

MINUTES of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 15th OCTOBER, 2024** at **6.30pm** at **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs A Johnson **Vice Chairman**

Councillor P Ward **Mayor ex-officio**
Councillor A Hutton **Immediate Past Mayor ex-officio**

Councillors Ms M Ewings*, U Mann, R Poppe

IN ATTENDANCE General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk.

*Arrived late at the Meeting

172. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An Apology for Absence had been received from Councillor S Hipsey (Chairman and Deputy Mayor).

173. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 3rd September, 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman (Appendix 1).

174. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Non-Pecuniary Declarations of Interest were made in respect of Minute No 182:

- i. Councillor A Hutton by virtue of being both a volunteer and helping to run the organisation involved; and
- ii. Councillor P Ward by virtue of being an occasional volunteer with the organisation.

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

175. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk in connection with a consultation from the Electoral Registration and Returning Officer regarding the above (Appendix 2).

In particular views were sought regarding the potential for an alternative polling station to Fairway Furniture (Tavistock South West Ward).

In the discussion arising reference was made, in particular, to:

- the shortage of community facilities in that area which could satisfactorily provide a suitable alternative polling station venue;
- despite significant house building in the South East and South West Wards, community buildings were not now being provided in the manner that would have historically been the case;
- that the catchment area for this polling station was considerable as it included the housing developments at Tiddybrook, Bishopsmead and Westbridge;
- that Fairway Furniture provided a suitable and sustainable location as it was walkable from the housing estates listed above, and was a level walk. It also provided parking for those requiring it;
- the reported views of the Local Electoral Authority regarding the potential for use of Schools;
- that the Red & Black Club might be an alternative, although it was recognised that this was some distance away for some, and walking along Crowndale Road could be considered slightly dangerous.

It was further reported that, because of the timescale for response to the consultation, the recommendation below would, de facto, represent the views of the Council as submitted.

RECOMMENDED THAT due to the deadline for a response of 16th October, 2024 the Town Council endorse the Committee's prior submitted response to 'support' the ongoing use of Fairway Furniture as a Polling Station, for the South East and South West Wards, at its Meeting on 29th October, 2024.

*Councillor Ms M Ewings arrived at the Meeting during consideration of the above item.

176. OUT OF HOURS ON CALL PROVISION

The Committee considered the report of the General Manager setting out proposed arrangements to update the operation of remuneration in connection with the operation of the out of hours/on call allowance (Appendix 3).

RECOMMENDED THAT the proposal be endorsed and Unison be requested to consider agreement to the variation of the Collective Agreement, in accordance with the request of staff, so as to enable the on-call allowance (currently £200) to be adjusted in line with the applicable rate of the Consumer Prices Index increase as at 1st April each year.

177. NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT 2023-24

It was reported that the Council's externally appointed auditor – PKF Littlejohn, had advised it had not been able to complete its work within the required timescale and had therefore issued a notice confirming its non-compliance, which was displayed on the website.

There appeared to be widespread issues associated with the work of the Auditor in the sector this year and the Council would be advised of receipt of the 'Notice of Conclusion of Audit' when received.

URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

178. COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Following recent attendance at a DALC event a Member raised the matter of Community Land Trusts and Council land. As the item was not tabled the consensus was that the matter be brought to a future meeting and/or a pre-Council presentation be organised, to address the operation of Community Land Trusts.

179. MEET THE LEADER – DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

The Committee was advised of an upcoming 'Meet the Leader' event being run by the County Council for Town and Parish Councils in West Devon, and scheduled to be held on 4th December, 2024 in Okehampton (6.00pm-8.00pm). Spaces were limited to two per Council and nominations were invited.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council appoint two representatives to attend the session at its Meeting on 29th October, 2024 and agree a list of topics which could be raised on behalf of the Town Council.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

180. 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 FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

181. OCCUPATION OF COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or financial nature or the business affairs of persons other than the Council)
The Committee received and considered the Briefing Note of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 4) in respect of the above. In the discussion arising particular reference was made to the content of the report including lettings, shopping habits, local, regional and national factors and the marketplace, alongside working with the BID Co, landlords and stakeholders, rental levels, economic trends, potential impacts on the ratepayer and support for quality business offers.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council continue to seek to attract 'quality' businesses to the town to maintain the town's reputation as an enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

Noted That a further Report would be brought forward as matters progressed.

182. FOOD HUB - THE MOLLY OWEN CENTRE

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or financial nature or the business affairs of persons other than the Council)
The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the General Manager (Appendix 5), following a request received for works to be undertaken by the current Licensee on an 'at risk' basis distinct from, and without prejudice to, other matters or applications.

An overview on the work of the organisation was provided by an involved Member. In the discussion arising reference was further made to various aspects of governance, legal, operating arrangements and structure which might provide a basis for potentially more favourable consideration of the matter. Also the value attached to the service currently, together with the most appropriate reporting arrangements within the Council accompanied by the value attached to equitable treatment of applicants/prospective applicants for benefits from the Council.

Following the discussion, and in the absence of a formal vote, there was a consensus that Tavistock Town Council might be invited to:

- agree to defer this matter to a future Budget & Policy Committee Meeting, once more information was available;
- not consider the Grant Application submitted by the applicant body at the Grants Panel Meeting scheduled for 22nd October, 2024;
- continue to support the applicant body until 31st December, 2024 when the current Licence expired;
- not agree to the proposed works being undertaken until such time as the future usage of the premises at The Molly Owen Centre had been agreed.

Noted That:

- a) Councillor P Ward declared an interest in the above item by virtue of association with the organisation concerned and took part in the discussion thereon;
- b) Councillor A Hutton declared an interest in the above item by virtue of involvement in the running of the organisation concerned and took part in the discussion thereon;
- c) a further Report would be prepared when the information sought was available, furthermore the view was expressed that in the short term the Council could continue to support a worthwhile cause if/as necessary should existing delivery arrangements fail.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

183. MARKET ROAD PROPERTIES

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or financial nature or the business affairs of persons other than the Council)
The General Manager reported that following previous liaison with SeaMoor Lettings, a list of requirements to be met had been provided to the Council. These would be completed by the Works Department by the end of the current financial year, with a view to the properties being 'let' early in the next financial year.

Noted That: the Council's criteria that any future tenants should be local persons or 'key workers' would require clarification, prior to letting.

The Meeting closed at 8.08pm.

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN