

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILFULL COUNCIL MEETINGCaddsdow Business Support Centre - Caddsdow Bideford EX39 3BEMonday, 4 September 2023 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT Councillor D Bushby (Chair)

 Councillor P Christie (Vice-Chair)

 Councillors S Andrews, L Bach, C Bright, L Bright, C Cottle-Hunkin, J Craigie, A Dart, T Elliott, S Gibson, J Gubb, P Hackett, P Hames, S Harding, R Hicks, C Hodson, S Inch, K James, T Johns, C Leather, R Lock, L Piper, P Shepherd, D Smith, H Thomas, C Wheatley and J Whittaker

ALSO PRESENT S Hearse - Chief Executive

 S Dorey - Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)

 S Kearney - Head of Communities & Place

 G Bryant - Finance Manager (S151 Officer)

 D Sibley - Climate & Sustainability Officer

 J Wynne - Estates Manager

 O Kearney - Estates Support Officer

 T Vanstone - Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer

 K Hewlett - Electoral and Democratic Services Officer

165. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: A Brenton, D Brenton, Hawkins, Hepple, Lo-Vel, Pennington and Newton.

166. COUNCIL MINUTES

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

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 31 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 24, Abstentions 2)

Councillor C Bright and L Bright joined the meeting at 18:30, after the vote had taken place.

167. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

John Lewis attended the meeting and requested to speak. Although the deadline for public participation had passed Chair agreed to his request.

Mr Lewis spoke to members about concerns regarding residential permit options for those who work nights and shifts that fall outside of normal working hours. He also raised concerns regarding the customer service he experienced whilst looking into the issue.

Chair thanked Mr Lewis for his contribution and advised that the relevant officers would be in contact to discuss the matters raised.

168. 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.

169. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

There were no matters for discussion.

171. 2023 UPDATE OF TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CARBON, ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY PLAN

Chair introduced the Sustainability and Climate Officer, Donna Sibley, who advised that the purpose of the report was to ask for member approval to publish an update of the Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan for Torridge. Members were advised that the Climate Change Working Group had viewed and provided feedback on the document.

Members noted page 29 of the report and asked for more detail regarding Torridge District Council's (TDC) usage of solar power. The Sustainability and Climate Officer advised this was available in the full carbon report. She went on to explain why this was not included in the update and noted an action for when the report returns to Full Council next year.

Members queried the inclusion of X Links in the report given that the project is yet to be confirmed and planning permission has not been granted. The Sustainability & Climate Officer advised this was at the request of the Climate Change Working Group.

The urgency of the work was noted by members and the need to prioritise TDC buildings energy saving and climate emission measures was also highlighted.

Following further discussion on the inclusion of X-Links within the report members agreed to recommend publishing of the report following some re-wording to clarify the project is an opportunity that could arise – similar to the Celtic Sea project referred to earlier in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Hames, seconded by Councillor Smith and Resolved:

That the 2023 update of the Carbon, Environment and Biodiversity Plan for Torridge be approved, with an amendment to clarify that the X-Links project is a possible opportunity that could arise for Torridge (page 13 of the report).

(Vote: For 26, Abstentions 2)

172. COUNCIL TAX - CARE LEAVERS DISCOUNT POLICY

Chair introduced the Head of Legal and Governance (& Monitoring Officer) who explained the purpose of the report, which was for members to approve, in principle, for a Council Tax Care Leaver Discount Policy to be drafted and adopted.

Care Leaver Discount was explained along with TDC's role and responsibility as a corporate parent and that gives TDC discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable to zero.

Members were advised of the current figures for Care Leavers in Torridge and the potential costs, using these figures. Following a brief discussion Chair advised that the report had Lead Member support.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Leather and Resolved:

That Members agreed, in principle, for a Council Tax Care Leavers Policy and that, should agreement be reached, the final Policy would be submitted to Full Council for approval prior to implementation.

(Vote: For, Unanimous)

173. ANNUAL REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2022-23

The Section 151 Officer introduced the report to members, the purpose of which was to report on the treasury management activity in the year and the actual prudential indicators for 2022/23.

Members were provided with a detailed summary of the report, and it was confirmed that the Council is compliant with the policy. Further context was provided and the key points noted.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor James and Resolved:

That members note the Treasury Management Report for 2022/23 and the actual Prudential Indicators for 2022/23.

(Vote: For Unanimous)

174. STREET NAME AND NUMBERING POLICY

The Head of Communities & Place, Sean Kearney, advised members that the purpose of the report was to request that committee adopt a new Street Naming and Numbering Policy.

Members were advised that this was the first refresh of a 15 year old policy and the process required some modernisation. The key changes were highlighted as:

- Amend the language in the policy to allow for Holiday Lets to be addressed.
- Impose new restrictions on publicly announcing a street name before it has been approved by TDC.
- Clarify the addressing criteria relating to planning permission.
- Amend the restrictions on the use of names of deceased persons to set a defined limit.
- Amend the procedures to ensure that addresses will only be allocated once construction has begun on the addressed site.
- Impose time restrictions on street name consultations.
- Introduce formal requirements for digital site plans for developments of 5 or more properties.
- Alter the written procedures & information to better reflect the actual processes.

Councillor Christie declared a personal interest having been involved in the naming of several places in the Bideford area.

There was discussion regarding naming of streets being limited to people who died over 100 years ago. The Head of Communities and Place explained the reasoning for this limit, but confirmed there was Councillor discretion.

Further concerns were made regarding the timescale of 10 days for Parish Councils. This wasn't felt long enough given the frequency of Parish meetings and members discussed possible options to extend this.

Following discussion members recommended the following amendments:

1. that the timescales for consultation be extended for Parish Councils to 21 days
2. that the limit of 100 year post mortem, be changed to 10 years.

It was proposed by Councillor Christie, seconded by Councillor Gubb and Resolved:

That the Street Naming & Numbering Policy be adopted with the following 2 amendments:

1. that the timescales for consultation be extended for Parish Councils to 21 days
2. that the limit of 100 year post mortem, be changed to 10 years.

(Vote: For 23, Against 5)

175. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE A9

There were no questions submitted under Procedural Rule A9.

176. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

177. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

(a) Written Notice of Motion from Councillor Lo-Vel

"I propose that the excessive parking charges for the use of Bideford Quay for charitable events such as the Rotary Water Festival, should be waived.

The fact that "for some years" it has been Council policy to charge "all events that require exclusive use of the car park a fee equivalent to what the Council 'might' earn from that car park on that day" is not a good enough reason to continue to do so.

I firmly believe that the financial gains of such events to the town are considerable and are of more benefit to the Council than the average local on the day parking receipts would be if they were not to take place.

I think that these events need to be recognised and supported as they often raise money for services which Torridge has cut back funding for. They bring positive benefits to Traders and the Council by increasing the number of visitors to the town (most of whom will utilise and pay for alternative car parking) and are of considerable local community benefit supporting wellbeing and happiness."

The Notice of Motion was deferred as Councillor Lo-Vell had given her apologies for the meeting.

(b) Written Notice of Motion from Councillor J Craigie

"Torridge District Council recognises that tourism plays a large part of the economic activity of the District and that Heritage tourism adds £1.9 Billion to the South West economy (£96.6m Northern Devon)

every year. As the highest value added form of tourism, heritage tourism offers a strong contribution to the levelling up agenda and will form elements of levelling up to be submitted by the District Council. We therefore call on Torrridge to support the consortium of Heritage Charities and voluntary bodies working on 'Bideford Heritage Harbour' designation for the tidal zone of the Torrridge adding significantly to crucial levelling up objectives. A significant portion of the £90,000 funding given by central government for the levelling up partnership bid over 2 years, should be made available to the consortium led by Way of the Wharves and The Freshspring Trust for the heritage harbour designation. £15,000 should be ring fenced for the creation of a district wide Heritage Development Trust Business Plan. The Trust is estimated to bring over £2.5 million inward investment into elevating heritage tourism, and return of the schooner "Kathleen and May" that a team are working to secure funding for, based on it's valuation of £500,000".

Councillor Craigie addressed members and requested deferral until the Leader and Chief Executive have met with the Levelling up Minister.

(c) Written Notice of Motion from Councillor C Wheatley

"We are proposing a notice of motion regarding this council recognises the huge importance of the mobile library service across the whole of the Torrridge District. We request that Devon County Council rethink their decision to close the service across Devon and seek a way to replace the mobile library vans. We ask DCC to explore future opportunities of the mobile service which will enhance lives for our rural communities.

There is a ground swell of public support to save our treasured mobile library service including celebrities and authors Stephen Fry, Michael Rosen, Michael Morpurgo, Dermot O'Leary, Nick Butterworth, Sarah McIntyre, Jacqueline Wilson, Malorie Blackman, Belinda Bauer, Liz Shakespeare, Veronica Henry, Patrick Gale, Tanya Landman, Claire Barker and Harriet Knock.

As well as being classified as "Rural-80" with more than 80% of our population living in rural settlements, Torrridge is one of the most deprived districts in the country with the second lowest social mobility rate in England, and the third lowest workplace earnings in the UK. Books are the foundations of education. To help lift our communities out of poverty, deprivation, isolation, and loneliness we should be increasing access to books not removing them."

Councillor Wheatley spoke to members on his notice of motion and requested a recorded vote be taken on the recommendation to write a further letter to Devon County Council (DCC) stating the Council's

objections.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor James to support the internal scrutiny investigation.

It was proposed by Councillor Wheatley, seconded by Councillor James and
Resolved:

That a further letter be written to DCC noting the objections of TDC and supporting the internal scrutiny investigation.

A recorded vote was taken:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
Andrews, S	X		
Bach, L	X		
Bright, C	X		
Bright, L	X		
Bushby, D	X		
Christie, P	X		
Cottle-Hunkin, C	X		
Craigie, J	X		
Dart, A	X		
Elliott, T			X
Gibson, S			X
Gubb, J	X		
Hackett, P	X		
Hames, P	X		
Harding, S			X
Hicks, R		X	
Hodson, C	X		
Inch, S	X		
James, K	X		
Johns, T	X		
Leather, C	X		
Lock, R			X
Piper, L	X		
Shepherd, P	X		
Smith, D	X		
Thomas, H	X		
Wheatley, C	X		
Whittaker, J			X

(Vote: For 22, Against 1, Abstentions 5)

(d) Written Notice of Motion from Councillor C Cottle-Hunkin

“Torrige District Council declared a housing crisis back in 2021 and has since spent considerable time and energy looking at housing solutions on council-owned land. It is clear that only a very small number of sites will be able to provide some temporary accommodation, far short of what is needed to solve the housing crisis in Torrige.

Therefore, this council puts out a request to landowners to come forward with land which might be suitable to be developed in the form of Community Land Trusts. When such land is available and considered appropriate, this council will actively support local communities to bring forward their own local housing schemes.”

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin spoke to members on the notice of motion. A recommendation was put forward that TDC enable Parish Councils to form Community Land Trusts.

During discussion an amendment was proposed that Parish Councils should be written an initial letter to request they help identify suitable land.

It was proposed by Councillor Cottle-Hunkin, seconded by Councillor Craigie and -
Resolved:

For TDC to write to Parish Councils regarding Community Land Trusts and request they help to identify suitable land.

(Vote: For 26, Against 2)

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm