

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE
27th FEBRUARY 2024**

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-27**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

In accordance with the prior directions of the Council, and related workshops, to afford the Committee the opportunity to review/comment on the Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan and, in particular, associated Council delivery plans 'in term'.

2. CORPORATE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan 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 expectation that the Council will operate with a continuing commitment to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and continuous organisational improvement. It was last revisited in February 2023.

3. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

There is no legal obligation for the Council to put in place a Strategic Plan, or associated delivery plans. However, clearly articulating organisational goals and objectives can assist to afford clarity of purpose. In addition it affords the opportunity to reduce risk by setting near and long term goals, with clear linkages to organisational performance and risk management processes on a plan led, evidence based basis.

4. RESOURCE ISSUES

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for aligning resources and capacity to priorities, for the identification of the resources required to deliver organisation goals and objectives, to programme work within capacity, and to undertake the necessary prioritisation of resources.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

There are no issues arising directly in connection with this report beyond such themes as may be considered appropriate for individual reference. However, where projects, workstreams or initiatives are

agreed in due course, the relevant reports/delivery framework will address these in connection with sustainability/the environment.

6. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

The Strategic Plan provides the means to develop, identify and disseminate the key priorities/purpose of the Council. 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 and Council:

- a) Endorse the extant Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan for the period 2024-27; subject to future inclusion of a suitable reference to the anticipated impact of devolution and/or formation of the Devon and Torbay Combined Authority (as/when more information becomes available later in 2024);
- b) In accordance with the outcome of the recent Member workshop sessions - endorse that the areas of young people, and of communications/community engagement; be identified as priority areas for review at this time;
- c) Pursuant to (b) above, the Town Council agree to establish two working groups (one for each topic), comprising 3-5 Members to review current arrangements and identify and recommend improvements/ initiatives/projects in accordance with the approach set out in para 3.10 below.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will recall consideration was previously given to the approach to be adopted in respect of the development of the Council's Strategic Plan by way of review and update in February, 2023. Thereafter and subsequent to the May elections, the Council revisited the matter in September 2023 and agreed arrangements for review.
- 1.2 In November, 2023 all Members of Council were invited to participate in a facilitated scoping session to identify and review matters such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis - outcome previously circulated).

- 1.3 Then, on 13th February, 2024 a follow up Member workshop reviewed the Strategic Plan, as informed by the SWOT analysis, and the main strands of the organisational Risk Register from which an assessment of possible future service plan delivery priorities (outcome of November 'prospective priorities' workshop previously circulated) was made.

2. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 In addition to reviewing the SWOT outcomes and Risk Register activities, recent, under way and anticipated activities (ie calls on capacity and resources – current/anticipated work programme) were also noted. These included, but were not limited to:

- a) Rebuilding of reserves to safe/sustainable levels post the COVID shock;
- b) Cost/capacity implications associated with assuming responsibility for the Guildhall Toilets;
- c) Neighbourhood Development Plan and Design Guide;
- d) Guildhall Gateway Centre – future operating arrangements;
- e) Highway Authority proposals re charging for on-street parking;
- f) Market testing of various professional services;
- g) Procurement of a new Council web site;
- h) EPC (energy performance certificate) and DPC compliance, and potential for material consequential costs;
- i) Organisational Health and Safety – policy and associated arrangements;
- j) Bannawell Play Area;
- k) Play provision audit;
- l) Various matters of a legal nature;
- m) Property Maintenance Plan;
- n) Vehicle audit;
- o) Market and Events Strategy;
- p) Tree work tender;
- q) Martyn's Law - preparation and implementation;
- r) Key Centre Working;
- s) Whitchurch Down Management Plan Review;
- t) Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- u) Heritage Quarter activities;
- v) Communications improvements;

- w) Betsy Grimal's Tower works;
- x) Anticipated play area refurbish/replacement – Monksmead, Skatepark/BMX Track;
- y) Market Road full resurfacing;
- z) Potential for/need to weatherproof/envelope Courtgate;
- aa) Relationships with other public authorities;
- bb) Compliance 'catch up';
- cc) Market Road retaining wall;
- dd) Museum repairs;
- ee) Town Hall repairs;
- ff) D Day commemoration.

Note the foregoing exclude both day to day activities/public services, and significant recurrent activities such as Goose Fair and the Garden Festival.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The recent workshop initially considered the Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan with due regard to the Risk Register and SWOT analysis. Following the review it endorsed same, for the period 2024-27, subject to an addition to address the potential future impact of devolution and/or the Devon and Torbay Combined Authority (DTCA).
- 3.2 However, it was considered premature to formulate that addition until recent/anticipated developments, including but not limited to the DCTA consultation, were more advanced. The recent SWOT analysis was also endorsed.
- 3.3 The workshop then proceeded to break into groups to discuss any new priorities that individual Councillors might like to see achieved – be they initiatives, projects, activities etc, over the next three years.
- 3.4 Following group discussion and feedback all Members then met in plenary session to review individual suggestions and identify and prioritise/rank those things participating councillors considered most important to consider whether to proceed with (outcomes previously circulated).
- 3.5 That included a broadly based discussion including, but not limited to, matters appertaining to the delivery of Council

services, the wider environment (such as the anticipated combined authority), communications, engagement, community groups, roles/responsibilities and organisational activity.

- 3.6 Notwithstanding that the topics covered were wide ranging and diverse, it was felt that two broad themes emerged (within which an appreciable number of the suggestions made could potentially fall). Namely the topics of communications/ community engagement, and also young people.
- 3.7 As was evident from the workshop outcomes there were a broad range of suggestions/statements arising under each one of those two areas - many of which were generic in nature. For example, taking the young people theme (but the principle applied to engagement/communications also). Whilst there were suggestions involving construction projects such as included reference to aspirations around a skate park or disabled play (specific), these were accompanied by variously supporting young *and* old, service provision, a building for use, youth services, advice, younger councillors (generic) etc.
- 3.8 Accordingly some of the suggestions of a general and non-specific nature eg 'service provision' could potentially mean different things to different people - provision of any service, in any amount to young persons from health to education, play to transport and so on. Work was therefore needed to translate and refine these broad statements into specific projects which could then be objectively assessed against associated support, affordability and benefits arising.
- 3.9 The consensus was therefore that an additional focused exercise was needed, for each of the two overarching topics, to enable identification of realistic scope, and where the highest level of agreement to proceed sat. ie to synthesize the wide-ranging suggestions into a small number of targeted smart projects that maximised stakeholder benefit, could deliver value for money and were achievable and affordable, both to the Council and the ratepayer. Similarly to clarify the extent to which the Council, in any given area was

appropriately provider, enabler, partner, contributor, advocate etc.

3.10 To do so it was suggested that, subject to Council agreement, two Member working Groups (of 3-5 Members each) be established to review each topic area (communications/engagement, and young people) to:

- a) Review the current position/status for each topic; and
- b) clarify/refine the meaning of the generic headings into a smaller number of potential priorities; and then
- c) identify and rank those priorities appropriate for consideration by Council, and achievable within the next three years (if/as required including the necessary resource envelope)

for submission to the Budget and Policy Committee and Council for consideration for subsequent inclusion within relevant delivery plans during the current Council term 2024-27.

3.11 Other significant topics raised, such as working more closely with Plymouth City Council, and supporting the business community, could then be reviewed as capacity became available. It was noted that these latter two, and some others, were to a significant degree already substantially aligned to extant political and/or organisational practice. A status report regarding communications/community engagement will be prepared for submission to the next meeting of this Committee.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Work to date has secured clarity as to the Strategic Plan 2024-27 and, through the working groups proposed, a prospective mechanism to inform next steps in relation to the two priority areas identified and inclusion into the delivery planning process. The groups' role will, amongst others, necessarily focus upon reducing a 'long list' of individual suggestions – variously regarding projects, initiatives, concepts, services, resources equipment etc into defined, ranked, costed and achievable project (or projects).

- 4.2 These could then be factored into delivery plans as the current project work programme (para 2.1 refers) is discharged and/or be incorporated where there is synergy.
- 4.3 The instructions of the Committee and Council are sought.

**CARL HEARN
TOWN CLERK
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
FEBRUARY, 2024**