

TORRIDGE LOCALITY (COUNTY) COMMITTEE

26 February 2019

Present:

Devon County Council

Councillors A Saywell (Chair), A Eastman, L Hellyer, T Inch and B Parsons

Torrige District Council

Councillors D Hurley and J Whittaker

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Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2018 be signed as a correct record.

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Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

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Future High Street Fund: Potential for Making a Bid

(In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillor Saywell had requested that the Committee consider this matter)

This related to the Government initiative, the 'Future High Streets Fund', and Councillor Saywell asked about the potential benefit noting that £650 million was available nationally but that each District could bid in respect of one Town only. He asked that the District Members and officers liaise with the County Council and adopt a strategic approach. The LEP had organised a workshop on the subject which was being held that day in Exeter to which Torrige District officers would be attending.

The Locality Officer confirmed that the District Councils were the lead authorities in bidding and that County Council officers would be willing to engage should it be appropriate and helpful once a project/projects had been identified.

Members discussed that a case could be made based on the rich heritage in Torrige as well as the economic imperative (for example, town centre residential development, tourist attractions such as community art and not just retail regeneration) and the role of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills in this regard. The Chair also referred to a recent meeting with the recently appointed Chief Executive of the Devon LEP and his willingness to attend a future meeting of this Committee.

Details of the Fund were available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/675-million-fund-to-transform-high-streets-andtown-centres-opens-to-communities>

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Local Member Updates

(a) Torridge Council Tax

Councillor Parsons reported on the cumulative effect of successive increases in the Council Tax on Torridge residents noting for example that 'Band D' was significantly higher than in many urban authorities. There was on-going Devon-wide campaigning for fairer funding for local rural councils with the current review of local government funding and comprehensive spending review.

The Chair also referred to the Fairer Funding Review and criteria used by Government for the funding for highways which appeared to favour urban authorities based on usage rather than length. Lobbying for fairer funding was underway at a regional level and through the Heart of the South West LEP.

(b) Holsworthy Community Hospital

Councillor Parsons reported on the continuing liaison with the Clinical Commissioning Group and proposals for some inpatient community beds in Holsworthy. He also referred to continuing discussion about GP provision at Shebbear.

Councillor Parsons also referred to his concerns about the health outcomes in Torridge recently reported to the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Board and the wider determinants of health such as fuel poverty, poor housing, mental health and educational performance.

(c) Local Events/Funding

The Locality Officer reported on the last of the Networking Events covering northern Devon to be held at High Bickington with a focus on grant funding and dementia care. She also reported on new funding arrangements. The County Council would be reallocating previous funding streams including CVS core grants and the Communities Together Fund in recognition of the four key priorities by which it wants to lead and collaborate in its work with local people and communities; to help local people **connect** with each other and their wider community; to shift more **control** of local decisions to communities; to challenge **inequality** where it exists for people and communities and; to **do things differently** in communities.

In order to meet these priorities, the Council has established three new funds for people, communities and the local organisations that support them, to bid for, to effect change and improve wellbeing for people across Devon.

The County Council's Devon Crowd Funding pilot was also proving to be successful with every £1 invested by the Council generating £7.50 of support for the crowdfund projects.

Details available at: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/devon-communit>

* **30** **Council/Cabinet Forward Plan and Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Committee noted that Council/Cabinet Forward Plan and the Scrutiny Work Programme was available at:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

* **31** **Dates of Meetings**

13 June 2019 and 8 October 2019 (Venues to be confirmed)

[link for the County Council Calendar of Meetings:
<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>]

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 12.10 pm and finished at 12.48 pm