

MINUTES of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 5th SEPTEMBER, 2023** at **6.30pm** in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor P Ward (Chairman)

Councillor U Mann (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Hutton, Mrs A Johnson

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

157. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Ms M Ewings.

158. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 12th July, 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made in respect of Agenda Item No. 7 'Request for Grant Funding' (Minute No. 163 below refers):

- i. Councillor A Hutton (Mayor) by virtue of membership of The Lions Club of Tavistock;
- ii. Councillors Mrs A Johnson and U Mann by virtue of family association with the applicant body.

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

160. TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

The Committee considered the Report of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 2) setting out arrangements for the review of the Town Council's Strategic Plan. In the discussion arising reference was made, in particular, to associated arrangements, the inclusion of all Councillors, challenges posed by legacy Covid impacts and inflationary pressures amongst others.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Town Council, on 19th September:

- a) agree the review of the Tavistock Town Council Strategic Plan for a further Plan period 2023-27;

b) endorse and progress the approach as set out in para 3.1 of the Report with a view to completion in the current financial year.

Noted That an amended version of the report with corrections to paragraph numbering had been recirculated prior to the Meeting.

161. BUDGET PREPARATION & PRECEPT SETTING 2024/25

The Committee received and considered the Report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 3) in connection with the above. It set out, inter alia, principles to be applied, or areas of change identified, for the development of the draft 2024/25 Budget proposal and associated Precept together with areas of material risk and/or uncertainty alongside matters pertinent to the in-year (current) position.

This represented the first in a series of reports which would be brought forward to assist in the preparation of the 2024/25 Budget. At the next meeting it was planned to submit half-year outturn (2023-24), together with a draft Budget 2024-25 incorporating more detailed information, alongside fees and charges, as informed by deliberations on the foregoing report.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council receive the Report and endorse it as a basis for the development of the draft Tavistock Town Council Budget 2024-25.

Noted That: it was reported:

- recent notification had been received from the Council's website provider regarding a change in operating platform. Associated options/costs were being explored;
- in response to a question, HMRC's approach to premises not opted to tax remained unclear.

162. SUSTAINABILITY & THE ENVIRONMENT

The Committee considered the Briefing Note (Appendix 4) of the General Manager, which set out the arrangements the Town Council already had in place, or was planning to initiate, in its approach to this matter.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to:

- the high number of Daubenton's Bats in the area;
- that local tours were being undertaken to see Bats;
- local beekeepers' concerns regarding the proliferation of Asian Hornets;
- appreciation for the work outlined in the Report.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Report be received and the content endorsed.

163. REQUEST FOR GRANT FUNDING

The Committee considered the Briefing Note (Appendix 5) of the Town Clerk in connection with a request for funding received from the Lions Club of Tavistock, pursuant to a Grant Application Form, and other documents, as provided by the applicant.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to the background to and purpose of the request, the distinction between contributing to 'added value' activities and routine operating costs, the role of The Lions in supporting community activities, and the current position regarding insurance service availability in general.

RECOMMENDED THAT the request be supported and the recommendation as set out in paragraph 5.1 (a-c) of the Briefing Note be endorsed and adopted.

Noted That in response to a question it was noted that those with a close association to the Lions Club (in particular active members of it), might wish to consider the tests as set out in the Code of Conduct for Tavistock Town Council, for Declaration of Interests and withdrawal from deliberations, when the matter came before Council for determination in due course.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

164. PROTECT DUTY (MARTYN'S LAW)

The Committee received, for information, a Briefing Note (Appendix 6) of the Town Clerk, with regard to the emerging Protect Duty, which was currently undergoing the Parliamentary process. In the ensuing discussion the outstanding uncertainties regarding coverage and potential impact on the Town Council were noted.

165. GOOSE FAIR

The Committee received and considered the Briefing Note (Appendix 7) of the Works Manager in connection with the ongoing arrangements for the upcoming Goose Fair 2023.

Noted That:

- Appreciation was expressed for the number of traders who had been attracted to attend this year's event;
- it was reported that a reduction in the projected cleaning costs (albeit from a very high baseline) for the event had been negotiated.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

166. 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

167. GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE – OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

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

The Committee received and reviewed the Report (with Appendices) as provided by the Town Clerk (Appendix 8), in connection with the above.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to financial arrangements, budget vs spend, agreement around the deed of surrender, timelines for interim operating arrangements, scope of new arrangements and associated matters.

RECOMMENDED THAT in view of the extensive negotiations which had been undertaken, available timeframes, and the importance attached to continuing the World Heritage Site offer Tavistock Town Council adopt the interim operating arrangements for the period 6th October, 2023 - 31st March, 2025, as agreed in principle with Tavistock Heritage Trust, and set out in more detail in the notes listed in the appendices to the report (1-2 refer).

Noted That

- a) The applicable date for the conclusion of the interim operating arrangement was 31st March, 2025;
- b) In connection with Appendix 2, this be amended to indicate that Councillor Mrs A Johnson and the Clerk had tendered their apologies and were therefore not in attendance.

168. CAPITAL WORKS UPDATE

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

The General Manager provided an oral update on the following matters:-

Market Road;

- the coffer dam was being removed on 25th September, which would require a road closure for the day;
- the road would be closed (subject to weather) for the week commencing 2nd October, for potentially 4 or 5 days, to allow for an area of 300m² to be resurfaced and re-lined;
- the re-building of the area of stone wall, which had previously been removed during the works, would be undertaken by the end of October.

Museum:

- an additional provision had been made for extra works to the Museum, with the materials having been delivered recently;
- plasterers would be on-site for 10 weeks (6 weeks' work, followed by 4 weeks' to dry) prior to redecoration;
- Agreement had been reached with the Museum regarding redecoration costs and it was also seeking external funding subject to availability.

Noted That in response to a question the General Manager undertook to review temporary use of contractor parking within the Guildhall Car Park.

Town Hall:

- the repointing on the Duke Street end of the building had commenced;
- plastic mortar mixes had been agreed and works would be commencing 6th September;
- the gable end of the building towards Duke Street would be assessed to see if any works were required;
- the scaffold design for the tower was awaited;
- positive progress was being made on the repairs to the windows.

Noted That following a query raised, it was confirmed that a Market Road property would continue to be required as a welfare facility until November 2023 and thereafter maintained by the Works department pending letting in the Spring.

The Meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN