

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILFULL COUNCIL MEETINGCaddsdow Business Support Centre - BidefordMonday, 18 July 2022 - 6.30 pm

## PRESENT

Councillor D Bushby (Chair)  
 Councillor P Christie (Vice-Chair)  
 Councillors D Brenton, R Clarke, C Cottle-Hunkin, P Hackett,  
 P Hames, S Harding, C Hawkins, R Hicks, C Hodson, D Hurley,  
 K James, D Jones, S Langford, N Laws, C Leather, R Lock,  
 J Manley, J McKenzie, S Newton, P Pennington, R Wiseman and  
 C Woodhouse

## ALSO PRESENT

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| S Dorey    | - Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer) |
| S Kearney  | - Head of Communities & Place                     |
| D Heyes    | - Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer)           |
| C Fuller   | - Economic Development Officer                    |
| J Wells    | - Revenues & Benefits Manager                     |
| T Vanstone | - Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer  |
| K Brown    | - Democratic Services Officer                     |
| S Cawsey   | - Democratic Services Officer                     |

Independent Member – Mr L Bach

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Councillors: R Craigie, C Bright, P Watson, K Hepple, D McGeough,  
 R Boughton, A Inch, J Gubb, M Brown, A Dart and Chief Executive –  
 Mr S Hearse

24. COUNCIL MINUTES

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

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 21, Abstentions 2)

Councillor Leather was not present when the vote was taken.

Matters Arising:

Minute item 12 – Notices of Motion

Councillor Brenton asked if there had been any update on Councillor Hames Notice of Motion. He was advised that a letter had been sent to the NHS, with a copy sent to Sir Geoffrey Cox MP. A response from the MP had been included in the Members Bulletin w/c 18 July.

Councillor Hames requested that a follow up letter be sent to the NHS if no response is received within the next few weeks.

25. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

26. 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.

27. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

There was no other correspondence or business brought forward by the Chair.

29. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE A9

There were no questions submitted under Procedural Rule A9.

30. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

31. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - BANDED INCOME SCHEME

The Finance Manager & S151 Officer introduced the Revenue & Benefits Manager, Jo Wells, who had attended the meeting to answer questions raised by Members.

The purpose of the report was to seek Member approval for Officers to undertake a consultation exercise on the introduction of banded income scheme for Local Council Support, with the intention that it is introduced from the 1 April 2023.

The slide presentation, delivered by the Finance Manager & S151 Officer, highlighted the salient points in the report, and provided Members with reasons and rationale to support the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Newton addressed the meeting and explained the benefits to both claimants and staff should the recommendations be approved.

During the discussion comments/ points raised included the following:

- The Revenue & Benefits Manager confirmed that despite receiving notifications from Government Agencies, the onus is on the customer to advise the Team of any changes to their income.
- Councillor Pennington commented that the Scheme would be beneficial to those in work and self-employed but not for carers and recommended that Devon Care Association be involved.
- Councillor Hicks asked why the scheme had been rejected in 2016 and what the difference was between the scheme then and now. Officers were unable to respond as this information was not too hand.

Councillor Leather gave support to the scheme but emphasised the need for this item to be brought back following the consultation, for ratification by Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Clarke and –

Resolved:

That a formal consultation on the proposed amendments to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as detailed in the report be authorised and the suggested amendments to the Scheme be approved in principle.

(Vote: For 22, Against 1, Abstentions 1)

## 32. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND SUBMISSION FOR TORRIDGE

The purpose of the report, presented by the Economic Development Officer, was to seek Member approval for the high-level intervention themes to be used within the Torrington District Council Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan to be submitted to the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities by 1 August 2022.

A slide presentation delivered to Members summarised details set out in the report.

Questions asked and comments/points raised were responded to by the Economic Development Officer. These included:

- Funding awarded to other Authorities being higher than that allocated to Torrington.

- Is the allocation of £1m ring fenced for Torridge – the funds will be allocated to Torridge.
- The Leader and Chief Executive represents Torridge on the North Devon Futures Board.
- Administration costs for ND+. The Head of Communities & Place agreed to email this information to Members. Members stated they would rather the funding went directly to Businesses rather than on administration costs.
- Concern expressed at the significant number of proposed intervention themes in three areas spreading the funding too thinly. The Head of Communities & Place explained that Officers are looking for leverage and more growth, but will have to revise what will be carried out.
- To support Street Warden Scheme in Bideford and Westward Ho! Members of the public have expressed disappointment there is no scheme this year.

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

Resolved:

- That the intervention themes proposed by the Northern Devon Futures Board, serving as the required Local Partnership Group for inclusion in the shared Prosperity Fund investment plan for Torridge District Council to be submitted before 1 August 2022, be approved.
- That ND+ be identified as the preferred delivery partner for local Business Support Delivery.

(Vote: For 23, Against 1)

### 33. LEISURE BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

The Finance Manager & S151 Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to update Members with regards to the business plan for Active Torridge reflecting its financial performance for the first quarter of 2022/23 (April – June 2022).

Councillor Newton sought clarification as to the title of this item because at the Full Council meeting in December 2021, a recommendation was that Members charge Active Torridge with reporting back by the end of June, with an updated base cost model. It was confirmed by the Finance Manager that this is what he had presented and explained that the budgets set are essentially valid for this year with a more substantial report being presented to the October Council meeting asking the Board to advise on how they will meet the challenges going forward. The Head of Communities and Place informed Members that this matter will be an Agenda item for the next Active Torridge Board meeting. Councillor Newton requested this item be presented to Full Council after the presentation at the Budget Working

Group because until Torridge know the conclusions of the Working Group and understand how much money there is or is not, a decision cannot be made on funding. The Head of Communities & Place advised that the Business Plan to be presented by the Board, will not be reporting on funding as this had been agreed, but will give details on what the Board are considering using TDC monies on.

Councillor Jones asked that when further financial information is presented, it is broken down into three sites so Members can see how they are operating independently. The Finance Manager agreed to this request but explained there are issues involved in capturing the costs.

Further discussion ensued on whether the Holsworthy Leisure Centre is owned or leased by the Authority. The Head of Legal explained the situation and confirmed that the Council does own Holsworthy Leisure Centre.

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin, Lead Member for Community, Culture & Leisure, reported on the positive reactions from members of the public on the re-opening of Gt. Torrington Swimming Pool.

Members noted the contents of the report.

#### 34. NORTHERN DEVON CULTURE STRATEGY

The Economic Development Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval for the Northern Devon Cultural Strategy and to request approval for a Cultural Development Fund bid for Bideford.

A slide presentation was given highlighting the following areas:

- context;
- ambitions;
- issues faced;
- appendix C;
- three main themes
  - helping people blossom
  - our cultural hubs
  - helping places thrive
- cultural development fund

Questions asked and comments/points raised were responded to by the Economic Development Officer. These included:

- reasons why feasibility studies are required for the Carnegie building in Bideford;
- a strong and clear narrative would need to be established to justify the funding bid and the funders would require evidence of how their funding has impacted the district therefore, it is best to concentrate on one area at a time;
- in reference to community fragmentation, it was advised that culture does not check the status of home ownership and any funding that is secured would need to be utilised to create the right opportunities;

Some Members expressed their gratitude and need for the strategy and thanked the Economic Development Officer for his work.

It was proposed by Councillor Lock, seconded by Councillor Jones and –

Resolved:

- That the Northern Devon Culture Strategy be adopted
- That a funding bid for Bideford to the Cultural Development Fund be approved. If successful as part of an EOI in July 2022 any match funding requirements would be returned to Community & Resources for approval.
- That the creation of a Northern Devon Cultural Partnership to support the delivery of this Strategy be endorsed.

(Vote: For 20, Against 4)

35. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

36. PART II - (CLOSED SESSION)

There were no Part II items.

The meeting commenced at 18.30 and closed at 20.10.