

MINUTES of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 24th JANUARY, 2023** at **5.30pm** in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor H Smith Vice Chairman (in the Chair)

Councillor P Ward Mayor
Councillors Ms M Ewings, Mrs A Johnson, B Smith.

Councillor P Squire (Ward Member).

IN ATTENDANCE Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk

348. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor A Hutton (Deputy Mayor).

349. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 13th December, 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

350. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point in the Meeting.

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

351. MARKET ROAD RIVERBANK

The Committee considered the Report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 2) in connection with the above.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to:

- that whilst Market Road was privately owned by the Town Council, it did form part of the highways network;
- the riverbank and associated structures were not designated flood defence assets;
- that the essential aspect of the proposed works were intended to ensure the highway continued to be safe for all users and spend would be proportionate to same, various flood defence responsibilities fell to other statutory bodies;

- that the Environment Agency had undertaken flood modelling of the Town which was in development;
- that if the river rose sufficiently to breach the wall on Market Road, there were potential issues for premises both in the immediate area, the A386 and associated highway network.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse and approve the Recommendation as included at para 2.1 of the Report, as follows:

Current Project

- a. The Council proceed with the tender exercise previously authorised and in so doing formulate the tender documentation so as to be able to:
 - i. Disaggregate essential safety works to underpin the riverbank/fill scoured areas from any non-essential or non-safety works;
 - ii. Clearly identify whether tenderers are supported by the DEFRA Commercial Group (a requirement where grant aid is available);
 - iii. Agree that, if additional funding (see below) is not available the additional priorities shall be as set out in para (v) of the appendix (Appendix 3).

- b. The Town Council contact Devon County Council and South West Water (para c (iv) of the appendix refers)

- c. The Council request the Environment Agency to explore the possibility of eligibility for support via:
 - i. Flood Defence Grant in Aid; or
 - ii. Local Levy
(para's c (ii) – (iii) of the appendix refer)

- d. The Council request from the EA, on completion of the current modelling work for the Town, the sharing of flood maps/data for the Town with the Council;

Future Proofing

- e. Subject to the outcome of (c) above the EA be requested to review the potential for development/inclusion of a future flood prevention scheme for Tavistock and to expedite the progress of development of the same.

352. RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN) SURVEY

The Committee considered a copy of the Market Town and Town Activities Survey at the request of a Member and as provided by the Rural Market Town Group (Appendix 4).

Whilst several sections were matters of fact it was suggested that Q7 of the Survey ('Levelling Up') was a question which required consideration by the Council.

In addressing same reference was made, in particular, to:

- the importance of a rail link being re-established between Tavistock and Plymouth (via Bere Alston), and thereafter Tavistock to Okehampton - which would improve the town's (and wider hinterland) connectivity with the rest of the country, and also ease pressure on the A386 and other parts of the highway network;
- that improved rail connectivity would have a major impact on the economic development of Tavistock and delivery of sustainable transport outcomes.

RECOMMENDED THAT

- a) Tavistock Town Council respond to the Survey to the effect that (Q7 refers) levelling up could most effectively and sustainably be achieved through the delivery of (first) the Tavistock-Plymouth Railway link, followed by railway linkage to Okehampton;
- b) In view of the critical importance of transport connectivity to the Town the Town Council's Strategic Plan be amended to include under s2.3 a new objective as follows:

'En 8 Transport Connectivity

The Council will support initiatives which improve the critical connectivity of the Town with other settlements, and national transport infrastructure, with a particular focus on the reinstatement of rail links to Plymouth and then to Exeter and beyond (via the Okehampton line).'

Noted That prior to the Council Meeting, Members were encouraged to consider any other levelling up topics that could appropriately be included in the Council's response;

353. WYNNE MAP

The Committee received and considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 5) in respect of the above.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council endorse the posting of the Wynne Map on the website of the National Library of Scotland subject to:

- the applicable restriction restricting use to non-commercial purposes only;
- the posting crediting Tavistock Town Council as outlined in the letter appended to the report;
- confirmation that the listing on the website can, if need be, be withdrawn at the request of the Council.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

354. ENERGY CONSUMPTION

The Committee received and noted the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 6) in respect of recent energy usage across parts of the organisation.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to:

- the impact of current energy contract arrangements on the Councils energy cost base for the duration of the contract term;
- measures being undertaken internally to reduce/mitigate costs, associated factors and their application to occupied premises;
- whether or not the Guildhall Gateway Centre might be eligible to benefit from Government help understood to be being offered to Museums and similar organisations;
- the layout and construction and constraints applying to the Councils premises (most especially those subject to listing);
- appropriate operational and behaviour changes to embed cost savings;
- ongoing monitoring of the position regarding energy costs and associated actions.

355. ON-STREET PARKING

It was reported that:

- there had been some generic communication from the County Highways Department, however appreciable engagement with regard to the consultation on potential charging for on-street parking in Tavistock had not yet been forthcoming;
- it was anticipated (but not confirmed) that consultation on this matter would take place after the Local Government Elections in May 2023, providing opportunity for Tavistock Town Council to consider its response to any such consultation;
- Devon County Council had indicated there were no current proposals to increase areas of resident only parking in the town.

Noted That the Town Clerk undertook to bring a short Report to the next Council Meeting, following consultation with the Tavistock BID Company.

356. URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

The following items were brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman and in view of the timelines involved:

a) **King's Coronation** – it was reported that information had now been provided by Buckingham Palace on plans for the King's Coronation Bank Holiday weekend in May 2023 and which was available on-line.

It was confirmed that;

- the Palace had requested that Beacons should not be lit for this occasion;
- West Devon Borough Council would be providing funding for eligible related event, estimated to be iro £250 per application, details of which would be announced week commencing 30th January, 2023;
- The Town Council was liaising with the BID Co regarding potential options.

The Clerk reminded Members that the next major event would then be the 80th Anniversary of D-Day (in June 2024), at which time beacons would be lit.

b) **Prospective Councillor Event** – a Member reported the outcome of a working party to consider the matter and associated recommendations (Appendix 7) which was circulated.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council endorse the additional measures and associated approach as proposed.

Noted That

- a communication would be sent to existing Councillors in mid-February, reminding them of the restrictions that Purdah would place on them;
- the importance of any Member activity in support of the initiative being neutral and wholly separate from activity that could be perceived as promotion of candidacy in advance of an election was noted.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

357. 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 CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

358. GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE ADVISORY FORUM

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or commercial nature, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Committee considered the Notes of the Meeting of the Guildhall Gateway Centre Advisory Forum held on 18th January, 2023 (Appendix 8).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to:

- An amendment to the notes of the meeting (Appendix 9) to reflect comments from THT had been distributed and would be included in the version circulated to the next meeting of the Forum;
- the various entry charging options which were currently being considered for the venue;
- the differing views on the funding that the Trust had available to it;
- the current arrangements for covering the cost of the cleaning provision for the venue, and future planned arrangements;
- the recommendations as included in the report which had both direct and indirect cost implications for the Council given the lack of available reserves held by the Trust.

RECOMMENDED THAT the recommendations (listed as 'AGREED THAT') in the report be endorsed.

359. VIREMENT FOR RECRUITMENT PURPOSES

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or commercial nature, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the General Manager (Appendix 10) in respect of the above.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council approve the virement of £3,121.80 from 403/4001 (Town Hall Salaries) to 404/4001 (Works Department Salaries) to cover the cost of recruiting a new member of Works Department staff via a recruitment agency.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

360. MARKET ROAD RETAINING WALL

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or commercial nature, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)

The General Manager provided an oral update with regard to the letting of the Contract for the works above, with particular reference to the timetable for expressions of interest, subsequent tendering and works and associated arrangements.

It was likely a Special Meeting of Council would be needed on 22/23 March, 2023 in connection with contract award.

361. BANNAWELL PARK FLOODING

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or commercial nature, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council).

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the General Manager (Appendix 11) outlining the current position with regard to the above.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to:

- Difficulties in communicating with/securing responses/action from Devon County Council;
- Practical and operational issues associated with the failure of the County Council to engage on the issue;
- Risk to the S106 monies allocated to the play area in view of persistent site inaccessibility;
- The importance attached to securing a lasting resolution.

Noted That – on a separate matter a Councillor undertook to provide the contact details for the Devon Wildlife Trust to the General Manager.

362. PROPERTY, LEGAL & FINANCE MATTERS

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal and/or commercial nature, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council).

No new matters brought forward.

The Meeting closed at 7.05pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN