

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2019  
BRIEFING NOTE**

**POTENTIAL FOR CO-LOCATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES**

**1.INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Committee will be aware that West Devon Borough Council is currently reviewing its ongoing requirement to retain the Kilworthy Park Offices. In order to do so it is undertaking a wide ranging appraisal, including of options to increase tenanted occupation, site disposal, reduced/altered presence etc.
- 1.2 As part of the options appraisal there have been preliminary discussions between officers of the Borough and Town Councils with a view to ascertaining whether or not there might be potential to work more closely together in the interests of Tavistock. For example, through the co-location of Council services and/or democratic arrangements.
- 1.3 This report provides, for information and review, an outline of matters to date and incorporates the comments of Borough Council colleagues.

**2.OPTIONS DISCUSSED**

- 2.1 The following options have been discussed on a without prejudice basis:
- 2.2 Potential re-location of Town Council services from Drake Road to Kilworthy Park. Kilworthy Park has sub-optimal occupancy levels which could, in part, be mitigated if the Town Council were to re-locate to the premises. This could give the Town Council the opportunity to consider disposal of Drake Road and provide an integrated access point to cross-council services. However, it was recognised that such a re-location would not of itself be sufficient to make a compelling case for the retention of Kilworthy Park and would involve a re-location of Town Council

services away from the Town Centre. It would also only be of benefit to the Borough if the Town Council were to pay a full commercial rent<sup>1</sup>.

2.3 Town Council re-location to WDBC space at Pitts Cleave industrial estate. This carried with it similar issues to Kilworthy Park vis rent, additionally it was considered to be too remote from the town for reasonable public access.

2.4 Utilisation of Town Council Drake Road Offices by the Borough Council. This possibility was facilitated by the anticipated availability of three of the four rooms on the ground floor which had until recently been let. There was also potential to achieve additional space in the basement area currently occupied by Community Groups<sup>2</sup>. The operating suggestion<sup>3</sup> being that if considered acceptable for the required uses the Town Council might be prepared to consider waiver of rent in favour of an agreement which provided for the Borough Council:-

- o meeting the business rates and a fair share of utility/service costs etc, together
- o with adding value via a service level agreement or similar for the provision of certain services (such as IT, communications etc.) to the Town Council.

2.5 On inspection the premises were generally well received, albeit limiting in one respect - the Council Chamber not being large enough to accommodate full meetings of the Borough Council and/ or development management & licensing committee. Related options discussed included occupancy of available rooms on the ground floor + use of the Council Chamber by the Borough; or occupancy of rooms on the first floor by the Borough and ground floor by the Town Council with sharing of the Chamber.

2.6 Tavistock Guildhall – the Courtroom was large enough to accommodate meetings of the Borough Council and the Robing Room had potential for smaller meetings. However it was noted

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<sup>1</sup> See para 2.4 below ie the Council would lose its own premises and potential income generation whilst its prospective offer to WDBC is rent free and based within the town centre

<sup>2</sup> For example as a small meeting space with a discreet side access

<sup>3</sup> Without prejudice to any final decision which would necessarily need to be made by the Town Council

that the terms of the lease to the existing Tenant meant that any requests for usage during the day time would be subject both to Tenant and funder approval. Also reviewed was the second floor space currently allocated to a one stop shop.

- 2.7 Molly Owen Centre – the premises provided ample space for full Council meetings of the Borough Council. However, it was recognised that investment would be required more generally to make them suitable for ongoing use. It was noted that there might be potential to explore the extent to which the South Hams/West Devon depot/work shop services for the area might be able to co-locate with the Works Department. Reasonable parking was available on site<sup>4</sup> and the 'house' could provide additional office type space. Proximity to the town centre was not ideal but for WDBC Council meetings (as opposed to service access) this was not a complete barrier. Additionally, if the Borough Council were to dispose of Kilworthy Park, there could be a potential to utilise the Molly Owen Centre to house existing Kilworthy Park tenants who may be displaced. This would generate an income for the Council.

### **3.NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 The discussions which have taken place are necessarily preliminary and form part of a wider options appraisal by the Borough Council. Critically, in order to be able to make a meaningful appraisal of any options it would be necessary to properly understand factors such as the time frame for any agreement, what services the Borough Council would seek to re-locate, numbers of staff/space required, times of usage etc. Should the Borough Council wish to take the matter forward it has been asked to provide this and other supporting information to enable a more detailed business case to be developed.
- 3.2 One option discussed was that (if considered worthy of further investigation in principle) and when more information was available a joint committee of members, 2 from each Council be formed to work with Officers, through options and make recommendations to their respective Councils. This decision would be subject to a similar recommendation being made and approved by West Devon Borough Council in March.

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<sup>4</sup> Although insufficient to accommodate 40+ cars

- 3.2 From a broader perspective if the Borough Council were to leave Kilworthy Park there was a clear community benefit in retaining a Borough Council presence in Tavistock. If shared with the Town Council this could maintain access to services, improve joint efficiency, help working together between the Council tiers and provide a more integrated/single point of contact for access to shared Council services.
- 3.3 It is understood that a report will be placed before the Borough Council at its March meeting to review options and identify those it wishes to progress further. Subject to the outcome of that, this matter will then be brought back for consideration by the Town Council as/if appropriate.

**CARL HEARN**  
**TOWN CLERK**