

**AGENDA ITEM No 5**

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock on **TUESDAY 27<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2018 at 6.30pm.**

**PRESENT** Councillor Mrs A Johnson (Chairman)  
Councillor P Ward (Vice Chairman)

Councillors P Palfrey, P Sanders, P Williamson.  
Councillor Mrs U Mann (Ward Member)

**IN ATTENDANCE** Town Clerk, General Manager

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**193. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs M Ewings and A Hutton.

**194. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 (Appendix 1) be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**195. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor P Sanders declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in connection with matters relating to the transfer of West Devon Borough Council public conveniences to Town and Parish Councils.

**196. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman informed the Committee of the recent success of Tavistock Heritage Trust, supported via a Grants Officer engaged by the Town Council, in securing a contribution of £60,000 toward the unfunded component (ie that underwritten by the Council) of the Guildhall Project from the H B Allen Trust.

The Chairman and Committee extended appreciation to Tavistock Heritage Trust.

**ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**197. WORKS DEPARTMENT – STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk and General Manager in connection with the outcome of the consultation on the

proposed restructuring of the Works Department and next steps (Appendix 2).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to a range of issues including:-

- The outcome of the staff consultation exercise, subsequent communications, next steps and the organisational benefits attached to flexible start times aligned with a revised "default" start time of 8.00am;
- The importance attached to any case for additional staffing resource to be adequately and appropriately funded;
- The views of the General Manager with regard to staffing levels;
- An adjustment arising in connection with staffing levels following further due diligence pursuant upon the past meeting of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED THAT having considered the outcome of the consultation and subject to:-

- staffing levels as indicated in para 3.2(b) of the Report;
- incorporation of the amended arrangements for work start times/Friday afternoon working with a view to the new operating structure coming into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019;

and pursuant to Minute No. 138(b) the Council proceed with and implement the proposals for the restructuring of the Works Department.

Noted That

- receipt of correspondence from Staff within the Department regarding working day start times and associated matters was reported and considered;
- No candidates had been shortlisted for the recently advertised Properties & Open Spaces Manager post.

#### **198. BUDGET PREPARATION AND PRECEPT SETTING 2019/20**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 3) prepared pursuant upon consideration of related matters and incorporating sections relating to:-

- Combined Account Code 2017/18, 2018/19 and proposed for 2019/20;
- Cost Centre for 2017/18, 2018/19 and proposed for 2019/20 and Summary by Centre;
- Budget Summary, Gross Revenue and Expenditure for 2018/19 and proposed for 2019/20;
- Schedule of Earmarked Reserves;
- Fixed Asset Register;

- Council Fees and Charges – current and proposed.

Arising from the Report the attention of the Committee was drawn, inter alia, to the following:-

- Potential increases in cost associated with the Guildhall Gateway Centre Project;
- The extent of the projected shortfall on the Capital Programme (£404,000 (2019-20 refers));
- Options available to the Council in seeking to fund the above shortfall;
- Proposals from West Devon Borough Council with regard to the transfer of public conveniences to Town/Parish Councils and related matters;
- Potential arrangements for the phased move of Market trading operations to a cashless basis;
- Corkage charges for the Town Hall;
- Inclusion from 2020/21 in the year end accounts of more detailed descriptions of “in kind” benefits granted by the Council to community organisations.

In the ensuing discussion and deliberations upon the draft Budget and the emerging Precept, particular reference was made to:-

- a. A preference to meet the shortfall on the Capital Programme by means of loan as outlined in the report - as opposed to by way of asset disposal;
- b. The extent to which the Town Council could seek to collaborate with the Borough Council around efficiency savings and service improvements which might be aligned to co-location or closer collaboration in service delivery;
- c. The future potential of the Molly Owen Centre for a range of uses;
- d. Consensus that the Council should retain an Earmarked Reserve of £50,000 for land acquisition;
- e. Issues associated with the respective disposal of public conveniences by the Borough Council including reference to usage, pay as you go, capital liabilities, demand/usage, community benefits etc. Also the potential merits associated with a consultation exercise with regard to the options available for next steps;
- f. Dog Warden Service – arising from the foregoing it was agreed that the Clerk write to the Borough Council requesting a targeted campaign regarding both dog fouling and dogs off the lead in The Meadows;
- g. Fees and Charges – the Committee endorsed the proposed fees and charges. It was further advised of a consolidation of arrangements in respect of the Town Hall so as to avoid the potential that some

events became inadvertently subsidised by the Council (ie operating at a greater cost than recovery) to ensure a more robust and transparent application of charging arrangements. A single standard rate was being introduced (with the only exceptions being for registered charities and civic events). This better reflected the predominantly local use of the building. Whilst it was acknowledged that some repeat users might consider these changes disadvantageous they were necessary in order to ensure both consistency of approach and continuity of a fair service offer, existing contracts would be honoured.

- h. It was noted that there were no proposals to consider reviewing Goose Fair fees and charges prior to the 2019 Goose Fair in view of the challenges being faced by Traders and Showmen in that sector.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council adopt and endorse, as appropriate:-

- i. The submitted draft Council Budget 2019/20 and accompanying Precept prepared on the basis of an increase of 6.61% for a Band D equivalent property (subject to the Committee making a final recommendation in connection with the Precept at the December Meeting);
- ii. Council Fees and Charges – the Schedule of Fees and Charges for Council Services 2019/20;
- iii. The sourcing of a loan in the sum of £400,000 from the Public Works Loan Board on the basis outlined in Para 2.3 (iii (b)) to fund the projected capital shortfall in respect of the Guildhall Gateway Centre Project;
- iv. Any surpluses available as at year end and not otherwise identified being rolled over into the Rolling Capital Programme;
- v. The Fixed Asset Register;
- vi. The Schedule of Earmarked Reserves;
- vii. Initiation of a consultation exercise regarding potentially taking on any, all or no public conveniences from West Devon Borough Council in 2020/21;
- viii. A review of Market Tolls be undertaken on the basis outlined in the report;
- ix. The adoption of Corkage Fees and Charges as outlined in Para 2.3 (xiii) of the Report and the matter, in future, being delegated to the General Manager.

Noted That

- the sentence following the words 'Deposit Fund' in para (xv) of the report be deleted;

- the Precept figure listed above varies from that in the report by virtue of Minute No. 197 above;
- a copy of a file note regarding a recent meeting with WDBC in connection with public conveniences and proposed disposal to the Town Council in 2020/21 was circulated.

**199. HEARINGS AND APPEALS PROCEEDURE**

The Committee considered the amendment of the forgoing Council procedures consequent on the discontinuation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and associated review.

RECOMMENDED THAT the words "Budget and Policy Committee" be substituted for "Finance and General Purposes Committee" in relation to composition and "Council" for "Finance and General Purposes Committee" in relation to reporting arrangements, together with any other consequential administrative amendments.

**200. GOOSE FAIR PARK AND RIDE**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 4) in connection with the above, arising from which it was:-

RECOMMENDED THAT a Grant of £1000 be made to each of the two Lions Clubs who supported the Goose Fair Park and Ride initiative.

Noted that:-

- a. Reference was made to 'in kind' support provided to the Lions and other organisations;
- b. The importance of, and potential arrangements for, sourcing of an alternative Park and Ride site at the western gateway to the town in view of the loss of Lumburn was stressed;
- c. Councillors Mrs A Johnson and Mrs U Mann declared a personal non-judicial interest in the Lions Club by virtue of family connection.

**201. SYSTEM FOR INTERNAL CONTROL**

The Committee considered an amended Tavistock Town Council Internal Control System (Appendix 5), adjusted to reflect the discontinuation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and introduction of the Budget and Policy Committee.

RECOMMENDED THAT the revised Tavistock Town Council Internal Control System be adopted with effect from January 2019.

Noted that the version listing for the document be amended to v1.1 Jan 2019.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**202. PENNON SHAREHOLDING**

The Committee noted the shareholding of the Council (449) in respect of Pennon Group PLC.

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**203. 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 item of business.

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM FOR  
DETERMINATION BY THE COMMITTEE**

**204. BARLEY MARKET STREET**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to information of a commercially sensitive nature and/or legal proceedings)

Pursuant to Minute No. 173 (b) the Committee considered the confidential advice of the Council's Solicitor in connection with the above arising from which it was:

RESOLVED THAT the Council contest the claim made by West Devon Borough Council for possessory title and take such proceedings as necessary to protect its interests subject to legal advice.

Noted That Councillor P Sanders declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above matter by virtue of serving on the Borough Council and left the Meeting.

The Press and Public were readmitted to the Meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

CHAIRMAN