

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Monday, 16 March 2020 - 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor R Hicks (Chair)
Councillor D McGeough (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brenton, C Bright, D Bushby, P Christie, K James,
N Laws, R Wiseman, C Hodson (substitute for A Dart) and
C Leather (substitute for J Hutchings)

ALSO PRESENT

S Hearse	- Strategic Manager (Resources)
S Kearney	- Planning & Economy Manager
S Toon	- Customer Support Manager
K Baird	- NDDR & Income Team Leader
A Redwood	- Property and Procurement Manager
S Cawsey	- Democratic Service Officer

Councillor C Cottle-Hunkin

Members of the public - 6

101. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Lock, J Hutchings and A Dart.

102. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEES

It was proposed, seconded and -

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 9, Abstentions 2)

It was proposed, seconded and -

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Budget Special meeting held on 3 February 2020 be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 9, Abstentions 2)

It was proposed, seconded and -

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Special meeting held on 17 February 2020 be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 9, Abstentions 2)

103. ACTION LIST

The Action List was noted.

104. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Linda Tarrant addressed the meeting regarding the financial situation at the Plough Arts Centre. She referred to her personal involvement with the Plough, and highlighted the importance of such an organisation for the whole of the district. She made an appeal for support from the Authority.

105. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

107. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

It was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved: That the Agenda as circulated be agreed.

(Vote: For Unanimous)

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

The following update was given by the Strategic Manager (Resources) and the Leader regarding the cancellation of Committee meetings in light of the coronavirus pandemic:

- To review the cancellation of Committee meetings
- For legal reasons meetings cannot be held electronically
- To look at items for Agenda's and decide which are essential and non essential that can be postponed
- Further information to be circulated to staff and Member the following day
- The primary concern is health and safety
- Contingency Plans are in place to deal with events

The Leader thanked Officers and Members for attending this meeting.

Agenda item 12 to be deferred.

109. THE PLOUGH ARTS CENTRE

The Planning and Economy Manager presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Member approval for £25,000 of financial assistance for the Plough Arts Centre in financial year 2020/21.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Bushby and –

Resolved:

- a) That subject to the other funding requests identified in the report being successful, a single financial contribution to support the Plough in financial Year 20/21 of £25,000 to be funded from the Economic Development Project Reserve be approved.
- b) That officers are tasked with working with the management of the Plough over the coming months to ascertain the requirement for, and affordability of additional financial assistance in future years. Any recommendation for additional assistance would be the subject of a separate report to Community and Resources Committee or Full Council (depending on which is the most appropriate) later in the financial year 2020/21.

(Vote: For 10, Against 1)

110. BEACH ACCESS - REQUEST FOR FUNDING

The purpose of the report, presented by the Property & Procurement Manager, was to obtain Member support for the allocation of funding for the extension to the existing slipway structure at Westward Ho! to enable safe access onto the beach.

The Committee were advised that the report had been drafted prior to the high tides of the previous week and the following updates were given:

- Further significant damage had been caused to the slipway by the recent storms. Works had now been carried out allowing access – but these works were only temporary and would not withstand the tides and swells experienced at this part of the beach.
- A permanent solution to the situation was being worked on, and details of the proposals and estimated costs involved were given.

The Committee commended the Property & Procurement Manager and his Team for the work they had carried out.

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

Resolved:

- That it be recommended to Full Council that the project be included in the Capital Programme, and to be funded from a combination of Coastal Communities Grant and an external contribution to enable the work to be completed within the timescale and consents required.
- That a planning application be submitted and consent obtained for the works

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

111. LEISURE CONTRACT OPTIONS

The report was presented by the Planning and Economy Manager who explained that the current Leisure Contract expires in January 2022, and it would now be timely for the Council to commence the process of determining what leisure services and facilities it wishes to provide from February 2022, and how, if any, they should be managed.

The options are to be fully explored by external Consultants due to the Council not having the in-house staff resources to be able to conduct a detailed options appraisal. A report to be brought back to this Committee for Members to approve a budget for the work.

Following concerns raised in relation to the funding for external Consultants, the Strategic Manager (Resources) clarified the reasons as to why figures had not been included in the report. He explained the meeting would need to go into Part II should Members wish to discuss exempt information.

The Planning & Economy Manager gave clarification and advice on concerns/issues raised by Members in relation to the Options outlined in the report. The main points discussed were:

- How other Authorities in the area operate their leisure facilities and the associated costs? This would be a matter to be explored by the Consultants.
- Networking with other Authorities and the Local Government Association.
- To carry out a survey on all equipment. An up to date survey would be undertaken, and at the end of the Contract the existing Contractor would be required to put right any defects/damage.

Members agreed not to put forward to the Consultant all the Options and resolved as follows:

It was proposed, seconded and –

RESOLVED:

1. That a budget to meet the costs of commissioning external expertise to provide a fully costed options analysis on the following be approved :
 - Outsourced management; As it is now with similar management arrangements
 - Asset transfer: Determine whether TDC should transfer any of its assets, partially or in their entirety
 - Extension of the existing contract with 1610
2. That progress reports be made on this work to the Property and Major Project Working Group
3. That the final consultants report and recommendations be brought back to Community and Resources Committee for consideration and resolution within 12 months.

(Vote: For 10, Abstentions 1)

112. THE BURROWS CENTRE - REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING.

This item was withdrawn from the Agenda.

113. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

The Customer Support Manager explained that the purpose of the report was to seek confirmation from Members as to whether the Council participates in the UK Government Refugee Resettlement Scheme.

Councillor Hodson, Lead Member for Customer Support, addressed the meeting referring to her comments stated in the report, and reiterating her support for the scheme.

It was proposed by Councillor McGeough, seconded by Councillor Leather that recommendation 2 - ongoing support of Community Sponsorship only, be approved.

Concerns were expressed in relation to recommendation 1 - the provision of accommodation, due to the current housing crisis in Torridge for the homeless.

The Customer Support Manager gave details of the costs to the Authority should Members agree recommendation 1.

It was proposed by Councillor Hodson, seconded by Councillor Brenton that approval be given to both recommendations as stated in the report.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillor McGeough and supported by more than five Members as required by the Constitution.

A recorded vote was taken on Councillor Hodson's proposal and seconded by Councillor Brenton as follows:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstentions
Hicks, R		X	
McGeough, D		X	
Brenton, D	X		
Bright, C	X		
Bushby, D		X	
Christie, P	X		
James, K	X		
Laws, N	X		
Wiseman, R	X		
Hodson, C	X		
Leather, C		X	

(Vote: For 7, Against 4)

The Motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council participates in the scheme by providing support through the allocation of one property in each of the two years of the Scheme to house a refugee family, which will involve funding the difference between the Landlords costs and the local housing allowance.
2. That ongoing support of Community Sponsorship be agreed.

114. BUSINESS RATES PUBLIC HOUSE AND RETAIL RELIEF POLICY

The NDDR & Income Team Leader presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Member approval of a Policy for Business Rates Public House and Retail Relief Policy.

The Committee were informed of the following update:

The Policies attached to the report would require amending in line with budget announcements made the previous week.

It was proposed by Councillor Hicks, seconded by Councillor James and –

RESOLVED:

That the policies attached to the report be amended in line with budget announcements March 2020, and approved in order that the Authority comply with government policy and are able to award reliefs to those businesses identified for the financial year 2020/21.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

115. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Laws, seconded by Councillor James and –

Resolved:

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 and Paragraph 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

116. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

117. APPLICATION FOR HARDSHIP RELIEF

The Committee was informed that a panel of Members had considered two applications for Business Rate Relief on the grounds of hardship. The panel had been minded to reject the first application, but agreed to relief on the second application.

It was proposed by Councillor Hicks, seconded by Councillor James and -

Resolved:

That the recommendation from the panel for the first application as stated in the report be agreed.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

It was proposed by Councillor Brenton, seconded by Councillor Bushby and –

Resolved:

That the recommendation from the panel for the second application as stated in the report be deferred for six months to consider whether there might be further Government support for businesses. In the meantime the requirement to pay the outstanding balance by instalments be suspended.

(Vote: For 10, Abstentions 1)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED)

It was proposed by Councillor Laws, seconded by Councillor Wiseman and –

Resolved: That the press and public be readmitted.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 19.45 pm

Chair:

Date: