

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE
9th APRIL 2024**

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

In accordance with the prior directions of the Council and related workshops associated with the review of the Strategic Plan, to afford the Committee the opportunity to review/comment on Tavistock Town Council external communication and engagement activities and any next steps.

2. CORPORATE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan 2024-27 sets out the strategic framework and key organisational goals and objectives which provide the basis for delivery of Council services over the plan period. It is underpinned by an expectation that the Council will have in place effective arrangements to meet statutory and other requirements, and communicate key messages (C2).

This is supplemented by the adopted Tavistock Town Council Media Protocol and Advice, and the Council's Social Media Guidelines - as accompanied by the relevant provisions of the Member Role Profile

3. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Notwithstanding certain restrictions around political activity and associated content, together with various requirements derived from transparency measures, the primary arrangements regulating Council communications are either set out in the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, or arise

from specific duties to consult/give notice etc. In many (but not all) cases these are more directed to principal authorities than the local council sector.

Subject to these parameters it is very much a matter for each local Council to determine how it manages/resources communication and engagement activities, and the identification/management of the risks or opportunities attaching to various courses of action (or indeed, inaction).

4. RESOURCE ISSUES

It is a matter for each Council to identify the resource it considers necessary and/or appropriate to support communication and engagement activities within the regulatory framework.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

There are no issues arising directly in connection with this report beyond any such themes as may be considered appropriate for individual reference.

6. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

The report content is derived from the Member workshops to which all Members of Council were invited to attend to review the prospective content of the Council's Strategic Plan and scope, develop, and discuss priorities for delivery over this Council term.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee review the current position, identify next steps and, if/as appropriate, for recommendation to Council:

- a) Identify the terms of reference for any Member group as may be constituted either to review the topic in the round, or any more specific area of activity (such as website replacement);
- b) Identify the timeframe for reporting;
- c) Subject to the completion of (a) above, nominate Members to serve on any Member group as may be constituted.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee will recall that consideration was previously given to the approach to be adopted in respect of the development of the Council's Strategic Plan, arising from which two priority areas were identified for review (Minute No 333 refers).
- 1.2 To that end, and set out below in a modular format, is a summary of the current position regarding the first area identified for review by Council - communications and engagement.
- 1.3 Councillors will, in particular, be familiar with the overall approach set out in both the Tavistock Town Council Media Protocol and Advice, and the Council's Social Media Guidelines - as supplemented by the relevant provisions of the Member Role Profile, which represent the applicable policy framework.
- 1.4 In preparing this report it is recognised that, whilst communications and engagement may often overlap, they can also differ in terms of structure, purpose and outcome. Council will also be mindful of the balance to be struck between appropriate and timely activities on the one hand, and the proportionality of the resource required to deliver them in a meaningful and relevant manner on the other. Information/consultation overload, or engagement which does not provide meaningful impact on outputs, can negatively affect community confidence in and/or engagement with the Council.
- 1.5 The following table is not intended to represent a comprehensive list of all associated Council activities. It is primarily focused on external communications/engagement and as such does not cover, other than tangentially, aspects such as organisational internal communications, marketing or branding etc. However, it does aim to provide sufficient overall context to describe current external arrangements. Utilising the model provided by the New Economic Foundation (NEF) activities may be variously subject to production by the Council, co-production or co-design with others, and take the forms variously of engaging, consulting, informing, educating (NEF also identifies coercing but this is more likely to apply to principal authorities in the exercise of quasi-judicial or similar responsibilities). These in turn can be subdivided into doing with/for/to.

- 1.6 The majority of the activities of the Town Council fall into the first two categories of doing 'with' and doing 'for'; reflecting the collaborative nature of the organisational approach to communications and engagement and diversity of means and mediums deployed.

2. THE CURRENT POSITION

PROJECT/TASK	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
Heritage Community		
HC1: Townscape Heritage Initiative	As accountable body and landlord of critical buildings and public realm, a £2.2m third party grant scheme to revive the town centre by preserving and regenerating key heritage assets.	<p>The benefits and reported achievement have been widely addressed previously, with regards to a scheme that was underpinned at the co-design stage (BID writing and presentation) by community and business representatives, as well as within its decision-making process pertaining to the Grants Panel and Project Management Board configuration, enhancing relationships as an example of community leadership.</p> <p>For more context refer to the Evaluation Report:</p> <p>https://www.tavistock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/inline-content/Tavistock%20Townscape%20Heritage%20Initiative%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf</p> <p>Key community outcomes included job creation and safeguarding and supporting a community centre, Kingdon House, moved from the reserve list with a TTHI contribution leverage 45K, securing a further 78K. The complimentary initiatives had a far-ranging reach within the community,</p>

		<p>including 44hrs of heritage skills training and workshops taken up by 385 attendees, 11 A level students undertaking a short course on blacksmithing, wood carving and stone masonry, delivering a heritage skills craft fayre in 2019, attended by 3300 visitors of all age ranges and working closely with Tamar Energy Community re: Bedford Cottages.</p> <p>Other initiatives, which also falls into the comms category include the production of 10,000 heritage walking tours leaflets and the development of a dedicated THI website and regular distribution of newsletters. It was acknowledged that the TTHI achieved a basic level of publicity and communication with post engagement to develop the Evaluation Report undertaken by interviewing grant recipients, business owners, occupant or renovated premises, agents, contractors and carrying out a street survey.</p>
<p>HC2: Guildhall Project</p>	<p>A £1.9 million town centre regeneration and visitor project led by Tavistock Town Council, in a partnership with Tavistock Heritage Trust and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with a Round 2 grant of £817,800 (supplemented by a DCMS "Kickstart" grant of £130,890), that has delivered a WHS Heritage Centre in the heart of Tavistock.</p>	<p>Members will be aware that this project was 10 years in the making prior to the development/delivery stage, underpinned, and grant awarded based upon working in tandem with a community partner organisation to deliver a Heritage Centre, VIC and Council Services.</p> <p>For background and detail refer to the Evaluation Report below.</p> <p>https://www.tavistock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/inline-content/TGG%20Evaluation%20Report Updated July2022%20%281%29 0.pdf</p> <p>Supporting quantitative data on project outcomes relating to community engagement and participation at the time of writing (2022) includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 entries into an art competition/exhibition 100

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach sessions at Tavistock Primary School, 175 children engaged • In-depth Guildhall project with local primary school 1 class of 30 children • A family activity day including 128 people • 120 students involved in Tavistock Town Tour • 6 young people involved in Youth Project • 27 VIC volunteers recruited • 14 town guide volunteers recruited • 10 volunteers involved and 5 interviews carried out for the Guildhall Memories Research Project • 47 Guildhall stewards recruited • 21 recruitment, training and learning volunteers recruited (Discovery Team) • THT and Tavistock Guildhall Websites created <p>Within the Robing Room is the display of the Tavistock Textile, produced by 17 stitchers from the local community, in liaison with local historians. This space also houses local artwork from the community.</p> <p>Current initiatives for the local community include free monthly talks on various topics relating to the history of Tavistock, regular family drop-in activity sessions run by the Discovery Team, regular organised school visits, use by Plymouth University and WHS for training purposes, and the venue is frequently used by community groups for meetings and consultations e.g. NDP.</p> <p>The VIC, managed by THT is within the complex, which provides a 5 day a week public information service for visitors to the town.</p>
--	--	---

<p>HC3: Heritage Alliance/Heritage Quarter/Heritage Fair and working with Tavistock Museum/Tavistock Heritage Trust/Subscription Library/Museum of policing in Devon and Cornwall</p>	<p>The Council proactively provides support for the Heritage Community</p>	<p>Support include:</p> <p>Attendance at the Heritage Alliance Meetings and facilitating the formation of the Heritage Quarter Group. This includes providing the venue for meetings and minute taking. The Council also organised the Heritage Fair in Guildhall in March 23 to pull together all the heritage community as a networking exercise and to demonstrate what each organization does and to assist with volunteer recruitment.</p> <p>Significant support in Officer time and financial contribution has been provided to Tavistock Museum to facilitate its full reopening and partnership activities are being arranged with THT (Discovery Team), Museum of policing in Devon and Cornwall and other stakeholders.</p>
<p>Business Community</p>		
<p>BC1: Tavistock BID, Chamber of Commerce and wider business community</p>	<p>The Council continues to build on its partnership with Tavistock BID, established in 2011, pertaining to co-production projects identified in their plan, alongside supporting Tavistock BID on significant town centre challenges</p>	<p>The Council works closely with the business community, primarily with Tavistock BID which includes several co-production initiatives.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coach Drivers Incentive Scheme 2) Christmas lights 3) Hanging baskets 4) Dickensian Evening 5) Joint advertising and promotion and campaigning (parking meters) <p>Initiatives 2, 3 and 5 services are charged at cost which does not include any management costs to support the activities of Tavistock BID.</p>

		<p>The Council facilitates the Town Hall and markets Consultative Group meetings which provides the business community a formal opportunity to be represented, along with Member appointment to the BID Board.</p> <p>Other initiatives to support the business community include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Subsidised rates at poor times of trading e.g. Pannier Market, Jan/Feb 2) Allowed BID to use an empty shop to store their garlands for a one-off event. 3) THT used 3 East End Stores to run 2nd hand shop in the run up the Christmas to raise funds plus allowed a previous tenant to use as a pop-up shop to sell stock after closing down. Youth markets/community market Butchers Hall. 4) The Council is actively working on arranging Youth Markets in Butchers Hall 5) Negotiated with Barclays Bank and championed the implementation of a Banking Hub in the Pannier market for the local community. 6) Supported a marketing strategy for town 7) Led on social distancing measures in the town centre for COVID on behalf of WDBC.
Longstanding Established Community Partnerships		
LECP1: Lions Club of Tavistock	There has been a long-established effective practise of co-production and partnership support with the Lions Club of Tavistock	<p>Established partnership activities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trees of Light co-production initiative which includes a cost to the Council to support the delivery of this initiative IRO £4,000. 2. Use of land/buildings FOC to support the Carnival activities (Meadows, Bedford Square, Guildhall car-park, Guildhall courtroom. Estimated grant in kind £1,300.

		<p>3. Partnership working re: events and financial support covered elsewhere</p> <p>4. In partnership with Tavistock Lions and Men in Sheds, TTC have been part of the introduction of 2 "chatty Benches" within the town. The purpose of the benches is to support positive mental health by talking to others.</p>
LECP2: Tavistock Community Gardeners	The Council has worked with this voluntary group on various projects, primarily on Council owned land since its inception in 2013, with the aim to soften the urban landscape and community participation in environmental and sustainable initiatives.	<p>Projects over this period have included planting scheme improvements to Celle Gardens, the development, promotion and implementation of the Blue Heart Campaign, Rose Walk, canal bed planting (including bug house), maintenance of planters around the Pannier Market perimeter, installation of bird boxes and hedge planting at Bannawell pony field.</p> <p>The Council provides Tavistock Community Gardeners with a polytunnel at Plymouth Road Cemetery for the raising of seeds.</p> <p>The Council also supported Tavistock Community Gardeners and BID in the delivery of Britain in Bloom for several years.</p>
LECP3: Tavistock Community Sensory Garden	In 2015 several community groups worked with the Council from a co-design perspective to deliver a Sensory Garden and Petanque Court on the land adjacent to Rose Walk in the Meadows	<p>The Council facilitated and in the early developmental stages, provided significant resource to support The Rotary Club of Tavistock and Lions Club of Tavistock in the development of a Sensory Garden and Petanque Court concept. This included attending meetings, supporting grant applications, assisting with the review of procurement and design documentation, aspects of bespoke project management and providing a lease to occupy the land. (now including Rose Walk)</p> <p>A strong relationship has been embedded between the Council and Tavistock Community Sensory Garden with operational matters pertaining to liaison on such aspects as tree management, path maintenance and removal of green waste being the main day to day business.</p>

<p>LECP4: Tavistock Youth Cafe</p>	<p>The Council has a long-established partnership-based approach with Tavistock Youth Café, including relating to Tavi Trails, skatepark maintenance and collaborations to support community events</p>	<p>From the origins of Tavi Skate steering group, the Council part funded and project managed the building of the skatepark in early 2000s and have continued with the management/maintenance of the facility. Throughout this period the Youth Café and Council have discussed aspects pertaining to its condition and use, and there are on-going discussions around the replacement of this provision for a multi-purpose wheeled facility, pertaining to funding, design and procurement.</p> <p>The Youth Café and Council worked closely pertaining to the delivery of Tavi Trails (purpose-built dirt bike track), which included the Council providing support around design, procurement and project management, with the issuing of a lease on completion and an on-going commitment to the maintenance of the site pertaining to grass cutting and tree management.</p> <p>Tavistock Youth Café have proactively supported the Council with town events, such as Goose Fair, Tour of Britain, Jubilee celebrations etc, including such aspects as sourcing performers (e.g. musicians/bmx demos)</p> <p>Refer to CGS1: Financial assistance</p>
<p>LECP5: Friends of the Green Burial Meadow</p>	<p>The Council closely works with community volunteers regarding the upkeep of the green burial site at Plymouth Road Cemetery</p>	<p>Since 2014 TTC has worked with a volunteer group to develop the wild flower meadow concept into a management strategy. The long-term project has developed vastly over the last 10 years, growing from one sole volunteer to a group in excess of 20, who have named themselves "Friends of the Green Burial Meadow". Over the years a mailing list of the volunteers has been developed to enable communication between the parties. In 2016 work between TTC staff and the volunteers commenced in preparing the ground for wild flowers, this</p>

		<p>included raking the cut grass and sowing yellow rattle to weaken the existing grass in order to give wild flowers a chance to propagate at the next sowing, with the process repeated and then mixed meadow flowers sowed. The meadow is now scythed once a year, again by volunteers and TTC, although a path which meanders through the meadow is cut by TTC on a regular basis for visitors. Regular meetings are held with volunteers.</p>
<p>Community Groups Support</p>		
<p>CGS1: Financial assistance: Council Grants Panel Process and concessionary rates</p>	<p>The Council holds a yearly grants panel process where eligible community applicants can apply for financial support, budget £20,000</p> <p>It also supports local businesses, community groups and charities by providing space for hire at concessionary rates if criteria's are met relating to community benefit</p>	<p>Sample period of last 6 years assessed: yearly allocation range £8550-£18929.99.</p> <p>Grants include Junior Life Skills, Tavistock Carers Support Group, Tavistock Rugby Club, Tavy Division Girl Guiding, Citizens Advice Bureau, Cattle Market, Sun Rise Cup, Butchers Park Allotment Association, THT, Tavistock Locals Help, Tavistock Scrubs Hub, Mary Budding Trust, Tavistock Area Christians together, Tavistock Local History Society, Tavistock Musical Theatre Company, Tavistock Library, Tavistock Street Pastors, Regarding Eve Theatre CIC, Vocal Harem Choir, Tavistock Museum, Tavistock Amateur Boxing Club, Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church, Devon and Cornwall Food Action, Tavi Fringe, Debt Advice Tavistock Area, TASS, Tavistock Cricket Club, Make a Difference, Catalyst, Tavistock Scrapstore, West Devon Community Voluntary Service, Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team, West Devon Autistic Women's Group. Tavistock Youth Café, Tavihelps, The Lions Club of Tavistock.</p> <p>For context, examples and range of support includes:</p> <p>Tavistock Locals Help (free telephone line £1000, £1500 to assist vulnerable people)</p>

		<p>Tavistock Youth Café (£2750 for food for users during drop in sessions, plus staff costs, insurance and utility costs) The Lions Club of Tavistock (£750 insurance) West Devon Community Voluntary Service (£750, 10% cost towards community builder) Tavistock Scrapstore (stairlift £1,000) TASS (table tennis and chairs/table £1500) Tavistock Museum (towards cost of mobile museum project £2470)</p> <p>It is also worth noting the fundraising initiatives for the Mayoral charities and the ongoing commitment to the Jessie Ann Alford Charity where applications are advertised in the press, website and social media and reported on at the Annual Town Meeting.</p> <p>The Council applies a discretionary community/charity venue hire rates, discounted at 25% to assist local organisations and community partners with their running costs, further strengthening community relations. Discretionary rates are also applied for community events such as Goose Fair and Tavistock Country Garden Show, with the aim of ensuring local businesses and community organisations are provided allocated space in prime locations. Dependent on the type of activity, on occasions venues such as TCOs/Robing Room are provided FOC.</p> <p>Some examples of organisations, groups that benefit from this approach include: Junior Life Skills, health and wellbeing classes (clubsize, vocal harem), blood donor stations usage, Fashion Shows where 25% discount went to Plymouth and Cornwall Cancer Fund, community organisations dinner/dances, Councillor training sessions, Children on Need, foreign student visits, Twinning, Tavistock Business Show, West Devon Community and Voluntary Service (including police, social</p>
--	--	---

		<p>services and drug rehabilitation). Butchers Hall has also been used for Tavistock Museum exhibitions, HODs, in partnership with BID (Stop the meters consultation/petition), NDP consultation process, local elections polling station venue, Bannawell play-park consultation, Tavistock Recycling Centre consultation, click and collect service during COVID, WDBC meeting venue, 'Cards for Good Causes' initiative, Tamar Energy Fest.</p> <p>Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service also use the Town Hall and MOC for scenario-based training.</p> <p>A representative sample of recent uses for the TCOs Chamber, the majority of which are FOC include: Tavistock Museum Trust NDP, Guildhall Gateway Advisory Forum, Whitchurch Down & TH & Markets Consultative Groups, Nursing Trust, Australian Delegation, THT, Westcountry Rivers Trust with NDP, Girl Guides Tour with a Member, Traffic Matters, ICCM Event, Highways Presentation, Ford St & Maynard Almshouse Trust.</p>
CGS2: Storage Space	There has been a long-established practise of providing Council infrastructure for the short to medium term for storage to assist community organisations with their running costs, projects and initiatives, usually at a nominal rent	<p>Different Council assets, including the Guildhall, Town Council Offices, Town Hall, MOC have been used by community organisations for storage of material and goods, including Tavistock Museum, THT, Lions Club of Tavistock, U3A, Tavonians Theatre Company, Tavistock Musical Theatre Company, Tavistock Brass Band, Tavistock Edge, Quakers. Most recent example: Tavistock BID using TCOs basement to store town guides prior to distribution.</p> <p>Permission was granted for medium term siting of ships containers at Pixon Lane open space utilised by Scrapstore and Lions Club of Tavistock. Recently the Council vacated their ships container at Pixon lane open space (purchased for £2,000), to allow medium term usage by the SHARE recycling initiative.</p>

<p>CGS3: Use of land/premises by community organisations</p>	<p>There has been a long-established practise of providing Council infrastructure/land for long term use, predominantly at a nominal rent, and to assist, where practicable, with aspects of their property management and other support on request</p>	<p>The Council provides long term leases and licences, usually at nominal rents for a broad array of community organisations which includes, Tavistock Museum, THT (VIC), Subscription Library, or other favourable arrangements with WDBC for occupation of Museum of Policing in Devon and Cornwall, Riffle Club, Scout Group, Golf Club, Cricket Club, Tennis Club, Bowling Club, Youth Café (BMX track), Tavistock Community Gardeners (Polytunnel at Plymouth Rd Cemetery). To provide some context, rent forgone for Tavistock Museum alone is estimated at £11,300, Tennis Club, Council provided £15,000 match-funding for court resurfacing, including project management support and provide storage space for maintenance equipment within the Tractor Shed outbuilding.</p> <p>In 1987 the Council leased land to WDBC on a peppercorn rent for the delivery of the Wharfs Art Centre and Meadowlands Swimming Pool, which has associated car and coach parking.</p> <p>The Council proactively facilitated negotiations to relocate the Old Folks Rest Room, providing advantageous terms for TASS, now known as 'Rest a While Café' at East End Stores. Part of that process included the removal and storage of equipment/furniture from the old premises and the procurement and project management of the conversion works for the new premises.</p> <p>The house at the MOC has been used medium term duration by Tavistock Local History Society whilst carrying out Ward and Chowen Archiving Project and is currently occupied by Feeding Devon/Tavi Helps to store and prepare consumables for the Food Hub. For context both initiatives approximately required a week's Officer time to facilitate.</p>
--	---	---

		<p>Since taking over the management of Bedford Square the Council has afforded community groups/charities the opportunity to promote initiatives, usually free of charge, which have a broad reach. Such organisations include: Dementia Bus, covid test kits, breast screening mobile unit, community bus awareness, army recruitment, RNLI collections, Dartmoor Rescue, Devon Air Ambulance, Memory Café, individual people's charitable causes, police awareness, defibrillator training, St Luke's Hospice (Cream Tea Event).</p> <p>The Council tends not to publicise, due to their sensitive nature, other initiatives, such as lighting the Town Hall/Drake Statue for Pancreatic Cancer Awareness/Kawasaki Disease.</p>
<p>CGS4: Bespoke Initiatives</p>	<p>The Council will continue to work with community groups, partner organisations and other Government Bodies to deliver project and initiatives which have a tangible community benefit</p>	<p>Officers are working closely with the Abbey Remains Project team. Recently the Council submitted a grant application to Historic England on behalf of the group and have been awarded just under £7,000 towards emergency repair works to Betsy Grimbals Tower, including a condition survey, with grants in-kind provided by Council re: depot labour/equipment. This is the start of a much larger project concept which will involve numerous strands of the local community, relating to the mapping of the Abbey Remains and carrying out significant repair works to BGT, project estimate £450,000.</p> <p>The Council works with WDBC with such aspects as adverse weather community mitigations, which includes providing a small quantity of sand/sandbags at Plymouth Rd Cemetery re: flooding and if resource all, an agreement to support WDBC with the gritting of access/egress points to certain Council owned car parks in Tavistock.</p> <p>2023/24 Officers are looking at partnership opportunities with West Devon Arts Workshops, which includes supporting grant</p>

		<p>writing and providing resource match funding in-kind or monetary to host community workshops in the Guildhall. Another initiative being developed is the repair of the mosaic located in Pannier Market.</p> <p>The works department in the past has worked closely with Whitchurch Primary School on such initiatives as litter picking and planting in Meadows.</p> <p>For several years the Council had an agreement with North Devon Youth Offending Team where works were scheduled at Bannawell open space to assist with the management of the greenspace, along with such aspects as litter picking graffiti removal.</p> <p>On the request of Tavistock Library, the Council provided support with the procurement and installation of the overhead sensory projector in the library.</p> <p>Requested and sourced by Cabin Day Nursery, the Council recently agreed to install autism friendly noticeboards in Meadows and Courtlands play-areas.</p> <p>The Council has provided the opportunity for several short duration school experience work placements both in the works department and the markets and events services.</p>
Events		
E1: Town events	The Council deliver with partners the yearly Goose Fair and strongly supports Tavistock BID in the delivery of Dickensian Evening	Goose Fair: It is well documented that this is a multi-agency event and a good example of how effective partnership working with local and external stakeholders (Showman’s Guild) can deliver challenging but rewarding activities. At any one-time visitor numbers are IRO 20,000, and exhibitors at the event include Rotary, local businesses, Tavistock BID/Chamber of

