

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 2nd JUNE 2020**

**BRIEFING NOTE
COUNCIL OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee will recall that, at the last Meeting of Council, various matters were agreed and arrangements put in place for the operational arrangements of the Council during the Pandemic.
- 1.2 The purpose of this briefing note is therefore to provide opportunity to the Committee to review the current position:

2. CURRENT POSITION

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

- 2.1 Council staff, vehicles and buildings have been offered to the local Category 1 Responder (responsible body¹) to assist with the relief effort as/when needed.
- 2.2 Essential services - principally comprising the Burial ground (Cemetery), Parks and Open Spaces and related maintenance and administration continue (as adjusted by Government guidance). These have been prioritised as they reflect the public health imperatives of safe burial and safe exercise.
- 2.3 'Unlocking lockdown' – the Council is working with Tavistock BID Co, bodies with statutory responsibilities in this area and other stakeholders to support a safe and managed unlocking of the Town Centre for the community and retailers of non-essential goods so as to support a return to more normal social and economic activity within the applicable guidelines.
- 2.4 Grants continue to be made available by the Council to community based organisations supporting local people via the 'Coronavirus Health Emergency Social Fund'.
- 2.5 Commercial Tenants – the Council has extended deferred rental arrangements to commercial tenants which substantially exceed those recommended by Government, so as to best support this key sector of the local economy and help its tenants.

¹ As designated under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004,

- 2.6 Licensees and Concession holders – are not being charged for the period during which the Council does not permit them to trade.

ADMINISTRATION

- 2.7 Administrative/managerial staff are working from home wherever possible, this is facilitated by the Councils IT (Citrix) platform which provides secure access to electronically held Council information for remote working. All Managers have been tasked with developing COVID 19 risk assessments to inform future developments.
- 2.8 The Council offices are closed to the public and will continue to be under current guidance, a service statement on the Councils website sets out the position. The core requirements of fair payment of suppliers, financial management etc are being met. Year end closedown is substantially complete.
- 2.9 Council (meeting) business is now undertaken, under the relevant provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020, including via 'virtual' meetings.
- 2.10 Members will also be aware that the General Manager is appropriately trained and serves as health and safety lead and advisor to the Council. In that capacity all material arrangements relating to Covid 19 and next steps are subject to his technical appraisal.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- 2.11 The Town Hall, Butchers Hall and related events/activities are unable to operate under the current guidance. It is anticipated that these will be the last to return to 'normal' as associated events/activities are broadly incompatible with social distancing. The Annual Garden Festival was cancelled, upcoming prospective events are under ongoing review.

PANNIER MARKET

- 2.12 The Market Reeve is keeping best practice, in particular NABMA² guidance under review and liaising actively with Market Trader representatives to identify how, when/in what format the Market will be able to safely reopen in light of government announcements and trader views.

² National Association of British Market Authorities

CAPITAL WORKS

2.13 The Guildhall and Guildhall Square projects are expected to resume work commencing 26th May with appropriate safeguards in place. A report on the impacts – financial, programming and other will be brought forward when the implications are better known.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE & REPAIR

2.14 This has not been possible during the pandemic to date. As construction services remobilise, and the financial position of the Council becomes clearer, these will begin to be addressed

OTHER MAINTENANCE OF OPEN SPACES & COMMUNAL AREAS

2.15 To date the essential areas have been prioritised. Looking forward there will likely be a gradual increase in resource deployed to necessary maintenance, where it can be safely programmed, in other areas to mitigate against future issues.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Council has maintained essential services during lockdown and is, subject to Government guidance, in a position to both support those tasked with responsibility for the 'unlocking' of the Town itself as well as certain Council services.
- 3.2 However, it is acknowledged that a return to 'normal' operations is likely some months away and there will accordingly be a need to adjust the allocation of resources to meet immediate needs as required.

**CARL HEARN
TOWN CLERK
MAY/JUNE 2020
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL**

