

MINUTES of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 23rd MAY, 2023** at **6.30pm** in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor P Ward Deputy Mayor ex- officio (also Immediate Past Mayor)

Councillors Ms M Ewings, Mrs A Johnson, U Mann.

Councillors N Martin, P Squire (Ward Members).

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

25. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the 2023-2024 Civic Year.

A nomination, duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor P Ward.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor P Ward be appointed Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

26. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the election of Vice Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the 2023-2024 Civic Year.

A nomination, duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor U Mann.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor U Mann be appointed Vice Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor A Hutton (Mayor ex-officio).

28. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 28th March, 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made;

- Councillors Ms M Ewings and Mrs A Johnson both declared an interest in any aspects of the Community Services and Corporate Service Plans appertaining to West Devon Borough Council, by virtue of both Members also being Councillors on that Authority.

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

30. SERVICE PLANS & ORGANISATIONAL RISK REGISTER 2023-24

The Committee considered the draft Community Services and draft Corporate Services Improvement Plans for 2023–24 (Appendices 2-3 refer).

Attention was drawn, in particular, to the role of the service planning process, linking the Council’s Strategic Plan to operational delivery, together with the setting of annual goals and priorities for the organisation and the monitoring and management of organisational performance and risk. It was also acknowledged that, by virtue of timing in the electoral cycle, many of the activities and projects in progress necessarily represented legacy initiatives. The strategic plan review later in the year would then afford opportunity to scope future arrangements.

The Committee proceeded to consider the following:-

a) Community Services Plan 2023–24

The Committee received and considered the Service Plan for Community Services 2023–24 as provided by the General Manager.

RECOMMENDED THAT, subject to the addition of reference to the Environment Act 2021 to the list of Legal Requirements at Section 1.6, Tavistock Town Council adopt the Commercial/Community Service Improvement Plan 2023–24.

b) Corporate Service Plan 2023–24 and Organisational Risk Register

The Committee received and considered the Service Plan for Corporate Services 2023–24 together with the organisational Risk Register before proceeding to review same in the round, most especially including the identified projects/tasks, and the appraisal/reappraisal of risk.

RECOMMENDED THAT (Service Plan) subject to the amendment of:

- the 14th bullet point as listed in the Legal Requirements Section to include the words to follow: 'as amended by the Environment Act 2021'; and the
- addition of 'TC' in the responsible Officer column of the project listed as 'planning for the future';

Tavistock Town Council endorse and adopt the Corporate Service Plan (for Risk Register see below) as the basis for the delivery of Council Services 2023-24.

Noted That particular reference was made to amendments made/identified within the report in connection with performance indicators.

Furthermore, in relation to Risk Management:

RECOMMENDED THAT (Organisational Risk Register) subject to the following amendments to the organisational Risk Register:

- i. 'C0' the 'severity' score being reduced from 5 to 3;
- ii. 'C1' the 'severity' score being reduced from 4 to 3;
- iii. 'C4' the 'severity' score being reduced from 5 to 4;
- iv. 'C6' the addition of reference to the Neighbourhood Development Plan to reflect reputational damage that might occur should progress fail;

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

Noted That particular reference was made to Risk C0 and the potential that it be either reviewed (or removed) following monitoring over the course of the current financial year.

31. ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee considered the Briefing Note and accompanying report of the General Manager (Appendix 4) in connection with the above.

In the discussion arising particular reference was made to:-

- an upcoming Devon-wide Biodiversity event on 13th June;
- potential installation requirements associated with charging stations for electric vehicles; sites in situ/proposed within the Town, and the work undertaken by the Town Council to facilitate charging points now sited on land demised to a partner;

- the potential for installing Photovoltaic panels on Council buildings/land, benefits and drawbacks, and potential linkages to work being commissioned regarding Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for Listed Buildings as Government advice became clearer.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council support the approach as set out in the Briefing Note.

Noted That the General Manager undertook to introduce, as a new project, a review of the options available for renewable energy measures in the Commercial/Community Service Plan 2024–25. This would include a review of the Council’s vehicle fleet.

32. ROLLING CAPITAL PROGRAMME (RCP)

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 5) in respect of the above.

In the discussion arising particular reference was made to:

- the positive impact of measures of savings and mitigation undertaken by the Council on the availability of funds within the RCP, thereby contributing to the possibility an additional project to improve the public realm and highway connectivity as identified (Market Road surfacing), might be able to proceed;
- additional spend recommended in connection with Bannawell Play Area pursuant on consultation responses;
- the anticipated quantum of spend required for improvements to the Guildhall Toilets, to make them suitable for transfer from West Devon Borough Council.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse and adopt the Rolling Capital Programme as submitted and the accompanying approach as outlined in the Briefing Note.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

33. TOWN HALL & MUSEUM – OUTCOME OF TENDER EXERCISES FOR THE CONDUCT OF REPAIRS TO THE BUILDING

The Committee received and noted the Briefing Note of the General Manager in respect of the above (Appendix 7).

Museum

It was reported that;

- the Museum Contract for structural works had been let to A D Williams for just under £60,000;

- works were planned to start on 19th June 2023, with an anticipated construction phase of 6–8 weeks;
- a suitable contingency provision had been allowed for as there were a number of potential risk items involved, including the possible identification of additional areas of dry rot.

Town Hall

In response to a question the Committee was advised of arrangements in connection with seating in and around the area and the wider town centre, the short-term nature of the works being undertaken, the balance to be struck as between varying uses/users, mitigating measures undertaken and in hand, safety measures/site constraints, prior contractual commitments and available space.

34. BANNAWELL PLAY AREA

The Committee received an oral update from the General Manager in respect of planned improvements to the above, with particular regard to the letting of the contract on a 'without prejudice' basis, S106 funding application, mobilisation arrangements (completion planned end Oct/Nov) and site preparation.

URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

The following urgent item was brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman in view of the timescales to the next Meeting.

35. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AWARD 2023-24

It was noted that Unison would shortly ballot its members for strike action which was anticipated to be on a disaggregated basis. Further updates would be brought forward as/when available.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

36. 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 CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

37. LEGAL SERVICES

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

The Committee considered the Confidential Report of the Town Clerk in respect of the above (Appendix 6). In the ensuing discussion reference was variously made to current, past and prospective future arrangements for the delivery of legal services, with particular reference to the matters as listed in the report, including the balance to be struck in relation to differing work flows.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council;

- a) endorse that, given the specialist nature of the service required, para 11.1 (a) (ii) of the Tavistock Town Council Financial Regulations be engaged in relation to Legal Service at this time; and
- b) with due regard to the urgency of the associated timescales, the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, be authorised to determine and contract for future arrangements for the provision of Legal Services to the Council on the basis of securing best value, and report back to the Council as matters progress.

38. MARKET ROAD PROPERTY

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

The Committee received an oral update from the General Manager in respect of the above. In particular, attention was drawn to the temporary re-purposing of a Market Road property, on a short-term basis, to provide welfare facilities for contractors (and thereby saving on costs) which would result in a delay in letting for residential use.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

39. TAVISTOCK HERITAGE TRUST/GULDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial/business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Committee received an oral update from the Town Clerk, with particular reference to the background to, current position, and recent developments (in relation to offer(s) made) suggesting progress in connection with the foregoing, together with the role of those Members appointed by Council to progress matters.

URGENT CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

The following urgent confidential item was brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman in view of the timescales to the next Meeting.

40. TENANCY MATTER – LANDLORD/TENANT OBLIGATIONS

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial/business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Committee was advised of recent developments regarding discussions with a tenant in connection with Lease renewal, together with the legal position/historic obligations attaching to a prior assignment of the Lease to the current tenant in connection with repairing obligations for the premises.

The Press and Public were re-admitted to the Meeting.

The Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN