

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 30th AUGUST 2022**

**BRIEFING NOTE
SUSTAINABILITY & THE ENVIRONMENT –
FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee will recall Council previously established a Sustainability and Environment Working Group in 2019 (Appendix 1 refers).

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 Over the past three years, and notwithstanding major impacts from the pandemic, the Working Group has undertaken various initiatives including, most recently, a review of how best the various related workstreams can be further developed (Appendix 2 refers).
- 2.2 It has concluded that the workstream can be further optimised by replacing the existing arrangement with a more formal process for action and review (see Working Group recommendations below).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To that end the recommendations of the Working Group are as follows:
 - a) The Sustainability and Environment Workgroup, having completed the tasks assigned by Council, now be wound down, and in future work to help the Council improve sustainability and biodiversity continue as a whole Council responsibility.
 - b) That the final report of the Working Group (Appendix 2 refers) be received and endorsed;
 - c) To take the workstream forward, and commencing with the Budget & Policy Committee Meeting on August 30th, 2022, and thereafter at 6 monthly intervals (ie each year typically in September and March), Tavistock Town Council's

environmental and sustainability programs, policies and priorities be reported to the Budget and Policy Committee for review, including the identification of possible funding streams that may be available to Council to action priorities*

- d) Each Year as part of the Budget setting process the Budget & Policy Committee consider the priorities in the report so that where resource and funding allow, Tavistock Town Council is able to progress environmental and climate actions in an effective and supported manner.
- e) The Committee and Council express its appreciation to the Members of the Working Group for the work undertaken and endorse the new arrangements.

*Note the appended report was prepared by the Workgroup, subsequent updates will be picked up through the normal reporting channels.

3.2 The instructions of the Committee and Council are sought.

**CARL HEARN
TOWN CLERK**

**WAYNE SOUTHALL
GENERAL MANAGER**

**AUGUST 2022
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL**

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The Committee considered the Report (Appendix 5) of the Town Clerk in connection with the above.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to a wide range of issues including, inter alia:-

- i. Work being undertaken by a partnership led by Devon County Council, the timetable for reporting (early 2020) and the importance attached to locally not running ahead of that high level county/regional activity in order to provide a consistent and co-ordinated approach;
- ii. The extent to which the Council was already showing leadership in connection with sustainability, the environment and climate change both through ongoing work and specific projects (such as the partnership with Tavistock Energy Community to provide insulation/energy efficiency support to owners of the Town's historic Bedford Cottages);
- iii. A general consensus that, following review of the information included in the report, the Council could, should it be so minded, appropriately declare a Climate Emergency, or similar, on the basis outlined therein;
- iv. An emerging related workstream at West Devon Borough Council;
- v. Prospective costs and benefits associated with anticipated future obligations in this arena;
- vi. The importance attached to, and benefits associated with, an evidence led and plan based approach as demonstrated in the report, to this work stream;
- vii. Appreciation of and for the extent to which an awareness of sustainability and environmental issues was already embedded within the operating culture of the Council.

RECOMMENDED THAT in accordance with the requirements of Minute Number 94 a Sustainability and Environment Working Group, reporting via the Budget and Policy Committee, be established, comprising up to four Members drawn from across the Membership of the Council (plus Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee, ex officio voting) tasked, on the sequential basis set out in the Report, with:-

- a. Undertaking a review to identify and evaluate the best practice as regards the potential for Town/Parish Councils to promote sustainable and environmental initiatives including with regard to climate change;
- b. On completion of (a) above
 - i. To review and assess those projects put forward through voting at the Policy Workshop;
 - ii. Together with any others which had been identified;
- c. Then developing a draft Sustainability and Environment Action Plan for consideration and subsequent assessment against funding via the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- d. Identifying and supporting the Member(s) who will lead researching and developing proposals in this area and also providing the nominee(s) from which the Town Council representation at WDBC Climate Change meetings would be drawn (if invited).