

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **Tuesday 4th January, 2022** at 5.30pm at **THE COURTROOM, THE GUILDHALL, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor H Smith (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs U Mann (Vice Chairman & Deputy Mayor)

Councillor A Hutton (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs A Johnson (Immediate Past Mayor)
Councillors J Ellis, *Mrs M Ewings, Mrs G Parker

Ward Members – Councillors B Smith, P Squire, P Williamson (Observers).

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

*Arrived late at the Meeting

262. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

263. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT The Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 16th November, 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

264. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

265. BUDGET PREPARATION & PRECEPT SETTING 2022-23

The Committee considered the Report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 2) in connection with the above incorporating the emerging Budget for the 2022/23 financial year/associated Precept and reflecting the previous deliberations of the Committee and Council.

The report also included proposed changes to Fees & Charges across the organisation, together with an indicative Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group emerging Project Plan and Budget.

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to:

- a) Fees and Charges:
 - i. changes proposed to Council Fees and Charges including, in particular, an increase in the fee for pitches in the Pannier Market from £9.00 to £10.00 (and consequential adjustments) following consultation with Market Trader representatives;
 - ii. the correction of the 'disabled' tariff shown for the Guildhall Car Park from 30p (as shown) to 50p.
- b) the funding of the Neighbourhood Development Plan via the Localism Budget head and a request that, in view of cost effective arrangements securing savings against the NDP's allocated website budget, £500 be vired from same (thereby reducing it from £3,000 to £2,500), to NDP 'Miscellaneous', to allow extra resource for costs such as promotional/engagement/social media to be met.
- c) Appreciation for the work of the Guildhall Gateway Centre Scheme Project Manager in supporting the project to successful conclusion.
- d) The previously expressed aim - to seek to keep any increase in Precept for 2022-23 below that of the prevailing rate of inflation which was satisfied within the emerging Budget.
- e) Current uncertainties associated with timing of issue of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group Initial Questionnaire, arising from the pandemic. This was now more likely estimated to be in April/May 2022, consequently the submission date for the more fully formed versions of both the NDP Project Plan and Emerging Budget (anticipated in the report at current financial year end) were expected to adjust accordingly.
- f) The draft Budget reflected the principles and decisions endorsed previously during the Budget setting process. As such it provided (necessarily qualified by the uncertainties associated with the pandemic and emergency works) a sustainable base to deliver community services for the next financial year supported by a Precept increase below that expected from other billing bodies (such as the County Council and Police) in the sum of 10p per week for a Band D property (or 2.92%).

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) endorse and approve:
 - i. the appended Schedule of Fees and Charges 2022/23, (subject to inclusion of the correction identified at para (a)(ii) above);

ii. NDP:–

- the virement of £500 from the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group Budget from 'Website' to 'Miscellaneous' (as above);
- the indicative NDP Project Management Plan and overall Budget 2022-23 on the basis set out in the Report.

b) subject to the endorsement of (a)(i) above, agree and approve the draft appended Budget for Tavistock Town Council for 2022/23 incorporating the savings, assumptions and projections as previously submitted to/endorsed by Council and set out in the Report together with the accompanying Precept of £852,554 (representing an increase of 2.92%).

c) and receive the Rolling Capital Programme.

Noted That *Councillor Mrs M Ewings arrived during consideration of the above item.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

266. GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE – PROJECT ASSESSMENT

The Committee received, welcomed and noted the;

- a) Tavistock Guildhall Gateway Centre Project Completion Report (Appendix 3);
- b) Preliminary Evaluation Report (Appendix 4) – this Report was a requirement of the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Noted That by its preliminary nature this was currently a confidential document. However, the final report (following the conclusion of visitor survey and associated activities) would be in the public domain.

267. INTERNAL AUDIT

It was reported that the interim report of the Council's Internal Auditor had not become available for this Meeting.

URGENT ITEM

268. PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNANCE FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2022 - 2023: CONSULTATION

The Chairman agreed to take the following item as a matter of urgency in view of the timescales involved.

It was reported that the foregoing (typically annual) consultation by Government had been published with a response date of 13th January. In the past the Council had endorsed the non-application of referendum principles to the sector and, in view of the next Council Meeting falling after the response date, it was agreed that the Clerk respond on behalf of the Council to reaffirm its previously agreed position.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

269. 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.

URGENT ITEM

270. OUT OF HOURS ALLOWANCES (WORKS DEPARTMENT)

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Chairman agreed to take the following item as a matter of urgency in view of the timescales involved.

Attention was drawn to the current out of hours allowance for relevant staff, related duties and the basis on which the scheme operated (which formed part of a collective agreement with the employee side). In all the circumstances, including the increased burden imposed by pandemic working, it was considered fair and reasonable to recommend an increase in the allowance to £175.

RECOMMENDED THAT subject to consultation with and no objection from the employee side, the out of hours allowance be increased to £175 with receipt backdated to the first full week of January.

Noted That Councillor Mrs M Ewings requested it be recorded she abstained from voting on the above matter.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

271. TOWN HALL & MARKETS TEAM STAFFING

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the General Manager (Appendix 5) alongside discussion around issues, options and challenges in the jobs market in general, and the Agency sector in particular.

The Press and Public were readmitted to the Meeting.

The Meeting closed at 6.00pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN