

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
COUNCIL
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON THURSDAY, 4 APRIL 2013**

Members in attendance			
* Denotes attendance		∅ Denotes apology for absence	
*	Cllr K J Baldry	*	Cllr M J Hicks
*	Cllr A D Barber	*	Cllr P W Hitchins
*	Cllr H D Bastone	*	Cllr J M Hodgson
∅	Cllr J H Baverstock	*	Cllr T R Holway
*	Cllr J I G Blackler	∅	Cllr L P Jones
*	Cllr I Bramble	*	Cllr D W May
*	Cllr J Brazil	*	Cllr C M Pannell
*	Cllr C G Bruce-Spencer	*	Cllr J T Pennington
*	Cllr B F Cane	*	Cllr R Rowe (Chairman)
*	Cllr B E Carson (Vice Chairman)	*	Cllr M F Saltern
*	Cllr R J Carter	∅	Cllr P C Smerdon
*	Cllr B S Cooper	*	Cllr J W Squire
*	Cllr S E Cooper	*	Cllr R C Steer
*	Cllr P Coulson	*	Cllr M Stone
*	Cllr P K Cuthbert	*	Cllr R J Tucker
∅	Cllr R J Foss	*	Cllr R J Vint
*	Cllr R D Gilbert	∅	Cllr L A H Ward
*	Cllr A S Gorman	*	Cllr J A Westacott MBE
*	Cllr M J Hannaford	*	Cllr K R H Wingate
*	Cllr J D Hawkins	*	Cllr S A E Wright

Item No.	Minute Ref No below refers	Officers in attendance and participating
All		Democratic Services Manager
All, with the exception of Item 13		Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer
Item 11	78/12	Environment Services Manager

72/12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 February 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

73/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but there was none made.

74/12 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made particular reference to two recent events which she had attended. Firstly, the Exeter Lord Mayors Banquet and secondly, her invitation to the blessing of the Hope Cove Lifeboat.

75/12 **QUESTIONS**

It was noted that no questions had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.

76/12 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

It was noted that one motion had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1.

(a) **By Cllrs Tucker and Hicks**

“How can we influence the viability and future of the Totnes Railway Station? Can the Council write to the Department of Transport, the Chairman of First Great Western and our local MPs, Gary Streeter MP and Dr Sarah Wollaston MP to ensure that fairness prevails.”

In his introduction, the proposer advised that the motion had generated a great deal of media interest. The intention of the motion had been to raise (and attempt to address) the vast differences in train ticket prices at local stations. It had been recently evidenced that tickets to London from Totnes cost £121, whereas the equivalent tickets from Newton Abbot and Plymouth cost £48 and £55 respectively.

In emphasising the importance of Totnes station to the district wide economy (600,000 users last year), the proposer felt that more cheaper advanced tickets should be made available. In addition, the local economy needed more trains to stop at Totnes station and it was noted that the same issue was arising at Tiverton Parkway station.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In referring to a paper which he had tabled to the meeting, a Member expressed his concern that he and his fellow local ward Members had not been consulted prior to this motion being submitted. In addition, the Member felt disappointed that the local Transport Community Group had not been consulted. In reply, other Members commented that the issue affected every town and parish in the South Hams and, in light of the lack of progress over this discrepancy, the effectiveness of the Community Group was questioned;

- (b) It was also felt that the high cost of parking at Totnes station, in comparison to other local stations; the dependency upon ticket machines; and the complexities of train fares needed to be re-considered;
- (c) A Member questioned whether this was a deliberate ploy by the rail company to ultimately reduce the number of trains stopping at Totnes station;
- (d) The proposer agreed to also write to those rail companies who were interested in taking on the franchise.

It was then:

RESOLVED

With regard to how the Council could influence the viability and future of the Totnes Railway Station, that the Council write to the Department of Transport, the Chairman of First Great Western and our local MPs, Gary Streeter MP and Dr Sarah Wollaston MP to ensure that fairness prevails.

77/12 PRESENTATION FROM THE LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

In accordance with Council Minute Number 55/10, the Lead Executive Member for Corporate Services was invited to provide a presentation on the current achievements, aims and challenges which were ongoing within his portfolio area.

In introducing the presentation, the Lead Executive Member advised that it was his intention to focus upon the added value and input which he brought to the role. In thanking all staff in Corporate Services, the Member advised that such input included: holding regular meetings; listening; leading; taking tough decisions; providing strategic direction; bringing forward ideas and initiatives; and ensuring compliance with approved policies and strategies.

Upon the conclusion of the presentation, a question was raised in relation to the impact of establishing a case management system for Legal Services. In reply, the Lead Member stated that on many occasions, Members did not know who was dealing with a particular case and it was important to address this matter. As a general point, the Member stated the importance of maintaining the momentum which had been gained following the Legal Services review.

78/12 PRESENTATION FROM THE LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

In accordance with Council Minute Number 55/10, the Lead Executive Member for Environment Services was invited to provide a presentation on the current achievements, aims and challenges which were ongoing within his portfolio area.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were raised:-

- It was confirmed that new car parking machines did not give change in light of the security implications associated with holding money. It was acknowledged that the recent implementation of RinGo (cashless parking system) would help to solve this issue;
- In reference to an ongoing initiative on the use of local products to produce fuel, the lead Member asked to be provided with more information to ensure it is appropriately considered;
- Assurances were given that the public conveniences review did not differentiate between those located in towns and parishes and the merits of each one would be considered fairly and equally.

79/12 REPORT OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURES WORKING GROUP

A report was considered which sought to advise Members of the discussions and recommendations arising from a recent meeting of the Political Structures Working Group.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the proposal to reduce the number of formal Council meetings held each year. In light of a concern, the Leader emphasised the importance of officers giving greater onus to forward planning to ensure that any date constrained decisions were programmed accordingly;
- (b) some concerns expressed at the proposal to discontinue Executive Member presentations to Council. Some Members felt that these currently provided a good opportunity to hear what each Executive Member had been up to within their respective service areas. In reply, the point was made that it was not the intention of the Working Group to eradicate this process, but to bring it into the Informal Council forum, which would enable for greater opportunity to focus upon specific areas;
- (c) the use of electronic voting equipment. In line with the transparency agenda, Members expressed their support for this proposal and wished for all votes taken using the equipment to be recorded in the minutes of that meeting. It was acknowledged that this wish could be incorporated into the annual review of the Council Constitution;

- (d) the start times of Development Management Committee meetings. The Chairman of the Committee informed that he fully endorsed the Working Group recommendation in this regard. A Member felt that the proposed recommendation should also be extended to include those occasions when a meeting agenda was particularly long. This proposal was subsequently endorsed.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That it be noted that a report will be presented to the Executive meeting on 6 June 2013 entitled: 'New Approach to Budget Setting and Monitoring';
2. That the number of ordinary formal Council meetings held each Municipal Year be reduced to four;
3. That the practice of lead Executive Members conducting presentations to Council on their respective service areas be discontinued;
4. That electronic voting equipment be purchased from the recurring revenue budget, which was set aside for the installation of the audio/visual system in the Council Chamber;
5. That the principle of webcasting public meetings be explored and reconsidered at a future meeting of the Working Group;
6. That on the occasions when the Development Management Committee is scheduled to consider Major (or particularly controversial and/or a large number of) planning applications, these meetings commence at 10.00am;
7. That Development Forums be convened to take place on the afternoon of Executive meeting days; and
8. That the responsibilities of the Tree and Hedge Appeal Group be transferred to the Development Management Committee.

(NOTE: At this point, the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Monitoring Officer and those Heads of Service in attendance left the meeting room).

80/12 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2013/14

A report was considered which set out the Council's statutory obligation to adopt a pay policy statement in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act.

In discussion, a Member expressed her concern at the multiple levels between the salaries of the highest and lowest earning officers and felt that this disparity was unjust and required further consideration in the future.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the pay policy statement (as attached at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) for 2013/14 be adopted.

(NOTE: At the conclusion of the vote on this item, the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Monitoring Officer and those Heads of Service in attendance returned to the meeting room).

81/12 **REPORTS OF BODIES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned bodies be received and approved subject to any amendments listed below:-

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| (a) | Development Management Committee | 13 February 2013 |
| (b) | Council Tax Setting Panel | 26 February 2013 |
| (c) | Economy & Environment Scrutiny Panel | 7 March 2013 |

A Member advised that he was in attendance at this meeting, but this was not reflected in the draft minutes. In reply, it was noted that this would be presented to the Panel at its next meeting as a suggested amendment before these minutes were signed off as a 'true and correct record'.

EE.38/12 Development of a Policy for Renewable Energy

The Panel Chairman updated Members that the interim guidance notes had now been approved by the Executive for consultation and asked that these be highlighted at town and parish council meetings.

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| (d) | Development Management Committee | 13 March 2013 |
| (e) | Community Life & Housing Scrutiny Panel | 14 March 2013 |

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm)

Chairman