

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (INTERNAL) COMMITTEE

Committee Room, Riverbank House, Bideford

7 August 2012 at 10.00am

PRESENT:

Councillor P R Collins (Chair)

Councillors: T J Johns, R A Lock (Substituting for Councillor P Watson), A J Symons, P Davies (arrived at 10.45am) and B M Parsons.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Mr R Baker

Mr A Rayner (under the Terms of the Constitution Mr Rayner substituted for the Independent Member vacancy).

ALSO PRESENT:

J Wallace – Head of Paid Service

K Miles – Solicitor

S Harding - Chief Accountant

S Hearse – Joint Head of Financial Services

D Claydon – Customer Service & Improvement Manager

15. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors M Footitt, P Watson, B M Edwards, J Whittaker and K P Murdoch.

16. MINUTES

It was proposed, seconded and –

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For 4, Abstention 2)

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

18. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

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

There were no urgent matters.

The Chair introduced Steve Hearse, Joint Head of Financial Services for North Devon Council and Torrridge Council.

20. LEAN REVIEW

The Customer Service and Improvement Manager advised that the Lean Review had started on 16 July. The officers involved are David Green, Jenni Pine, Ian Fry, Kevin Crowl and himself, Steve Burgess and Linda Craze where also available if needed.

He mentioned that there were a few issues that needed attention straight away these were:

- Duty officer's line – voicemail to be activated while away from their desk. Messages to be actioned the next day.
- Planning support – Group pickup activated now for telephone calls.
- Switchboard – further questions need to be asked by the operator before transferring the caller to the appropriate officer.

On the 25 July the collection of customer demands commenced. The Customer Service and Improvement Manager explained that once the analysis had been completed a presentation will be held of the findings. It will take approximately seven weeks to redesign the process.

Questions were raised with regard to cover for officers while they are on the Lean Review. The Customer Service and Improvement Manager assured Members that cover was in place.

The Head of Paid Service added that the presentation should also be shown to Councillors R Lock, M Brown and G Tabor, the Leader and Deputy Leader.

21. FULL COUNCIL – REPORT FROM WORKING GROUP

The Chair advised that the working group had met and would meet again after this meeting. He referred to the Corporate Support Officer's progress report and the draft questionnaire.

The Solicitor added that legally we only have to have the Annual General Meeting, as delegated powers had been given to the Committees.

The following suggestions are to be considered at the next working group:

- Nine cycles within the year cycles 1,3,5,7,9, could be Full Council meetings and 2,4,6,8, could be Informal Council meetings.
- Discuss single items at Informal Meetings
- More interaction
- Public speaking at the start of Community & Resources only on items on the agenda
- Interaction more with Parish Councils

22. FUTURE BUDGET SETTING TIMESCALE AND METHODOLOGY

The Chair referred to the Budget Setting process last year which took two days (one for Capital and one for Revenue) and asked for ideas to move this forward.

The Chair explained that the first working group meeting was due to be held on Thursday 9 August to look at Finance and forward planning.

23. INDEPENDENT MEMBER UPDATE ON POSITION AND FUTURE TRAINING

Community & Resources Committee approved advertising the vacancies.

24. CAPITAL BIDDING PROCESS WORKING GROUP

The Head of Paid Service explained that the Officer Asset Management Working Group would be looking at the Project Initiation Documents (PID's) before they are presented to the Member Asset Management Working Group for challenge.

The Chief Accountant referred to a "sample" of the proposed new Capital Bidding Form. He mentioned that this would not be suitable for multi years.

The Chief Accountant advised that the PID's would shortly be despatched.

25. UPDATE ON RECORDING EQUIPMENT

The Solicitor advised that there were some software problems with the equipment and training was required.

26. BURTON ART GALLERY

The Chair advised that this item was presented at the last Community & Resources Committee meeting and a 20% saving over the next 2 years was approved.

Following discussions it was agreed that Burton Art Gallery be put on the Forward Plan for 2013/14. The Chair advised that this should be discussed by this Committee rather than a working group.

27. PLANNING PROJECT UPDATE

This item had been mentioned earlier on the agenda.

28. MONTHLY BUSINESS REPORT

The Chair referred to the list of questions which had been posed by Mr Rayner.

Mr Rayner suggested that the meaning of Class A and Class C be explained to Community and Resources Committee.

Following discussions it was agreed to invite two Heads of Service to the meeting so they would be available to answer any questions on their service.

Mr Rayner asked if the Monthly Business Report could be issued to Members in advance of the agenda to give Members more time to look through it, as well as sufficient time given for officers to answer any questions.

It was proposed by Mr Baker seconded by Councillor A Symons and

Resolved:

That explanations are built into Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan and are made clearer at the next Community and Resources Committee.

(Vote: Unanimous)

29. SCOPING OF FUTURE WORK PROJECTS – SET UP WORKING GROUP FOR COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The Chair advised that a working group is to be set up to look at a better way to consult with the Parish Councils and Members of the public.

The following Members agreed to sit on the working group Councillors P R Collins, A J Symons, Mr R Baker and the PR and Communications Manager.

30. FORWARD PLAN

The content of the Forward Plan was noted and amended accordingly.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and closed at 12.20

Signed:

Dated: