

AGENDA ITEM No. 8

MINUTES of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 28th MAY, 2024** at **6.30pm** in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor P Ward **Mayor ex-officio**
Councillor S Hipsey **Deputy Mayor ex-officio**
Councillor A Hutton **Immediate Past Mayor ex-officio**

Councillors Ms M Ewings*, Mrs A Johnson, U Mann, R Poppe.

IN ATTENDANCE Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk

*Arrived late at the Meeting

13. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the 2024-2025 Civic Year.

A nomination, duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor S Hipsey.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor S Hipsey be elected Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

14. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Vice-Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the 2024-2025 Civic Year.

A nomination, duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor Mrs A Johnson.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor Mrs A Johnson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An Apology for late arrival had been received from Councillor Ms M Ewings (see below).

16. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 9th April, 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The were no Declarations of Interest made at this point in the Meeting.
Note - please see Minute No. 20 below.

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

18. SERVICE PLANS 2024-25

The Committee considered the:

A. draft Corporate Service Plan 2024 -25, Organisational Risk Register and Annual Summary (Appendix 2);

The Committee received and considered the Service Plan for Corporate Services 2024–25, together with the Annual Summary and Organisational Risk Register before proceeding to review same in the round, most especially including the identified projects/tasks, and the appraisal/reappraisal of risk.

In the discussion arising reference was made, in particular, to:-

- i. the importance attached to collaborative working, and to relevant authorities properly discharging their statutory duties, as highlighted by a recent surface water flooding incident;
- ii. the extent to which a recent change of leadership at the County Council might assist with the 'joined-up' working of various authorities, also reference to recent past challenges in securing a fair hearing from the County Council;
- iii. concerns regarding the reported recent reconfiguration (discontinuation) of Devon County Council meetings in connection with locality-based issues, and the adverse impact this could potentially have on the working relationship between the County and its partner District/Borough and Town/Parish Councils;
- iv. observations regarding the current and potential future use of the Molly Owen Centre (the Meeting was advised this was addressed in the Community Services Plan). The extent to which there was/was not capacity to take on significant new projects at a time of necessary retrenchment was noted;
- v. the range of projects and initiatives (including potentially eg Abbey Remains, mixed use facility for wheeled sports etc), also including those of a co-production/collaborative nature, as identified in the

- service planning process, associated resource/capacity/scheduling implications;
- vi. the background to the local and key performance indicators, as listed in the Corporate Plan, which were intended to promote efficient, effective and economic working practices and service improvement, also that the indicator appertaining to the level of training undertaken by Councillors drew a range of views.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- a) The Council receive and endorse the Annual Summary;
- b) subject to the deletion of '2021-22', and its replacement with '2024-25', in Section 2 of the Corporate Services Improvement Plan, the Tavistock Town Council Corporate Services Improvement Plan 2024-25 be endorsed and adopted as the basis for the delivery of Council Services 2024-25 (see below regarding Risk Register);
- c) subject to the following amendments to the Organisational Risk Register:
 - 'C0' Deletion, as recommended
 - 'C1' the 'likelihood' score being reduced from 4 to 3;
 - 'C3' the 'likelihood' score being reduced from 4 to 3;
 - 'C4' the 'severity' score being reduced from 4 to 3;
 - 'C8' the 'severity' score being reduced from 4 to 3;

the Council endorse and adopt the Tavistock Town Council Organisational Risk Register.

B. draft **Community Services Service Plan 2024-25** (Appendix 3).

The Committee received and considered the Service Plan for Community Services 2024-25.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Tavistock Town Council Community Services Plan 2024-25 be adopted and endorsed as the basis for delivery of associated services 2024-25.

Noted That

- a) In response to a request it was agreed that a descriptor be added to the 2025-26 Service Plan regarding any changes to performance indicators and/or the underlying purpose;
- b) Particular reference was made to the importance attached to the importance of the indicator relating to updating and review of Health, Safety and related arrangements;
- c) *Councillor Ms M Ewings arrived at the Meeting during consideration of this item.

19. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION (PSPO's) AND DISPERSAL ORDER(S)

The Committee received and considered the Report of the Town Clerk in connection with a preliminary informal consultation regarding public spaces protection and dispersal orders (Appendix 4).

During the discussion arising particular reference was made to:

- anti-social behaviour (ASB), potential displacement and related matters;
- various views on the potential scope and application of such proposals should they be introduced;
- the extent of area(s) proposed - town wide;
- any potential for a dispersal order to extend beyond alcohol related anti-social behaviour to other behaviour (ASB).

It was noted that that, at this stage, the Town Council was only being asked to support the proposal of the Police that the Local Licensing Authority (West Devon Borough Council) proceed to public consultation. That would provide opportunity for the community, and Council, to express views upon a properly developed proposal.

RECOMMENDED THAT, without prejudice to the formal consultation, the Council support the request of the Police that the Licensing Authority (West Devon Borough Council) proceed to consult upon an alcohol PSPO, and associated dispersal powers, as set out in the email from WDBC of 1st May, 2024.

20. CIVIC CEREMONIAL MATTERS

The Committee received and considered:

a) Chairman's Allowance

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 5) in respect of the above.

Following a period of discussion it was:

RECOMMENDED THAT no further action be taken by the Council on this matter at the present time, and the Council reconfirm the established practice of reviewing all budget heads at the time of the annual Budget setting round including on the basis this matter be reviewed specifically in the Autumn.

Noted That the Mayor Declared an Interest in this matter, and took no part in the discussion.

b) **Record of Councillor Attendance at Meetings**

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 6) in respect of the above.

During the discussion arising reference was made, in particular, to:

- the methodology adopted by West Devon Borough Council (WDBC);
- the merits/drawbacks of different approaches and methods of data presentation, or even of reporting at all;
- the role of apologies and whether attendance 'ranking' was/was not helpful.

RECOMMENDED THAT, commencing in the 2024–25 Civic Year, Councillor attendance be recorded on the basis as adopted by WDBC ie for each Councillor:

1. Total expected attendances;
2. Present as expected;
3. Apologies received;
4. Absent (inc. Apologies)

21. MARKET ROAD COTTAGES

The Committee received and considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 7) in respect of the above.

A discussion took place with particular reference being made to:

- the potential for either a Veterans' Association, Housing Charity or equivalent to be offered the control of the properties under a lease, so they continued being available as residential properties. The Town Council would retain ownership, but the risk, management and control pertaining to the properties would be passed on;
- similarly, whether the Local Housing Authority (West Devon Borough Council) might be interested in utilising the properties as temporary housing;
- the merits and/or drawbacks associated with the Town Council retaining ownership of the properties, now that a primary reason for purchase was no longer applicable (i.e. to allow access to the rear of The Guildhall when the refurbishment works were being undertaken).

RECOMMENDED THAT initial enquiries be made of social housing providers (see above) to identify the extent of interest in utilisation of the properties on a leasehold basis for the provision of housing for local or other priority accommodation groups and associated options.

Noted That:

- a) relevant factors such as recent rent levels, council tax banding etc would be collated to assist providers in coming to a view. Members with contacts with same would take 'soundings';
- b) the value attached to a plan led, streamlined and efficient approach to Council business was noted alongside the benefits, drawbacks and capacity implications of different ways of working.

22. COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Committee received and considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 8) in respect of the above.

In the discussion arising particular reference was made to:

- The obligations associated with accessibility compliance requirements WCAG 2.1AA Rating;
- Options available including migration or full procurement and associated time/cost/capacity implications;
- Subject to minor changes the fitness for purpose of the current website – both for users and administrators;
- An update, namely that migration, if adopted, would be to wordpress and not Drupal 10 – thereby representing a more cost efficient option for future maintenance/upgrades.

In the circumstances, and with particular regard to the reduced cost and capacity implications of migration, it was:

RECOMMENDED THAT subject to the satisfactory outcome of the necessary due diligence to ensure continuity and quality of offer and cost efficiency within the approved budget, Tavistock Town Council progress the migration of its website via its current provider.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

23. HEARINGS PANEL MINUTES

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the Hearings Panel held on 13th May, 2024 (Appendix 9).

24. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

i. Local Government Pay Award 2024–2025

It was reported that the Employer's side had offered £1,290 per member of staff between Spinal Column Points 2–43, and 2.5% above that level. The Unions involved were not supportive - the outcome of sector consultations would be reported in due course.

ii. Letting for Electioneering Purposes

It was reported that the Council had received approaches from political parties looking to book space for electioneering, arising from which it was:

RECOMMENDED THAT:

- i. any/all registered political parties be permitted to book space on Bedford Square, with the usual booking fee being paid and subject to availability;
- ii. that, subject to availability, the Town Hall could be utilised for 'all party' hustings (ie subject to all candidates/parties standing in the Constituency being represented);
- iii. No other premises be made available.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

25. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was: -

RESOLVED THAT the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

26. GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE – FUTURE OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or financial nature or the business affairs of persons other than the Council)

The Committee received the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 10).

An overview was provided regarding the current position, prospective future arrangements and related matters.

RECOMMENDED THAT, subject to the addition of item 'd' below, Tavistock Town Council proceed with discussions with the licensee on the basis as set out in para's 3.2 (a-c) of the Report plus:-

'd)The two posts (currently fixed term contracts) supporting the facility (post No's TM5 & TM9 refer)'.

27. COUNCIL PROPERTY

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing, commercial or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 11).

An overview of the Council’s ownership of this parcel of land was provided, and also whether or not it was still considered a strategic asset.

RECOMMENDED THAT subject to the requirements set out in the report being met (para 3.1(c) refers) Tavistock Town Council proceed with marketing the land on the basis as set out in the report, and with any such overage agreement as may be applicable.

28. STAFFING COMMUNITY SERVICES – SUPPORT SERVICES

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee received the Briefing Note of the General Manager and Town Clerk (Appendix 12) in connection with the above.

RECOMMENDED THAT, subject to the date at paragraph 2.4 being amended from 1st July 2024 to 24th June 2024, Tavistock Town Council endorse the course of action as set out in para’s 2.4 and 3.3 of the Briefing.

The Meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN