

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2022**

**BRIEFING NOTE  
PANDEMIC & ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF  
COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council will be aware of the continuing and variable impact of the pandemic on arrangements for the conduct of Meetings and associated Council business.
- 1.2 At the current time it continues to be unlawful for Councils to conduct Council business through virtual mediums.
- 1.3 Consequently, the options realistically available are:
  - a) The conduct of Council business through 'physical' meetings in the normal way, whilst respecting Government health requirements and guidance;
  - b) The conduct of Council business through an approved delegation scheme to officers, such as that approved by Council previously to deal with the pandemic;
  - c) A mix of the above.
- 1.4 Insofar as physical meetings are concerned the additional requirements principally relate to space/distancing, ventilation, ease of access and ability to accommodate cleaning and other hygiene measures. It is also important to bear in mind that the public have a lawful right to attend meetings and the foregoing factors apply to all those in attendance (elected representatives, public and staff).
- 1.5 The Council has, to date, primarily made use of the Town Hall and Butchers' Hall subject to availability. However, bookings in the Town Hall have been limited by virtue of public usage/bookings and the Butchers' Hall is considered by some a less attractive option, more especially during the winter months.

## **2. CURRENT POSITION**

2.1 Following on from the above the Council has the opportunity to:

RECOMMENDATION 1 – that, subject to Government requirements and guidance within the current legislative provisions for Council Meetings, the Council either:

a) Revert to operation of the Coronavirus Delegation Scheme pending an improvement in the pandemic position nationally and the removal of the guidance to 'work from home'

Or

b) Continue to hold physical meetings subject to the necessary precautions (see below).

2.2 In the event that the decision accords with (b) above, whether the Council wishes to express a preference insofar as venues are concerned and, if so, whether that varies according to meeting type (see section 3 below).

2.3 For example, for Meetings of the Council in full assembly, and with the potential of regular guest/public attendance, an adequate participant separation can only realistically be achieved in the Town Hall (assuming that Butchers' Hall is considered unsuitable during the winter months).

2.4 By contrast, Development Management & Licensing can be accommodated in either of the above or the Guildhall Courtroom or Council Chamber (the latter with either reduced separation and/or potential screening). Budget & Policy all of the above. Note: the Robing Room has not been identified because of the difficulty of securing the minimum of 10 spaces with 2m+ separation.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

3.1 It is a matter for Council to determine if, and if so where, compliant with the subsisting public health requirements and guidance alongside individual and collective appetite for risk, to meet to conduct Council business.

3.2 RECOMMENDATION 2 – that (subject to endorsing para 2.1 (b) above) the Council give such guidance as to the venue(s) to be adopted for meetings of the:

- i) Council;
- ii) Development Management & Licensing Committee;
- iii) Budget & Policy Committee.

to be applicable until such time as public health restrictions/guidance change or the Council determines otherwise.

3.3 The instructions of the Council are sought.

**CARL HEARN  
TOWN CLERK  
JANUARY 2022  
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL**