

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor J Herron

East Ward:

Councillor J Craigie (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs R Craigie

Councillor Mrs L Hellyer

Councillor J McKenzie

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor P Christie (Mayor)

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)

Mr H Cameron (TDC, Economic Development  
Project Officer)

Mr B Garman (NDCC)

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received from Councillor Wootton, South Ward.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no Declarations of Interest.

77. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

Mr Garman advised that as well as campaigning for cycling and walking routes, Northern Devon Cycling Campaign (NDCC) is aware of the uncomfortable relationship that exists between cyclists and walkers due to the sometimes lack of consideration that some cyclists show for other path users.

He indicated that some sort of cycling etiquette must exist in the shared spaces if the animosity felt towards cyclists is to be broken down. In an effort to gain the support and trust of the walkers, cyclists will be encouraged to, "put a bell on it!"

Members had received a copy of a poster that will be used to spearhead the campaign.

78. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 October 2020 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 5, Against: 0)

79. SALIX DECARBONISING HEAT – SKILLS GRANT: – WORKING WITH THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Chairman advised Members that following discussions with the Chairman of the Market Management Committee he had submitted a Public Sector Low Carbon Skills fund application with a view to Pannier Market and Office Energy efficiency.

He confirmed that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has made funding available to enable Salix Finance to provide a 'Low Carbon Skills Fund Grant' (the "LCSF Grant") of up to £20,000.00.

He noted that the timelines for the Grant funding had been "tight;" many Councils have not applied, TDC are in the process of applying with the original deadline having slipped to 4 December 2020 for submissions.

The Chairman introduced Mr Cameron who, he explained, was doing very similar work for the TDC Estate.

Mr Cameron spoke about the various categories of funding application, the key dates of 11 January 2021 when submissions are required for the LCSF Application for Project Managing / Heat Decarbonisation Plan and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and 30 September 2021 when all projects are to be completed.

The LCSF Grant provides the opportunity to hire consultants / experts to design a project to develop energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrade projects, specifically for the needs of the applicants (non-domestic) building. This can lead to application for project funding from the main grant Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), which aims to deliver significant carbon savings within the public sector.

He reiterated that it was a tight window to achieve a lot of work; TDC are working on applications for nine out of ten buildings although he conceded he was not sure what could realistically be achieved. (He confirmed that the Town Hall was included in the application portfolio.)

His recommendation, in the light of approved funding, was that the Town Council should expedite the Pannier Market project.

He spoke of other funding stream elements including a Project Management Fund and Heat Decarbonisation Plan, to reduce the Carbon footprint; he indicated that the Chairman, Councillor J Craigie, had submitted two £10,000.00 bids respectively.

Although buildings like the Pannier Market are difficult to insulate, he expressed quiet optimism, although the Heritage and Listed status of the building could present difficulties. Noting, from the successful application, the insulation of the roof eaves may present “conservation” issues, along with an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) attached to the façade. The Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) too may require licensing application to DCC (land).

He stated that whilst it may be difficult to achieve some of the criteria required for the main application, having the grant already approved by the scheme could allow the exploration and development of a clear plan for future works to increase the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the building. If the expert/specialist work is able to develop a clear application to the main fund, this capital work could really help to sympathetically improve the quality of provision offered by the Panier Market for both the tenants and the customers/visitors.

Councillor McKenzie felt that the Market Management Committee should be included in the process, where hitherto it had not been. He expressed concern that it could become a homogenous building with the implementation of insulation, double glazing and panelling. He noted Mr Cameron’s observation of the difficulty presented by the Listed Building and seeking the approval of the Conservation Officer.

Mr Cameron noted that the process would provide for a real understanding of the building and may provide opportunities to obtain access to other future funding streams.

The Clerk advised Members that the Committee would need to make recommendation, for the Market Management Committee to resolve upon (the project). The project is taking place in the building for which the Applicant pays the energy bills and will benefit from any resulting savings i.e. the Market as opposed to Town Council.

The impact of the works would have to be considered with regard the tenants / traders as well as the building itself. Whilst the outside may resemble a prison, the inside of the Victorian building is attractive often commented upon by visitors. He noted also that Planning and LBC applications had been submitted for the doors.

Councillor McKenzie in directing his questions to Mr Cameron asked whether the fund could be used to provide for efficient electrical heating, with the advent of the solar panels, and similarly more efficient lighting – LED.

Mr Cameron explained the four categories within the funding:

1. Heat pump and Ground Source Heat Pumps.
2. Insulation and lighting.
3. Opportunity for electrical upgrades including battery storage.
4. Move away from gas / oil fired boilers.

Councillor McKenzie felt that with insulation, lighting and heating, doors similar to the recently installed Market Hall (although expensive) at either end of Butcher’s Row could be deemed as insulation.

Mr Cameron thought it could be feasible; he encouraged Members to view the Salix Website and Public Sector page before venturing to change the heating system.

Councillor Mrs R Craigie indicated that she did not favour ASHP given their impact on the outside of the (Listed) building; she agreed that a consultant was needed and confirmed that the purpose of the fund was to engage a specialist. Given the Grade II status she was open to Battery storage and a more efficient heating system.

She noted that the High Street Fund application sought to move the Market to Isaacs Yard leaving a building that could be improved upon, made warm through insulation and have multiple purposes. The funding provided an opportunity to invest in the Building.

Councillor McKenzie assured the Members that the Pannier Market would remain; the High Street Fund bid provided for alternate areas for retail.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer felt there was much to be gained from the consultation process that would provide for the building to be used for other opportunities. She supported the submission and would support again when passed to the Market Management Committee.

Councillor Herron warned against heating without insulation with the implied loss.

Councillor Christie congratulated the Chairman on obtaining the funding approval. He stated, through experience, that the Butcher’s Row shops were like fridges and that insulation of the shops might sit more easily with the Heritage look and meet with the agreement of the Conservation Officer.

He noted that often with the tight deadlines the scarcity of the "Experts." He wondered if there were any available.

Councillor Christie asked if Mr Cameron would be willing to oversee the work. He had spoken to the Town Clerk about the impact upon the staff resource and skillset. Should additional staffing be required the project might fall if the SF&GP Committee were not open to temporary increased manning.

The Chairman indicated that there may be project money available for funding a project manager.

Mr Cameron confirmed that there was the LCSF £10,000 fund specifically for those who did not have the time and resource to Project Manage.

The Chairman confirmed that he had made an approach to a former 361 Energy CiC who had background knowledge and experience of the building.

Councillor McKenzie noted that some Units did have dry line insulation materials, but a recent policy upgrade provided for Council entry to advance Unit improvements. He felt that the Market Management Committee should look into upgrading Butcher's Row, possibly with Salix funding, through insulation and reduction of Carbon emissions.

The Clerk highlighted the recent maintenance work costs brought about through rot in various timbers in Butcher's Row. He suggested also that the financial cost of running the Market was modest.

Councillor Mrs R Craigie advocated improved insulation for the Market Place Shops, also. While the Market Management Committee consider the commercial aspect the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee sought not to contribute to Climate Change but to improve the energy and efficiency of the building.

Mr Cameron explained that the Funding remit would provide for free upgrades to the efficiency of the building, increased provision, a better place but with not an increase cost to the Market nor tenant rent increase. The aspiration of the scheme is to bring down the overall carbon footprint (of the District).

The Clerk reminded Members that the body applying for the fund must be the body benefitting. He indicated that the Committee, who appeared fully supportive of the opportunity, would have to make recommendation to the Market Management Committee, to resolve upon. The LCSF Grant offer would be renewed allowing for the appropriate signatories' representative of the Market. As it stands, the Town Clerk cannot sign / authorise the funding payment, iaw the Council's Standing Orders. He intimated that either Chairmen of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee or Market Management Committee, Councillor McKenzie, should sign as the Accountable Officer and take responsibility for the monthly returns and other stated conditions of the offer.

The Chairman indicated that he and Councillor McKenzie would work together. He asked when the Market Management Committee would next convene.

The Clerk advised that he and Councillor McKenzie had discussed a meeting during the week commencing 30 November 2020 (he noted that the Budget, engagement of the Development Officer and rent increases needed to be resolved upon).

Councillor Christie again wondered if it did not make more sense for Mr Cameron and TDC to work with the Town Council; should TDC's bid fail Mr Cameron could take the lead, given the Pannier Market is a TDC building.

Mr Cameron explained that once he had staffed the applications the subsequent work would go to the Estates Team who would Project Manage the works and oversee any Project Manager engaged on a short-term contract through the LCSF payment.

Councillor Christie, with deference to the Town Clerk and office team, speculated that the Property Department for TDC could take on the Pannier Market with their experience and expertise. Again, the Pannier Market is a TDC building.

On prompting from the Chairman, Councillor Christie (also Vice Chairman of TDC) agreed to liaise with Mr Redwood from the Estates Department.

The Chairman sought to establish what should happen next.

The Clerk indicated that the Committee should recommend that the funding opportunity should be resolved upon by the Market Management Committee. Consideration needed to be given to who should be the Accountable Officer (Councillors Mrs R Craigie, Mrs Hellyer and McKenzie indicated support for Councillor J Craigie to fill the role; the Chairman expressed agreement, noting that he was also the Vice Chairman of the Market Management Committee) to sign off the monthly reports and who would be responsible for setting things in motion, arrange tenders, rate the bids and engage / liaise with the Contractors; VAT implications would also need to be clarified.

It was reaffirmed that timing is tight, reiterating the 11 January 2021 deadline.

The Clerk established that once the commitment had been made, within five days of the new offer, 70% of the £20,000.00 funding will be paid (to the Council / Market).

Mr Cameron understood that there was a quick turnaround with the funding. It provided for engaging the consultant to provide the report, a clear strategy that would support application to the main fund, by 11 January 2021. The remaining 30% would be paid on

presentation of receipt, proof of expenditure, by 11 February 2021.

He alluded to the difficulty of establishing three “suitors,” for the TDC bid.

The Chairman confirmed that at this, first stage, it was establishing a project; it was not the implementation stage. It would provide for research, details and a smooth implementation. In order to apply for the next stage of funding the project would have to be able to show a carbon saving of £500 per tonne.

Members discussed potential candidates for the consultancy role.

It was proposed by Councillor J Craigie, and seconded by Councillor McKenzie

RECOMMENDED: That:

1. The Chairman of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee should be appointed the Accountable Officer, responsible for ensuring that the LCSF Grant is used in compliance of their terms and conditions.
2. The Market Management Committee, on behalf of the Pannier Market, staff the LCSF Grant opportunity, as the benefitting body and resolve accordingly.
3. Both Chairmen of the respective Committees take the lead, in working together, to research and provide detail for the next Market Management Committee Meeting.

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0)

Members thanked Mr Cameron for his attendance and contribution.

## 80. COMMITTEE WORK – PROJECT ACTION DOCUMENT

The Chairman believed that establishing a project document, based on the Committee’s work, would help facilitate bids / applications in the light of future funding opportunities.

Councillor McKenzie suggested that the Working Groups are dissolved, given that none have been convened recently. The establishment of a document would provide an overview of those current projects and enable the Committee to direct their energies forward in applying for funding and agree new projects.

The Chairman conceded that COVID-19 had impacted adversely upon Working Group Meetings. An updated spreadsheet would track those projects that are underway, future opportunities and potential funding streams. It would provide also for identifying who, Chairman / Deputy Chairman, was leading a project and what was being done to progress them.

Both Councillors Mrs R Craigie and McKenzie were in agreement that an action plan can be raised and agreed upon and subsequently updated with viable projects.

The Chairman invited Members to provide detail within the next two weeks for inclusion at the next Meeting. Consideration would be given to:

- Cycling.
- Tidal.
- Bideford Forest.
- o Schools – Ford Woodland / education.
- Nappies.

Councillor McKenzie warned against overreaching the Committee’s / Council’s remit and stepping on the toes of other authorities. Much of the cycle path suggestions were not in Bideford. He felt there were other areas of priority, given that there was much cycle provision in Bideford.

While cycling was healthy, and the alternative travel provided for a reduction in carbon emissions, there was a danger that the motorist was being vilified. He spoke of a fine balance, there are those where cycling would not provide for a commute into Barnstaple. The elderly and disabled rely on vehicles. The Committee can not be seen to vilify the car driver; they had to be careful not to alienate people.

Councillor Heron indicated that the Committee were not vilifying the motorist, whilst inclusive their approach had to offer alternatives.

Councillor Mrs R Craigie should like the Committee to make recommendations to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee, to include Carbon neutral buildings, footpaths, cycleways and trees that would provide for the Planning Committee to be obliged to consider.

The Clerk advised that he had spoken to the Senior Planning Policy Officer for TDC about including a cycle bridge in the Local and Neighbourhood Plans, that had been raised by the Committee as an aspirational idea at the Meeting held on 22 September 2020.

She advised that the current Plan is in place but not adjusted in the short term and is subject to review (in about two years).

As part of the (statutory) process the Town Council will be invited to consult, where it can make comments and make a submission.

In order to be included into the Local Plan any submission must have a realist prospect of success. It must be more than an aspiration and it should realistically be able to come to fruition during the lifetime of the (Local) Plan – currently 2031.

They look to be positive but will indicate what can't be done, which route not to go down.

The Project does need to be viable.

The Council, in making a submission, would have to show that it was physically possible and where funds would be drawn. There would need to be evidential work to demonstrate how it could work.

The TDC process / consideration is not negative but realistic.

The Clerk added that the Officer had agreed to forward an E Mail regarding the process.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for the useful information.

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RECOMMENDED: That a forward Action Plan is created, updated and included on each agenda. The Working Groups are dissolved.

(Vote: For: 4, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

## 81. WORKING GROUPS

### a. Energy and Heat.

Members discussed tidal projects noting the small area attributable to Bideford, the working Port, Brunswick Development and a wider scope that would need greater outside and higher agency / authority involvement.

The Chairman noted that the Tidal development did not sit well within the context of the RCEF grant opportunity.

Councillor Christie noted that TDC had properly instigated a Climate Change Working Group, to be Chaired by Councillor Hames.

### b. Transport.

No update.

### c. Carbon sinks and biodiversity (CSB).

Councillor Heron had no update on Dimpsey Woods. He had though 100 trees growing in his garden.

Councillor Mrs R Craigie advised that the Chairman had sourced, and arranged for collection from Exeter, the Devon White Beam. She added that given their size she too would be obtaining three at personal expense, in the event that those Council specimens did not survive.

There was further discussion on cuttings, hybridisation, cutting material and other areas of growth.

The Chairman thanked the Members for their attendance and support. He concluded the Meeting at 8.12 pm.