

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

INTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Town Hall - Bridge Street, Bideford, EX39 2HS

Tuesday, 7 February 2023 - 10.00 am

PRESENT Councillor P Watson (Chair)

Councillors R Boughton, R Clarke, C Cottle-Hunkin, J Gubb,  
S Harding and S Langford

Mr S Dengate and Mr I Harper

ALSO PRESENT S Hearse - Chief Executive  
D Heyes - Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer)  
J Walter - Strategy, Performance & ICT Manager  
P Hudson - Senior Capital Accountant  
T Vanstone - Senior Electoral & Democratic Services  
Officer  
K Brown - Democratic Services Officer

Councillors C Hodson and K James

212. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Hames.

213. MINUTES

Matters Arising

Minute 209 Grounds Maintenance

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin referred to page 3 of the minutes and a paragraph stating the sites in Torrington when inherited were in poor condition. She wanted it noted that these were not the sites that the Town Council manage.

Minute 210 QBR 2

Mr Dengate queried a bullet point on page 4 of the agenda minutes, stating he thought it should read statutory rather than non-statutory. The ICT, Strategy & Performance provided an explanation for this which Mr Dengate accepted.

It was proposed by Councillor J Gubb, seconded by Councillor R Clarke and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For - unanimous)

214. ACTION LIST

The action list was discussed and updated.

215. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

216. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

217. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

No matters were brought forward.

218. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

219. BUDGET 2023/24 MTFS

The Finance Manager (S151 Officer) introduced the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider, formulate and recommend the Budget 2023/24 to Full Council.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) indicates the possible extent of the budget and funding shortfall that the Council will face in the future. It is an aid in identifying the extent of service changes that the Council will need to make to achieve a balanced budget in each financial year up to 2027/28.

Prior to the presentation the Finance Manager (S151 Officer) advised of a slight difference in figures in the report and the slides on the presentation due to the approval at Community & Resources for the introduction of S106 monitoring fees.

A detailed and informative slide presentation was given highlighting the salient points in the report.

A brief discussion followed.

The Finance Manager (S151 Officer) confirmed that the Rural Services Delivery Grant had increased however there was a corresponding reduction in the Funding Guarantee Grant therefore the authority was no better off financially.

It was confirmed that approximately 4000 individuals across the authority claim Council Tax Support, however that includes both working age claimants and claimants of pensionable age.

The business rate review would apply to village halls if they were liable for Business Rates.

The Bank of England interest rate was now 4% not 3.5% as stated on the slide.

It was suggested that the authority look at statutory requirements at base level rather than increase fees. In response to this suggestion the Chief Executive advised why the fees had been investigated and to review statutory services the Council's strategic plan would also have to be examined. With the new Council in May 2023 this would be a priority task for them. Councillor James advised work had been carried out by the Member Budget Working Group and saved money without any major effect to the services provided.

It was proposed by Councillor R Clarke, seconded by Councillor S Harding and -

Resolved:

That the following be recommended to Full Council:

- a) That Torridge's Band D Council Tax for 2023/24 be increased by (2.99%) from £178.66 to £184.00 per year
- b) That Torridge's Net Revenue Budget 2023/24 is £11.155m
- c) That the contributions to the Council's reserves as outlined in paragraph 11.4 of the report be approved.
- d) That in light of the risks to the Council's finances identified within the report that the Member Working Group continue its work to bring the Council's budgets back into balance.

That members note:

The Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) assurance of the robustness of the budget 2023/24 set out in section 13 of the report.

Note the assumptions and forecast applied to develop the MTFs outlined in section 9 of the report.

Note the risks associated with the Budget 2023/24 and MTFs outlined in section 10 of the report.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

220. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Deputy Section 151 Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was for Members to consider, formulate and recommend updates to the Capital Programme 2023/24 to Full Council.

The Capital Programme includes authorised projects which require updating due to inflationary pressures, along with new PIDs (Project Initiation Documents) which require authorisation from Members before inclusion.

The Deputy Section 151 Officer delivered a slide presentation detailing the following:

- Covers the next five years
- Consists of approved projects (PIDs)
- Funded by :
  - Reserves
  - Contributions from Revenue
  - Capital Receipts
  - Grants
- Pressures
  - New Homes Bonus
  - Inflation
- New PIDs
  - Due to funding/inflation pressures – no new PIDs were sought 2023/24 programme
- Projects to add
  - Projects that alleviate some of the wider cost pressures that the council is facing:
 

▪ Sully House	£968K	(C&R March 2022)
▪ Sully House Modular Units	£221K	(C&R March 2022)
▪ Hubbastone Conversion	£372K	(C&R July 2022)
- Details of updated programme and vehicle programme
- Future pressures
- Key points for the Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre

A brief discussion took place where the money for the modular units at Sully House was clarified.

An explanation was given on the Linear Defence and the work that has already been carried out and the intended future work.

It was proposed by Councillor R Clarke, seconded by Councillor J Gubb and -

Resolved:

That the following be recommended to Full Council:

That the Capital Programme be updated to include:

- Sully House
- Sully House Modular Units
- Hubbastone Conversion

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

## 221. CENSUS RESULTS

The ICT, Strategy & Performance Manager presented this item. A detailed slide presentation was delivered on Torridge District Council's Census results for 2021. The data was released in November and December 2022 and January 2023.

The presentation started with an introduction, a brief re-cap and the new statistical releases. Information was then given on population within England and Wales and changes in population for regions and Local Authorities which included percentages, age and sex.

An explanation was given on the graphs within the slides.

The Census was conducted during Covid and answers should have been given on normal circumstances.

It was confirmed that the slides would be shared to the Committee following the meeting.

In addition to the new statistical releases the Census covered topics to include:

- Employment
- Education
- Deprivation
- Migration
- Health
- Industry
- Labour market and travel to work
- Care

When detailing the travel to work results the ICT, Strategy & Performance Manager confirmed bike commuting was not recorded (0.7%) but he had only highlighted the top 4 most popular results.

A brief discussion took place.

Once further information is released it will be shared with the Committee.

Following a query regarding the Ward profiles, it was confirmed that they would be updated to include this information and available on the website for the election in May 2023.

222. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was discussed.

It was confirmed the QBR would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

The next Internal Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting had been brought forward to the 16<sup>th</sup> March.

223. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed by , seconded by 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: )

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.20 am

Chair:

Date: