

PRESENT:

East Ward:

Councillor J Craigie (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs R Craigie
Councillor J McKenzie

South Ward:

Councillor Mrs S Langford

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mrs K Corfe had proffered her resignation from the Committee, prior to the Meeting. Councillor Herron had not sent apologies for his absence.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

26. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There were no members of the public present.

27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 January 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 4, Against: 0)

28. BIDEFORD DRIVING RESPONSIBLY CAMPAIGN

The Chairman advised that he and Councillor Herron had been unable to arrange a meeting to provide for a preliminary discussion on the item.

Members agreed to defer (consideration of) the item.

29. ACE RAILWAY – ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDING SUPPORT

a. £3,000 provision Environment Budget to ACE Railway towards the cost of building the economic and environmental case to reconnect Bideford to the main rail network.

The Chairman had attended a meeting of the ACE Railway Working Group that included a presentation by OkeRail. In order to make the (Okehampton) freight line safe for passengers thirteen miles of track had to be reinstated.

Councillor McKenzie observed that only half a mile of track was in Bideford / Torrridge the remainder was mostly in North Devon.

It had been noted at the Meeting that the current head of Strategic Development of Network Rail was soon to retire to Bideford. The potential for network connections and influence could be a coup for the initiative.

The Chairman indicated that ACE Railway had identified a consultant to provide a feasibility report and economic case at a cost of £12,000.00.

Railfuture an independent organisation campaigning for a bigger, better railway had made an offer of £6,000.00 in support of the venture.

The Chairman believed the Council could provide financial assistance by funding the Environmental Aspect of the Economic Report looking at the Climate Control targets for Bideford i.e. fewer cars, reduction in buses / journey times giving rise to the benefits of an integrated transport system.

Councillor Mrs Langford agreed that monies taken from the annual Climate Control budget could be used, with the proviso that the report detailed how much decarbonisation could be achieved for Bideford, as a result of the rail initiative restoring the main line between Barnstaple and the Town.

b. Both District Councils, Devon County Council and each Parish along the Tarka Line are invited to similarly make contributions.

Members agreed that in addressing "stakeholder," Councils on the Project and request for funding contributions; both the North Devon and Torrington MPs should also be informed.

The Chairman agreed to draft the content of the letters; the Clerk will administer.

It was proposed by Councillor J Craigie, seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford, and

RECOMMENDED: That:

- £3,000.00 is provided from the Climate Change budget to support the Environmental aspect of the Economic Report and the benefits to the decarbonisation of Bideford.
- Letters are written to the Stakeholder Town and Parish Councils advising them of the Project and inviting contributions; the Local MPs are similarly appraised.

Vote: (For: 4, Against: 0)

30. REPORT ON DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL'S NET ZERO VISIONS PROJECT

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs R Craigie had both attended a DCC Net Zero Visions Project Zoom Meeting (representing Bideford).

The driver behind the Project is that a better future is still possible, "but to create that future we must first be able to picture it."

Three artists were in attendance who have been commissioned to provide, through the mediums of mural art, illustration, and game design to picture and illustrate the various visions of net zero life in 2050 submitted by Devon communities.

The Presentation included community representation from Exeter, Plymouth, Torbay as well as Bideford.

Members considered a questionnaire that included energy supply, transport, food land and sea. The intention was to make it widely available and feed the responses back to DCC. It was agreed that the very questions and process did not merit further consideration although the Chairman agreed to respond and include the Council's previous Devon Carbon Plan submission.

Discussion developed on what could be included in a net zero vision of Bideford in 2050, and where a mural could be displayed representative of the Communities' ideas. It was felt that the Burton could also provide input, from an art perspective, in developing a response.

The Chairman indicated that there would be a further workshop on 21 February where three (Bideford) delegates could engage in developing the Vision with DCC. Given that Bideford was the only representative from North Devon it was felt that involvement may draw attention / funding to the Town.

The Chairman thanked the Members for their attendance and support. He concluded the Meeting at 7.45 pm.