		<p>Commerce, Heritage groups, numerous charitable organisations, Tavistock Youth Café and local schools, with the police, fire service and WDBC providing agency support. The park and ride facilities are managed by Lions of Tavistock.</p> <p>On a lesser scale, but comparable principles the Council delivers Tavistock Country Garden Show.</p> <p>Dickensian Evening: Refer to BC1.</p>
E2: Civic events	To Council lead on and/or actively support civic ceremonial, working closely with the community and partners	The Council leads on, and/or supports various civic ceremonial events attended by the community which includes civic service, Remembrance Days, Civic Ball, responsibilities pertaining to accession of monarch, commemorative events e.g. 2024 D-Day 80 Beacons.
E3: Bespoke events	To Council lead on and/or actively support one off events, working closely with the community and partners	<p>Three representative examples of effective co-design and co-production include:</p> <p>1) Tavistock's Community Festival of Food and Craft pertaining to a Royal Visit in 2019. The Council led (in a short duration), heavily supported by community partners in delivering a town event which included artisan food and drink, local entertainment, school attendance and performances, community stalls, demonstrations, local crafts. Butchers Hall hosted the 'Community engagement and Artisan Craft Market' which included, Scrapstore & Precious Plastics, Tavistock Heritage Trust, Devon Flame, Sensory Garden, Dartmoor Rescue, Devon Hedge Group, Led To Dream, SPLITZ, TASS, Pam Mico Wool Spinner, Alan Thomas Wood, Turner, Anne Thomas Basket Maker, Wagner Silver, Framed Imagination, Tavistock Lions, Tavistock Rotary, Dartmoor Wetplate, Tavistock Youth Café, Leyford Studio, Ink & Clay, Tavistock Library, Tavistock BID & Tavistock District Chamber of Commerce. There are plans to</p>

		<p>repeat the concept of the 'Community engagement and Artisan Craft Market' in 2025.</p> <p>2) The Tour of Britain event in 2010 was a prime example of multiple community organisations pulling together to celebrate the benefits of the Tour of Britain having an official start in Tavistock, working closely with such organisations as Lions of Tavistock, Tavistock Youth Café and Showman's Guild. For context, the community benefitted from a free concert attended by IRO 7,000 in the town centre.</p> <p>3) 2022 Platinum Jubilee Celebrations led by Tavistock BID and other partners, including music and entertainment, including a 'community initiative called 'River of Hope Pageant'', the Lions of Tavistock delivering a 'picnic in the park', along with Roby Trust holding a steam fair. The Council supported by providing food free of charge, applying for grants and lighting a Beacon on Whitchurch Down.</p>
<p>E4: Supporting other community event organisers</p>	<p>The Council provides land, equipment, resource and professional advice to assist with the implementation of events which have a community benefit</p>	<p>TTC regularly supports community groups through providing infrastructure such as marquees, tables, cones, barriers and traffic management signage (Groups include Lions of Tavistock, Harrowbeer Airfield Show, St Eustachius Church, Tavistock BID).</p> <p>Other community events where we provide space (e.g. Meadows/Whitchurch Down), advice and support, e.g. RAs/emergency plans include: Ecofest, Tavi Pride (including managing the procession), religious groups either doing church services or fun days, Tavistock Athletics running events, U3A annual gathering, cadets and local scouts' group for exercises, and more recently Tavistock College held a cross country relay race on Whitchurch Down.</p>
<p>How We Engage Externally</p>		

<p>HWEE1: Social media</p>	<p>The Council proactively manages various social media platforms and monitors others pertaining to the business of the Council</p>	<p>As a representative sampling below is a summary of posts shared on Tavistock Town Councils FB page since June 2023. This does not include dedicated pages for the market and event venues, Goose Fair or the Guildhall Gateway Centre (administering FB by TTC since Oct 23).</p> <p>Shared posts in this period covers Tavistock related business pertaining to: Tavistock BID, Visit Tavistock, Tavistock Police, DCC, WDBC, DNP, TNDP, Tavistock Museum, Tavistock Subscription Library, Tavistock Heritage Trust, Tavistock Heritage Open Days, Tavistock Lions events and activities (Carnival, fireworks, Trees of Light, Dickensian attendance, Christmas card selling in the PM), Tavistock Community Gardeners, Tavistock Community Sensory Garden, Tavistock Pride, St Eustachius (Christmas Tree Festival: note we collect/deliver tables to facilitate this initiative), Dartmoor Search and Rescue, Dartmoor Hill Farm Project, Tamar Energy Community (Energy Fest Event in BH, West Devon CVS, West Country Rivers Trust (30th August community event re: Tiddybrook), Make a Difference mental health charity (21st Sept fun dog show in Meadows), West Devon Communities (20th Sept thanking TTC), Tavistock Youth Café, ECO Fest (25th July), Tavi Fringe (7th July).</p> <p>Examples of some FB posts by the Council in this period include: each Council Meeting created as a FB event, How to get in touch with TTC, TTC meetings-how to get involved, Did you know TTC has a YouTube channel, Need to contact your local Cllr?, Contact info, What does the Council do, Invite the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Other posts cover off such aspects a information on Council owned properties, Council maintained historic properties, trees, parks and open spaces, cemeteries,</p>
--------------------------------	---	--

		<p>civic activities, Town Crier, Services for hire, bat monitoring project, Green Canopy initiative by the Council and others (Plasterdown Parish Council).</p> <p>It is worth reviewing the content of the Guildhall Gateway Centre FB page since Oct 23, in reference to links with partner organisations, sharing of posts relating to the heritage community/WHS and oversight of activities and projects being delivered within the facility.</p> <p>Note: Developing other social media platforms are being considered to increase demographic reach, e.g. TikTok.</p>
<p>HWEE2: Website/live streaming</p>	<p>The Council manages and maintains the www.tavistock.gov.uk Website and since October 2023 has taken over the tavistockguildhall.org Website.</p>	<p>The main Council Website is primarily updated by Officer resource and as a whole has had accessibility reformatting. Members have been advised that the website will no longer be supported in 2025 and a new content platform is required. This is covered off in the main body of the text where content design needs to be carefully considered to capture audiences and fully represent Council business. AI may be a medium imported to assist with generic questions/orientation.</p> <p>Documents included on the website include: What the Council does (and others), annual return, strategic plan. News items are regularly posted but press releases are less frequent. From a signposting perspective there is significant detail on the website pertaining to Council Initiatives Council initiatives: THI, Guildhall Project, Neighbourhood Development Plan.</p> <p>The Council undertakes a blended approach with the administration of the Guildhall website (in-house/external) but the core changes have been made, and significant</p>

		<p>adaption/amendment is not anticipated in the short to medium term.</p> <p>The Council has been progressive in setting up live streaming infrastructure in the TCOs to reach a wider audience, used for Full Council Meetings. This provision is also available within The Guildhall courtroom and such aspects as accessibility and loop impedance systems etc have been considered and implemented to ensure that meetings can be attended in person, as well as virtually.</p>
<p>HWEE3: Consultations</p>	<p>The Council uses various mediums and approaches to consult and engage with the local community and key stakeholders around pertaining to the business of the Council and wider matters affecting to community</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Day to day consultation/communication with the local community and stakeholders whether it be by email, social media, telephone or face to face e.g. front desk of Guildhall visitor Centre, TCOs reception, Pannier Market Office. 2) The Council used Butchers Hall and provided technical support to fill in petitions for stop the meters as a recent example of engaging with a sector of the community which may have found it difficult to interact effectively electronically. 3) The Council has led on public consultations pertaining to play parks e.g. TAP funding Meadows, Play Builder Courtlands, Whitchurch and Bannawell, Sec106. Methods include, on site surgeries, using facilities like Butchers Hall, door knocking, public questionnaires and this data is then utilised as to inform as part of the co-design process. Recent examples include Bannawell play-park and early discussions about wheeled facilities in Meadows to replace the skatepark. A tangible success story, with the relationship developed over two years was the embedded

		<p>partnership between Council and Meadows Makeover community group, which included joint fund-raising initiatives, use of Town Hall for fund raising events, and becoming the main consultee on co-design aspects.</p> <p>4) Public realm strategy was developed through a robust consultation process one to one interviews, walkarounds, workshops, exhibitions, questionnaires.</p> <p>5) Whitchurch Down Consultative Group/Town Hall and Markets Consultative Group are well established and effective. Other consultations have included bespoke consultations with traders/perimeter shops when undertaking significant building works.</p> <p>6) The Council hosts, plans and reports at the Annual Town Meeting</p> <p>7) Officers and Members work closely with local police and crime and disorder partners, e.g. event support, Meadows anti-social behaviour, DCOs and PSPOs, including regular attendance at Tavistock Matters.</p>
<p>HWEE4: Council comms initiatives</p>	<p>The Council uses different mediums to provide information and engage with the local community and visitors, dependent on subject matter and urgency/reach/intention</p>	<p>The Council produces the Tavistock Town Guide every 3 years which includes: history of the town, local interests, guided walks and information on events and facilities. The principles of this publication are that it is cost neutral, with a publishing company sourcing advertising to offset costs and the guide is distributed to local hotels, camp sites, has a digital version and is available at VIC and municipal buildings.</p>

		<p>The Council recently agreed to allocate a Public relations budget of £1500 which could be utilised to commission professionals to assist with comms on challenging matters.</p> <p>Recent press releases that the Council have either led on or supported include such aspects as THI awards, Guildhall Project, Stop the Parking Meters Campaign, Public Toilets Provision. Several of these have included town wide public consultation, questionnaires methodology pertaining to THI, public conveniences and NDP facilitation in whole or part by the Council. As mentioned in the body of the report, reference should always be made to the media and social media policies.</p> <p>Other good news stories press releases, supporting community initiatives by the Council include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Looking for volunteers who would like to use the town council's heterodyne (tuneable) bat monitor to support the work of the Bat Conservation Trust and provide information to the National Bat Monitoring Programme. 2) Press release pertaining to Green Burial Meadow, contact TTC, looking for volunteers for sowing wild flower seeds, and helping with annual scything and raking. <p>A bespoke leaflet was produced for the local elections – 'Councillors can make a difference leaflet' to try and encourage the community to get involved in Council business.</p> <p>Different mediums Members may not be aware of, used for advertising/promotion to attempt to reach various market segments, in addition to established initiatives like the Coach Drivers Incentive Scheme include:</p>
--	--	--

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dartmoor Tourist Boards – adverts feature across 20 Dartmoor National Parks with an advert also in the Dartmoor Magazine 2) Tavy Links – Dependent on what we are advertising, links now has 6 magazines, Oke Links, Tavy Links, Moor Links, Ply Links Central, Ply Links North & Coastal links, so we always look at what kind of audience and area we are aiming to target, with an overall the reach for the 6 magazines of 52,000 homes with potential of 124,000 readers. 3) Smile Publication – Plymouth hospital radio magazine, advert was in support of the NHS. 4) Tavistock Business Club – provides a weekly presence in the local publication Tavistock Gazette, this is utilised across the whole organisation and has the option to target certain areas by featuring any of their publications across the Southwest. 5) Antiques Tourist – This is an annual magazine in which we specifically target the Antiques & Collectables Market, with emphasis on our Tuesday Market 6) Plymouth Argyle – This is a new publication aimed at the Plymouth area and is a magazine featuring Plymouth Argyle information and their fixture list for the 2024/2025 season, we are one of only three business that actually featuring prominently on the actual fixture list page, we also were guaranteed exclusivity that we would be the only market. 7) QR code – We are also working on including QR Codes on all of our advertising 8) Flyers – We distribute flyers for specific events such as the Tavistock Country Garden Show, Heritage Fair, Goose Fair Distributed at various catchment sites
--	--	---

<p>HWEE5: Inactive past comms methods</p>	<p>The Council previously used various forms of communication which are no longer being delivered due to such aspects as medium-term resource challenges, cost/benefit assessment, delivery in other formats</p>	<p>The Council up to 2019 for a sustained period produced a Council Newsletter quarterly/6 monthly with 5000 copies being delivered to the local residents. Back in 2019 indicative costs pertaining to this for printing and distribution was £1350. Resources were directed elsewhere due to Council Initiatives commitments but it was widely acknowledged that the quarterly frequency would need to be amended due to such aspects as editorial expectations, cost, repetition.</p> <p>Previously a statutory obligation which received funding from Government, the Council used to produce a document called Best Value Performance Plan, contents included: Mayors Introduction, History and Different Council responsibilities, Members/Committees/staff/calendar of meetings, aims and objectives re: democratic processes, employment and economic growth, community and social facilities, local services, partnerships, built and environment and development, countryside and open spaces, services: what the Council does and doesn't do, expenditure summary and costs of services, programme of best value reviews, performance indicators, audit report. Note: All the above information is still presented, but in different formats within various Council documents.</p> <p>The Council has on occasions held Open Days in the Town Hall, where other partners have been in attendance, for the public to engage with Officers, Cllrs and other partners pertaining to their respective business/initiatives. Note: It is intended to reintroduce this in 2025, most likely within Butchers Hall.</p> <p>For one-year Mayors Surgeries were held in the Mayors Parlour. Attendance was de minimis.</p>
---	--	---

<p>HWEE6: Display space</p>	<p>The Council provides, administers and manages various mediums to promote and/or recognise community organisations, business partners, initiatives, events and special occasions</p>	<p>These mediums include the banner system spanning the Town Hall to Court Gate, noticeboards displayed external and internally on Town Hall, Guildhall, Pannier Market, TCOs, Butchers Hall, Plymouth Road Cemetery, A frames where appropriate and compliant, brochure displays in Pannier Market, Town Hall, TCOs, Guildhall, poster displays on glass doors of municipal buildings, movable barrows, ICT infrastructure within Butchers Hall and Guildhall Courtroom. Recent town wide promotional examples include 'Stop the Parking Meters Campaign', NDP consultation process, Guildhall Heritage Fair.</p> <p>Flags are also erected above the Town Hall as per the flag flying schedule in recognition of key dates/events.</p>
<p>HWEE7: Neighbourhood Development Plan</p>	<p>The Council is committed to supporting the production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan</p>	<p>Extensive communication, engagement and involvement activities have been (and are being) undertaken in connection with the development of the NDP for Tavistock, both with public bodies, interest groups, stakeholders and the wider community, including the use of various mediums and messages to access different audiences (as identified in other sections).</p>

3. CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The foregoing section provides a sample of the depth and breadth of communication and engagement activities typically undertaken by the Council. They may variously be on an ad hoc, or on an ongoing basis - be operationalised or, in the alternative, subject to Member direction.

- 3.2 For a Council of modest size (in comparison to the largest local councils which have 3-6 times the staffing resource of Tavistock), it is submitted that these represent, in the round, effective and wide-

reaching arrangements to support collaboration, co-production and, on occasion, co-design. In so doing they also grow the capacity and extend the reach of the organisation (and its partners).

- 3.3 Often (though not always) engagement is through the diverse and vibrant community groups, business, public sector, voluntary and other interests within the Town. This is not just something that the Council 'happens to do'. It is central to the enabling business model which underpins all of its operations – 'doing more with less'. Clearly whilst the Council does much directly, often aspects of its most significant work are delivered with (and through) others in circumstances where the Council may be leader, facilitator, contributor, advocate, supporter or contractor. The longstanding relationship with the Tavistock BID Co is one example.
- 3.4 In summary the Council has a range of effective and flexible arrangements that, in different ways, support participation, engagement and communication, in varying forms with groups and organisations. There is also a demonstrable capacity (albeit not without resource challenge) to address major external news impacts which may be locally, regionally or nationally derived. That is supplemented by allocation of a budget to enable the engagement of external resources if/as appropriate.
- 3.5 However, it is acknowledged that there may also be a case that the extent/capacity of the Council to undertake some of the more contemporary aspects of communications and public relations (for example in the way that the Borough Council does), is understandably constrained by size and resource. For example, ongoing communications (such as regular 'what we have done' publications or posts, or campaigns etc) are not realistically sustainable with present resources. This reflects, in part, that the Council has for its size, a higher than average number of service delivery posts – accompanied by a correspondingly lower number of what might loosely be described as corporate or organisational support roles (communications, policy development, human resource, grant funding, project management/procurement etc) than the norm.

- 3.6 Whilst the basis of this report is around communications/engagement, a more or less corresponding challenge in terms of the management of scarce resources is the organisational risk that applies in all those areas of activity listed above. To address that, put simply scarce resources are applied to the highest risk/opportunity area at any given moment in time. That carries with it key worker and other risks, but it is an unavoidable function of organisational size and the prudent application of public monies to maximise outputs.
- 3.7 Returning to communications/engagement that means, when major issues arise – Black Lives Matter, Ethnic Patriots of Great Britain, charging for on-street parking etc - there can be need for the good offices of partners and/or, a significant consequential impact on capacity to deliver the 'day job' in order to resource them. That is not a criticism, rather it is an observation of the position an organisation the modest size of TTC, with the accompanying service and staffing demographic finds itself in - and hopefully such impacts are rare.
- 3.8 Looking forward, and taking advantage of the 'baseline' set out in section 2 above, there is an opportunity to consider what the Council could/should do more of/less/differently.
- 3.9 For example as part of the process outlined above Members will no doubt wish to consider the associated risks including reference to the corporate and commercial and community service plan risk registers. Taking the latter as an example risk 1 re: collaborative working whilst maintaining core services. Eg appointment into key roles, regarding relationships with DCC, WDBC and BID at Officer level; specific to partnership activities, and provide the necessary plans which underpin the working arrangements between partners, eg Whitchurch Down Management Plan. Risk 4: the impact of collaborative working, eg Guildhall project. Risk 5 publicity and customer satisfaction: risk that organization adversely affected by perception, standards, customer satisfaction and industry image is both challenging and core to organizational objectives. If adopted, a similar approach could apply to

those applicable and higher-level constituents of the organisational corporate risk register (items C3-4, and most especially C6 refer).

- 3.10 With all community engagement initiatives there should typically be a cost/benefit analysis made and, as part of the exercise, consideration should be given to the process, whether it is applicable or appropriate and, if so, associated steps which include considering the: scope, purpose, outcomes, outputs, participants, budget, timescales, institutional response, monitoring and evaluation. It is important that if the Council decides to meaningfully involve people it should ensure there is a clear purpose, and explain the limitations, understand the barriers, involve the community at the earliest opportunity, give stakeholders access to the right support to take part. It should also make sure any process is accessible and inclusive, allows people to see the effect of their involvement and ensure the degree of involvement is proportionate to the size and resources of service and task significance. Poorly planned involvement, as with involvement for its own sake, can lead to resentment and poor outcomes due to failing to manage expectations.
- 3.11 For those reasons, amongst others, the corporate reporting framework specifically references communications, and the service planning process highlights consultations, so as to ensure both Members, and report authors, are mindful of the issue in their respective deliberations and delivery.
- 3.12 More generally in reviewing how best to proceed some areas to consider could appropriately include, but are not limited to:
- a) What the Council does well, what not so well, and what is perceived externally?
 - b) What lessons could be learnt from past practice, (e.g. resource and financial impact of co-production with heritage partners?)

- c) Whether the Council engages too much with certain organisations & sectors from a resource perspective (or not), what are the actual and opportunity costs, whether there are missed opportunities, blind spots or sectors/groups that it should consider engaging with, what are the social norms, intrinsic incentives, 'who' the messenger is, who the messenger should be?
- d) Whether or not (and if so how) to undertake a stakeholder mapping-based approach to understand the strengths (and weaknesses) within the community (individuals and groups)?
- e) What information could form the basis for any further strategy document on communications, if appropriate, following similar principles as previously adopted for the Sustainability Report, with scheduled reviews (ie what has been done, what is being done and what it is proposed to do) and how that links to the existing policy framework documents which apply? (Note: West Devon Borough/South Hams District Councils are presently reviewing their communications strategy (expected by/in Summer). If this is a type of work this Council wishes to undertake it might assist for that to be informed by the outputs of the WD/SH model)
- f) What additional Council resources to support community engagement/comms could be considered and planned for in the medium term, whilst recognising already operationally planned existing/new initiatives e.g. for the Community Services team 1) Development of Whitchurch Down Management Plan 2) Working with the West Country Rivers Trust to discuss management of the wetland in Bannawell Park 3) Working with schools and Youth Café on planting schemes on various sites and creating a mural at Bannawell playground 4) Facilitating and assisting with THT Discovery Team Activities 5) Working with West Devon Art Workshops on such projects as planned workshops in the Guildhall and repairing the mosaic at the Pannier Market. Linking to that what extra, or different, resource might be appropriate or needed to support different ways of working?
- g) With foreseeable short-term projects/tasks, how should these be progressed? Current example: developing a new Council Website for January 2025, is the allocated budget sufficient, what are the expectations/functionality, what input do Members wish to inform content (if changes are desired) and what measures might help to make digital services more accessible, convenient and straightforward, e.g. use of AI (not as a substitute to already established methods) without

impacting non digital services for those who are vulnerable, digitally disenfranchised or who choose to relate to the organisation in other ways?

- h) The extent to which there may be conceptual options to make Council and partner services more accessible to the public (one-stop shop principles), e.g. high street premises, Guildhall ground, first and second floors, TCOs ground floor, MOC etc?
- i) The central role of role of elected Members. In particular how they discharge their responsibilities in accordance with their commitment to meeting the obligations set out in the Councillor role profile regarding leadership, participation/engagement and representation?
- j) Whether the Council should consider reviewing previous methods of communication and/or adapting e.g. maybe yearly newsletters (delivered to residents), open days (perhaps held in Butchers Hall, including partners), structured opportunities to meet the community , editorials in such mediums as Tavi links (including referencing community engagement activities/partners), public informal sessions prior to Full Council, following up with/and discussing future opportunities, plans, with grant awardees, involving young people by partnering with WDBC to promote and deliver local democracy week each year? In the past under the (now discontinued) sector 'best value' regime the Council received Government funding to support these initiatives.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Committee review the current position, identify next steps and, if/as appropriate for recommendation to Council:

- a) Identify the terms of reference for any Member group as may be constituted either to review the topic in the round, or any more specific area of activity (such as website replacement);
- b) Identify the time frame for reporting;

c) Subject to the completion of (a) above, nominate Members to serve on any Member group as may be constituted.

4.2 The instructions of the Committee and Council are sought.

**WAYNE SOUTHALL
GENERAL MANAGER
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
APRIL, 2024**