

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 at 5pm conducted remotely via Zoom and YouTube

**PRESENT**

Councillor Mrs G Parker (Vice Chairman in the Chair)

Councillor A Hutton (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Mrs A Johnson (Mayor)

Councillors Ms L Crawford, J Ellis, Mrs M Ewings\*, Mrs U Mann, H Smith, P Williamson.

Ward Members – Councillors B Smith, P Squire, P Ward (Observers)

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

\*in attendance for part of the Meeting

**99. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for anticipated late arrival had been received from Councillor Mrs M Ewings.

**100. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT The Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

**101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

**ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**102. BUDGET PREPARATION & PRECEPT SETTING 2021-22**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 2) in respect of the above.

During the ensuing discussion reference was made, amongst others, to:-

- this being the first stage of the budget setting process;
- the in-year impact of Coronavirus on the Council's commercial income levels (due to the closure, or limited opening, of its main

- income generating facilities) which had, hitherto, provided a substantial subsidy to other Council services to the community;
- the likelihood a final decision on the budget and precept would appropriately be deferred until the Council Meeting scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to enable the fullest picture of Council finances to be available to inform same;
  - a finance briefing/workshop to be held, prior to the next Committee Meeting, to review the position as at half year and challenges (income in particular) for the next financial year;
  - the uncertainties associated with predicting future commercial income in the current (Coronavirus) climate, also the unusual position of the Council in comparison to other Town and Parish Councils regarding its reliance on non-precepted income;
  - a recent consultation in connection with exit payments in the public sector which, whilst unlikely to be applicable to the Town Council, could have significant impacts in the principal authority sector.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council adopt and endorse the Report and the associated principles to be applied in the development of the draft 2021/22 Budget proposal and associated Precept, including that the determination of the 2021/22 Budget be deferred until the Council Meeting scheduled to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **103. COMMERCIAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE PLAN 2020-21**

The Committee received the Draft 2020/21 Commercial & Community Service Plan and associated Risk Register (Appendix 3).

The General Manager reported that;

- whilst the previous Council decision had been for the Town Hall to remain closed until the end of December 2020, in the current circumstances it was anticipated that this period be extended until the end of March 2021;
- performance indicators had been included in the Plan for projected income for Bedford Square. Work was being undertaken to maximise usage in this area, with social distancing restrictions in place, to generate additional income;
- Council-owned vehicles had all passed their MOTs and were currently operative, however if necessary and subject to funding, they would be replaced if the costs of keeping them on the road became disproportionate;
- recruitment to support the Cemetery and Works Department could appropriately be undertaken in Quarter 4, due to the current impact on some staff. The priority role was for the

Community & Compliance Officer post. Support was currently being provided by other departments, but this might not be an option when those departments moved into busier periods themselves eg grass cutting

Following a query regarding Betsy Grimbal's it was reported that £10,000 had previously been received from Historic England for a condition survey, which had identified that;

- £ 130,000 of works had been identified – up to 80% of which might be grant-funded by Historic England, with Tavistock Town Council having to meet the shortfall;
- discussions on this matter were ongoing, however as full funding for the works was not currently available, this matter would need to be taken forward into 2021

It was also acknowledged that other risk areas which might require capital funding included the Market Road riverbank.

RECOMMENDED THAT Council endorse and adopt the Commercial & Community Service Improvement Plan 2020/2021.

#### **104. INTERPRETATION BOARD WORDING**

The Committee considered five options submitted for the wording on the previously agreed Drake's Statue Interpretation Board, as prepared by one of the Council's nominated representatives (Appendix 4).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to possible changes which could be made/acceptable options arising and related matters from which it was:

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council accept and endorse option 2 as listed in the report, namely: –

*'In 2020 following a campaign to remove this statue of Sir Francis Drake, the Town Council in partnership with Tavistock Heritage Trust, decided to provide some of the missing information on his life'*

Noted That Councillor P Williamson requested it be recorded he abstained from voting on the above matter.

## **ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### **105. TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE SCHEME - EVALUATION**

The Committee received and noted the Evaluation Report, in connection with the above (Appendix 5).

In the discussion arising particular reference was made to:

- the report reflecting the successful collaboration with community and commercial groups, funders and individuals to successfully deliver lasting benefits to the historic streetscene, local economy and retail environment;
- lessons which could be learned from the report, should the Council embark on a similar project in the future;
- Tavistock Town Council continuing to be the only (town/parish) Council in the country to have successfully delivered a Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme.

Partners, colleagues, the Project Management Board and staff, together with past Councillors were commended for their dedication and contribution to a successful long term project supporting the town.

### **106. PANNIER MARKET UPDATE**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Market Reeve, which set out an overview of the position regarding the operation of the Pannier Market (Appendix 6).

The General Manager confirmed that;

- the report covered the current financial situation in view of the current number of tables available for letting, bearing in mind social distancing;
- the planned operating arrangements in the run up to Christmas;
- the most challenging period would be January to March 2021, (which historically was already the most difficult trading period);
- arrangements were being put in place to maximise trading in Butchers' Hall, on Bedford Square, and in The Meadows to support income;
- plans would be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and in line with any emerging changes to Government regulations;
- a report from the Market Reeve would be provided to each meeting to provide ongoing information regarding this impacted income stream;
- it was hoped that a return to 5-day per week trading could recommence by/in April 2021;

- with effect from Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October, Tuesday traders who had been using Butchers' Hall would return to the Pannier Market, to help re-establish the different themed trading days.

### **107. INTERPRETATION BOARD – CONTENT**

The Committee received and noted a report with regard to the above, as provided by Tavistock Heritage Trust (Appendix 7). It was reported that timelines had slipped slightly.

Noted That a query was raised regarding some of the content in connection with Elizabeth I, which might require checking prior to the board being commissioned.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

### **108. 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.

The Meeting then temporarily adjourned at 6.17pm.

The Meeting reconvened at 6.30pm attendance by Councillors and authorised Officers at the Confidential reconvened part of the Meeting was accessed via Zoom.

Councillor Mrs M Ewings joined the Meeting.

### **PRESENT**

Councillor A Hutton (Chairman – Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Mrs G Parker (Vice Chairman in the Chair)

Councillors Ms L Crawford, J Ellis, Mrs M Ewings, Mrs A Johnson, Mrs U Mann, H Smith and P Williamson

Ward Members:-

Councillors B Smith, P Squire and P Ward (Observers)

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

**DECLARATION** on entering the Confidential section - each Councillor present was asked to declare to the Chairman that there were no other persons present, nor would be present, who were not entitled to be (hearing or seeing), and/or recording the Meeting. All Members made a positive Declaration.

## **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### **109. CAPITAL WORKS – THIRD PARTY FUNDING & COST BASE, CORONAVIRUS AND CONSEQUENTIAL MATTERS**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to contractual, financial and/or legal matters affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee received an oral update from the Town Clerk in connection with the above regarding the two outstanding capital projects. More particularly an approach to funders for consideration to be given to an uplift in funding in respect of the impact of coronavirus, the treatment of VAT, scheme scope and related matters.

### **110. BUTCHERS' HALL**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to contractual, financial and/or legal matters affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee received an oral update from the General Manager in respect of the above with particular reference to:

- ongoing problems arising through water ingress;
- the extent to which the origin of the issues and associated responsibility could be identified and attributed;
- further advice being sought;
- avenues for redress;
- the extent to which specific works required and/or costs could be identified at this stage;
- the ongoing deleterious impact on the premises as a venue for events;
- the pressing need for satisfactory resolution.

Further updates would be brought to future meetings.

## **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**(URGENT MATTER BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN)**

**111. TENANCY MATTER**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to contractual, financial and/or legal matters affecting persons other than the Council)

Further to the provisions of Minute No 59(b) a request the Council reconsider its position in light of new information was reported. Those Members who had attended to hear the request doing so solely in an information gathering capacity.

Appreciation was expressed to the applicant for the full and frank nature of their submission.

RECOMMENDED THAT the additional information submitted be considered by Council at its next meeting, together with the report previously circulated, so as to ascertain whether or not a change in position were merited.

The Meeting closed at 7.06pm

Signed:

Dated:  
CHAIRMAN