

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 31ST AUGUST 2021**

**BRIEFING NOTE
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN (REVISION)**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee will recall that the current Strategic Plan for Tavistock Town Council is operative for the period 2017–2021. In accordance with proper practice it sets out the strategic framework and key organisational goals and objectives which provide the basis for the delivery of Council services over the plan period. It is underpinned by the expectation that the Council will operate with a continuing commitment to economy, efficiency, effectiveness and continuous organisational improvement.
- 1.2 Whilst there is no legal obligation for the Council to put in place a Strategic Plan, by clearly articulating organisational goals and objectives such a plan provides clarity of purpose and promotes the effective allocation and prioritisation of resources. Additionally, it affords the opportunity to set near and long term goals with clear linkages to organisational performance and risk management processes including the annual Corporate Plan arrangements.

2. THE CURRENT POSITON

- 2.1 The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic upon the finances of the organisation, the scheduling of its work programme and associated capacity to deliver has been, and will for some time continue to be, substantial. Moreover, as we tentatively move from “pandemic” to “endemic” the implications of many of those factors remain uncertain.

- 2.2 In the circumstances it is submitted that rather than reviewing the Strategic Plan in its entirety at a time when such uncertainty exists around finance, capacity and the economy that it is more prudent for the Council to:-
- a) Update the existing plan to reflect the current exceptional circumstances;
 - b) For that reason extend the duration of the current strategic plan from 2017–2021 to 2017-2023 (i.e. coterminous with the next elections);
 - c) Thereby afford the new Council in 2023 opportunity to undertake a new strategic planning process informed both by its aspirations, and a more robust understanding of the financial, resource and capacity position in which the Council finds itself than could realistically be achieved now.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The Committee will recall undertaking a scoping exercise for strategic planning early in this Council's life (2019) at which time it endorsed the core themes of:-
- a) Listening – to the community, stakeholders and partners. Understanding their needs, aspirations and fears and contributing as appropriate to the shaping of place and supporting people.
 - b) Leading – accepting responsibility as leader of the community and taking a lead as shaper of place. Being an advocate for the town, representing and driving its interests, securing benefits for it.
 - c) Achieving – the effective use of Council resources, the prioritisation of activities which provide greatest benefit and the delivery of effective efficient and accountable public services.
- 3.2 Sitting immediately below the Strategic Plan is the Council's Corporate Services Plan which is reviewed by Council on an annual basis. It includes the organisational work programme for the year, Council Risk Register, performance measures and related matters. This latter document may loosely be thought of as the "annual implementation plan" for the longer term strategic plan itself.

- 3.3 Turning to the Strategic Plan itself the following recommendations for amendments are derived from:
- a review of the Council Policy Workshop undertaken in 2019;
 - and informed by the major issues (most especially the pandemic) arising since.
- 3.4 Please note that the Guildhall toilets are not included (being a work in progress and substantially complete subject to finalisation with the Borough Council). Similarly, a separate component regarding pandemic recovery has not been included because this is implicit in policies such as C1 and C3 alongside the specific provisions of the Council's Risk Register recently agreed in connection with same.
- 3.5 In order to progress matters, it is therefore recommended that the following amendments to the Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan be made:
- The title and subsequent references to the duration of the Strategic Plan within the document be amended from 2017–2021 to 2017–2023;
 - To articulate same the third paragraph of the "Introduction" to the Strategic Plan be amended to read as follows:-
'The Strategic Plan originally covered a four-year period, since extended to six following the unprecedented impact of the Coronavirus pandemic to enable the upcoming new Council to identify its own priorities informed by the position post pandemic in 2023. For completeness it should be read in conjunction with the annual Corporate and Community Services Plans which together form the basis from which operational activities and goals are agreed, identified, prioritised, resourced and delivered by the Council.'
 - Policy EN6 new development – be amended to read "The Council will seek to inform and shape new development in the town to ensure sustainable and managed growth supported by appropriate infrastructure including through the development and delivery, in

collaboration with the community, of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Town.'

- The introduction of a new policy EN7 sustainability and the environment –
'The Council will collaborate with the community, stakeholders and statutory bodies to increase community resilience and/or sustainability and the mitigation of adverse impacts on biodiversity and climate caused by human activity.'
- The amendment of EC6 prudent financial management to read
'The Council will prepare a balanced budget and maintain appropriate levels of reserves (both general) (equivalent to not less than nine months' income) and capital (not less than £500,000 in view of its ownership of significant historical buildings in the town). It will maintain sufficient measures of financial assurance and control, and conduct due diligence on all projects and initiatives to ensure that they are affordable, deliverable, sustainable and appropriate.'
- The amendment of Ec2 Working Together, as follows
'The Council will work with the Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement District Ltd and other representative bodies, partners and public authorities to promote a vibrant and healthy local Economy recognising a shared commitment to the special nature of the settlement as a traditional market (with livestock, pannier, open air, arts and ad hoc markets) and stannary town, centre of an independent/artisan retail offer, World Heritage Site and Gateway to both Dartmoor and the Tamar Valley.'

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the course of action as set out in para 3.5 above be endorsed and recommended to Council.

**CARL HEARN
TOWN CLERK
AUGUST 2021**

TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL