

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & RESOURCES MEETING

Caddstown Business Support Centre - Bideford

Monday, 24 October 2022 - 10.00 am

PRESENT                      Councillor R Hicks (Chair)  
                                    Councillor A Dart (Vice-Chair)  
                                    Councillors D Brenton, C Bright, D Bushby, P Christie, D Hurley,  
                                    K James, N Laws, R Lock and S Newton

ALSO PRESENT              S Hearse                      - Chief Executive  
                                    S Kearney                     - Head of Communities & Place  
                                    D Heyes                       - Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer)  
                                    A Redwood                   - Major Projects & Estates Manager  
                                    J Walter                       - Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager  
                                    T Vanstone                  - Senior Electoral & Democratic Services  
   Officer  
                                    S Cawsey                      - Democratic Services Officer

271.      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hodson and S Dorey, Head of Legal.

272.      MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
                 HELD ON 25 JULY 2022

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

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022 be signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 10, Abstentions 1)

Matters Arising

Minute 262 – Councillor Christie advised he had put forward a Notice of Motion. It was confirmed by the Senior Electoral and Democratic Services Officer that a letter had been sent to South West Water requesting information as set out in the Notice of Motion. No response had yet been received.

273.      ACTION LIST

The Action List was reviewed and updated.

274. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

275. FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Bright asked what the position was regarding The Plough as this item was no longer on the Forward Plan. This item was to come back to the Committee for a second look at funding options. The Plough had previously submitted a Business Plan. The Chief Executive agreed the item to be put back on the Forward Plan and to review what had been submitted.

The Forward Plan was noted.

276. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

277. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA BETWEEN PARTS I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

279. DIGITAL BY DEFAULT & ICT STRATEGY

The purpose of the report, presented by the Strategy, Performance and ICT Manager was for Members to approve the Digital by Default & ICT Strategy 2022-25.

The Strategy, Performance and ICT Manager gave a summary of the report and highlighted the need for the public to use online systems where possible. He acknowledged that there are those who are not able to do this and highlighted that face-to-face contact will not be replaced.

Councillor Hicks asked for a telephone directory of all Council staff. Members were informed that the IT apprentice had set up a directory which will be made available shortly. Following comments made the Strategy, Performance and IT Manager explained the issues with providing information on a private device – there will be difficulties with the information being kept up to date.

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

Resolved:

That the Digital & ICT Strategy be approved as the framework for continuing the Authority's digital transformation.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

280. FORMER TENNIS COURTS OFF GAS LANE, TORRINGTON LEASEHOLD DISPOSAL

The purpose of the report, summarised by the Head of Communities & Place, was for Members to consider granting a 20 year Lease of the tennis courts to Torrington Football Club.

The Head of Communities & Place responded to a recommendation made by Councillor Bright and confirmed that within the MUGA the Club have stated two tennis courts will be provided and that TDC will signpost any funding stream to the Football Club.

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

Resolved:

That the proposal to grant a Lease of the Tennis Courts to Torrington FC as detailed in the report be approved, and authority be given for the preparation and approval of the associated legal documentation.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

281. BIDEFORD SKATE PARK ACOUSTIC SCREEN UPDATE

The Major Projects Manager presented the report in detail and explained that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the situation with the acoustic barrier at the skate park in Bideford, and the options being explored within the budget available to obtain the best way forward.

A lengthy discussion followed when concerns/comments raised included:

Ombudsman's Report – in summary the report was committing the Authority to work through the recommendations they have specified which involved some mitigation measures. The Head of Communities & Place gave details of the findings in the report.

Councillor Christie had concerns with having an earth bund as he felt this would create further problems.

Not a statutory requirement to install acoustic barrier. Increased costs therefore not acceptable.

Pros and cons of alternative options considered to achieve the acoustic the properties required.

The Chair called for a proposer and seconder for each of the recommendations:

5a) There was no proposer or seconder

5b) Proposed by Councillor Bushby – there was no seconder.

At this point Councillor Christie raised concerns with flooding on the site and recommended that advice be sought from South West Water.

5c) Proposed by Councillor Brenton – there was no seconder.

5d) Proposed by Councillor Newton and seconded by Councillor Dart.

5e) Proposed by Councillor Christie and seconded by Councillor Brenton subject to the following amendments:

- Councillor Christie recommended an amendment to consult South West Water as the site is in a critical flood risk area.
- Councillor Lock recommended an amendment to put on hold the whole project for 12 months due to financial constraints, noise complaints to continue to be monitored and to continue dialogue with the residents.

It was proposed by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Dark that recommendation 5d) be approved.

(Vote: For 3, Against 5, Abstentions 3)

The motion was lost.

It was proposed by Councillor Christie, seconded by Councillor Brenton that recommendation 5e) be approved, subject to the two recommendations as set out above and -

Resolved:

That the current project be cancelled, and the full proposals be put on hold until funding is available, utilising the capital allocation for other current projects with budget pressures. This would mean the Council would fail to deliver the proposed acoustic solution expected by the complainants. However, the continued rise in material and construction costs could have both significant financial and public perception implications on the Council by users who enjoy the open public amenity that has been provided.

That no build be carried out until consultation with South West Water due to the site being in a critical flood risk area.

In view of the severe financial constraints on the council's budget, the whole project to be put on hold for 12 months and noise complaints continue to be monitored and dialogue maintained with the residents concerned.

(Vote: For 8, Against 2, Abstentions 1)

The meeting commenced at 10am and closed at 11.30am