noted the report.

56. TORRIDGE BUSINESS INVESTMENT SCHEME

Councillor Brenton declared a personal interest as a member of Bideford Bridge Trust.

The Economic Development Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to present options for a business investment scheme to support sole-trader businesses to become employers. This report will lay out options for members to debate in order to maximise the potential impact of the scheme.

The PowerPoint presentation given at the meeting can be viewed by clicking on the link [here](#)

When discussing the Scheme the following points were raised:

- The need for the Scheme to be monitored
- To ensure Officers give as much help to applicants as possible to ensure all applicants are given the same opportunities
- As part of the process Officers would look at the accounts of the applicants

- Publicising the Scheme – discussions had already taken place with the Federation of Small Businesses. Other methods suggested included social media and traditional routes
- The Scheme should be open to limited companies as opposed to just Sole Traders
- The maximum amount of the grant be limited to £5,000
- The Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Lead for Economy be involved in the assessment process

The Economic Development Officer confirmed that all these matters would be considered for incorporation into the draft policy.

The Head of Paid Service explained her role within North Devon+ and the restructure that had taken place.

Members acknowledged this was a good scheme and had a lot of potential.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Julian and -

Resolved:

That the Direct Grants Scheme as detailed in Appendix A attached to the report be adopted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

57. S215 NOTICES

A joint presentation was given by the Economic development Officer and Conservation Officer. The purpose of the report was:

1. To propose a strategic rationale for the application of section 215 Notices to support both economic development and the protection of listed buildings.
2. To explore the risks and implications of using Section 215 Notices for unoccupied listed buildings which have fallen into disrepair.

The PowerPoint presentation given at the meeting can be viewed by clicking on the link [here](#)

When discussing this item, Councillor Hurley raised a concern that the report did not include rural areas and would like to see the Scheme expanded to include rural Wards and villages.

Reference was made to the Neighbourhood Plans and how this would tie in with the proposed S215 policy. The Planning and Economy Manager agreed to look into this and respond in due course.

The Planning and Economy Manager advised that although this Scheme would not solve all issues, it gave Officers the power to use at their discretion.

It was agreed that an amendment be made to the recommendations to include rural Wards and villages.

It was proposed by Councillor McGeough, seconded by Councillor Lock and -

Resolved:

- That the S215 Policy, to include rural Wards and villages, be adopted
- That the existing Section 215 Notices Reserve of £110,000 be used to create Conservation and Economic Development SECTION 215 Reserve of £10,609, the balance of £100,000 to be retained to fund costs of action/repairs be agreed.
- That an annual top up of Conservation and Economic Development SECTION 215 Reserve of £10,000 per year (from the Policy and Contingency Reserve) be agreed. Not required in the first year financial year of the Section 215 programme.

(Vote: For 10, Abstentions 1)

58. FINANCIAL CHALLENGES UPDATE REPORT

Councillor Brenton left the meeting at 8.50pm

The purpose of the report presented by the Finance Manager was for Members to consider the Financial Challenges faced by Torridge Council for the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019/20 – 2022/23 and to consider remedial actions to bring the Council's finances back into balance over the life of the MTFS.

The PowerPoint presentation given at the meeting can be viewed by clicking on the link [here](#)

Questions were asked and responded to during the presentation.

Following a comment made by Councillor Julian, the Head of Paid Service advised that when preparing the budget there are always a lot of uncertainties, but these are confirmed at the beginning of each new year. She emphasised the need for savings to be made.

It was proposed by Councillor Lock, seconded by Councillor Hackett and -

Resolved:

That the revenue and capital challenges faced by the Council be noted, and consideration to be given to the remedial action required to bring the budgets back into balance over the medium term.

(Vote: For 6, Against 1, Abstentions 3)

59. TRANSFORMING TORRIDGE PROGRAMME

The Head of Paid Service gave a verbal update on the current position with regard to the works being undertaken at Riverbank House.

Significant progress had been made over the last few weeks. The first floor is now almost finished.

The new Customer Hub is not quite ready but looking to move the teams in situ by mid November. As mentioned to the Chair, Councillor S Inch, Officers are looking to have a low key opening of the hub for public and staff on 20 November.

Members acknowledged the great work undertaken by the Property and Procurement Manager.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.27 pm

Chair:

Date: