

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILFULL COUNCIL MEETINGCaddsdow Business Support Centre - Caddsdow Bideford EX39 3BEMonday, 11 March 2024 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT Councillor D Bushby (Chair)
 Councillors S Andrews, L Bach, A Brenton, D Brenton, C Bright,
 C Cottle-Hunkin, J Craigie, A Dart, T Elliott, J Gubb, P Hackett,
 P Hames, S Harding, C Hawkins, R Hicks, C Hodson, S Inch,
 K James, T Johns, C Leather, W Lo-Vel, R Lock, S Newton,
 P Pennington, L Piper and D Smith

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)
	T Vanstone	- Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer
	K Brown	- Democratic Services Officer

Two members of the public.

Non-elected Members Mr S Dengate and Mr I Harper

258. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Prior to the commencement of the meeting a minutes silence as held for Councillor P Christie.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: L Bright, L Ford, S Gibson, K Hepple, P Shepherd, H Thomas and J Whittaker.

259. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There was one public speaker, Mr Desmond Willetts. Mr Willetts addressed the Committee regarding the Levelling Up Partnership grant and raised concerns on how TDC are handling the grant. Concerns raised included the inequality of the distribution of the grant, revenue costs were unknown, Councillors had not been made aware of all the facts and implications of the project, effect on Torriddle's plans, the setting of future capital and revenue budgets and lack of government funding.

260. 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.

261. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

No items were brought forward.

263. DEVON & TORBAY DEVOLUTION DEAL PROPOSAL AND CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive presented the report, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of Full Council the Devon County Council and Torbay Unitary Council Devolution Deal proposal that had been approved for consultation by their respective Cabinets/Executives on 2nd February. The consultation went live on 12th February 2024 and will run for 6 weeks.

The Chief Executive handed over to Keri Denton, Director of Performance and Partnerships at DCC and Maria Price, Director of Legal and Democratic Services at DCC.

A detailed slide presentation was delivered which included the following:

- What is devolution
- National and local context
- Devolution framework
- Ambitions and priorities
- Benefits
 - Economy and growth
 - Skills
 - Housing
 - Transport
 - Net zero and low carbon
- Impact
- Governance
- Proposed Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA)
- Voting rights
- Team Devon Joint Committee
- Proposed advisory boards
- Assurance
- Consultation, next steps and timescales

More information is available on the www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk website.

Following the presentation Members were invited to ask questions and a lengthy discussion and debate commenced.

In response to a query regarding Plymouth City Council's place on the CCA, Keri Denton advised that their seat could be a loss if they choose not to join and gave reasons for Plymouth not wanting to join, however the Government requested that the opportunity be given.

The Chief Executive provided further information on the proposed amendment to the policy for District Councils to have a greater voice, however this failed in the parliamentary process, therefore it is the legislation that stipulates the voting rights. However it is the intention of Team Devon to go back to the Governance Model for a greater level of representation from the District Councils.

The decision to have three appointed Members from DCC and three from Torbay was decided by the type of authority not by population.

Following a comment that the constitution has a form of appeal, Maria Price confirmed that the constitution still had to be written and she would take on comments made by Members to ensure there is a right of appeal.

In response to a comment regarding the lack of DCC representatives, Keri Denton apologised and said she would take back comments made. She also confirmed that her and her team are often in the area. The CCA would not have an office and would not be based in Exeter.

Throughout the debate it became clear that Members had concerns and were apprehensive about the Devolution deal.

Following a query regarding the Government document stating that no local authority functions are being removed from any local authority in any area apart from transport, Keri Denton confirmed it would be the transport planning function that would move into the CCA. Highways would stay with DCC.

Information was given by Keri Denton on funding received to set up the CCA and the model that would be used. Other sources of funding were detailed.

The re-assessment of the Governance could be added to the constitution for changes in the future.

Following a query regarding funding for this project, Keri Denton referred to the Government policy for reassurance on how the project would continue to be funded.

The table of powers is available to view on the website.

It was confirmed that TDC do not have to be part of the arrangement.

The Leader of the Council addressed the Committee and advised the comments heard tonight had been reflected at the Team Devon meetings already and expressed the need and reasons to be part of this deal. If TDC are part of this project, it will enable the Council to have their say and be involved rather than be ignored. He moved the recommendations in the report and suggested that

Members put forward their individual concerns/questions to himself and the Chief Executive and they would collate a response to the consultation. There was no seconder for this proposal.

Thanks was given to both Keri Denton and Maria Price for their presentation.

Councillor C Leather proposed that a response be sent which states that TDC regret the fact that there is very little involvement for District Councils in the CCA, Councillor A Dart seconded the proposal.

Councillor P Pennington proposed that a response be sent which states that TDC have concerns about the Governance and Scrutiny of the CCA, this was seconded by Councillor C Cottle-Hunkin.

Councillor C Cottle-Hunkin proposed that Councillor P Pennington's response also be sent to Central Government, this was seconded by Councillor J Craigie.

Keri Denton confirmed the District Council responses received to date.

It was proposed by Councillor C Leather, seconded by Councillor A Dart and –

Resolved:

That the recommendation to respond to the consultation stating that TDC regret the fact that there is very little involvement with District Councils in the proposed CCA be approved.

(Vote: For – 21, Against – 4, Abstentions – 2)

Motion was carried.

It was proposed by Councillor P Pennington, seconded by Councillor C Cottle-Hunkin and –

Resolved:

That the recommendation to respond to the consultation stating that TDC have concerns over the Governance and Scrutiny of the CCA be approved.

(Vote: For – 14, Against – 13, Abstentions – 0)

Motion was carried.

It was proposed by Councillor C Cottle-Hunkin, seconded by Councillor J Craigie and –

Resolved:

That the recommendation for Councillor P Pennington's response also be sent to Central Government be approved.

(Vote: For – 20, Against – 7, Abstentions – 0)

The report was noted.

264. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

265. PART II - (CLOSED SESSION)

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.57pm.

Chair:

Date: