

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET AND POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock on **TUESDAY 11TH APRIL, 2017** at **6.30pm.**

PRESENT Councillor Mrs M Ewings (Chairman),
Councillors Mrs A Johnson, P Palfrey, H Smith, P Ward,
P Williamson

Ward Members – Councillors T Gibbins, J Sheldon,
P Squire

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

283 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion in the list of those in attendance of Councillor P Sanders the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget and Policy Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 1st March, 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

284 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor P Sanders.

285 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

286 TAVISTOCK GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE INITIATIVE

The Sub-Committee considered a report previously circulated to all Members of the Council arising from the conduct of the Mid-Term Review by the Heritage Lottery Fund (Appendix 1) together with a post Mid-Term Review Action Plan (Appendix 2) and next steps.

Attention was drawn, in particular, to:-

- Broadly positive feedback from HLF at the Mid-Term Review;
- An offer by HLF of an extension of the period (by approximately 2½ months) for submission which the Council was encouraged to take in order to prepare the best submission possible
- Areas of potential reservations expressed by HLF, more particularly:-
 - Capacity/scale of financial commitment by the Town Council;
 - Capacity/progress of Tavistock Heritage Trust (THT) as a delivery partner.
- HLF had also mentioned the possibility that the Town Council might make a contribution 'at risk' prior to submission toward development/activity support.
- Linking to the comments made by Heritage Lottery Fund identification of:-
 - What were the potential best and worst case scenarios for the Council as applicant body in terms of costs/liability/impacts:

- What was the Plan B? (for example should THT not be in a position to deliver the proposal).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to a wide range of issues including, but not limited to:-

- i. Business risk and financial risk potentially attaching to both Town Council and/or THT;
- ii. Progress made by THT in constituting itself, demonstrating capacity through the engagement of staff/sourcing of funds and the extent of work still remaining in order to bring it to the point where it could demonstrate a resilient and robust long-term business plan to satisfy its role as anchor partner;
- iii. The changes that had arisen as between the original aspirations for THT and its present situation;
- iv. The extent to which the emerging Gateway Centre Round Two submission was/was not consistent with that originally made at Round One;
- v. Whether or not there was any potential to link the Guildhall proposal to the Butchers' Hall within the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme;
- vi. The operation and composition of any prospective future THT board;
- vii. The importance attached to the fullest possible understanding, prior to consideration of any submission, of the risks attaching to the Council.

Arising from the consideration of the forgoing it was

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council

- i. Welcome and accept the offer of the Heritage Lottery Fund to extend the submission date by 2½ months;
- ii. Reaffirm its continuing commitment in principle, to underwriting the costs associated with the final bid;
- iii. Task the Project Team with working up the final bid for consideration by Council prior to submission with a particular focus on:-
 - a) The fullest possible assessment of potential liabilities accruing to the Council for both the delivery stage and the duration of the contract with Heritage Lottery Fund (including best/worst case scenarios);
 - b) The resilience of Tavistock Heritage Trust to perform the role of anchor/delivery partner for the Gateway Centre;
 - c) Without prejudice to (b) above review potential alternative delivery options consistent with the goals of the Round One Bid including direct delivery by the Council
- iv. Communicate next steps to and continue to actively work with key partners and stakeholders to deliver a successful HLF bid.

287 TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE – PANNIER MARKET WORKS

The Sub Committee received an oral report from the General Manager in connection with the above, a written account of which would be presented to the next Meeting of Council.

In summary tenders had been invited for works to the Pannier Market roof and associated works pursuant to the Council's obligations as landlord under the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme. Preliminary assessments derived from a bill of costs indicated the likelihood of a potentially substantial overspend on the allocated budget.

Consequently, for the purposes of the tender value engineering work had been undertaken with a view to the control of costs. In particular:-

- a) The removal of provision for internal insulation (which was not capable of being grant assisted) and associated works (which were anticipated to significantly reduce the overall costs of the scheme potentially by in the order of 30%);
- b) The separate identification of other non-grant fundable works (such as provision of new doors) in order to enable the Council to clearly identify THI supported and non-supported works, to prioritise same and programme works accordingly.

It was further noted that the strict timetables for delivery in the current year meant that a report would be presented to Council at its Meeting on 18th April, 2017 following a preliminary assessment. Council would then be invited to set a maximum threshold for the costs of works. The matter then being considered by the Grants Panel on 19th April (it being assessed, in parallel, by Heritage Lottery Fund) with a view to a start on site in May 2017.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council, at its Meeting on 18th April, 2017, consider the report of the General Manager together with a further update on the outcome of the preliminary appraisal of tenders and determine how best proceed.

Noted That On a related matter the Sub Committee was advised because of issues arising in relation to the initial (historic) valuations of works within the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme it had been necessary to reconsider the approach adopted to such projects. Consequently in future applicants would be advised of the applicable provisional budget allocation and recommended to develop a programme of works consistent with that sum (as opposed to developing a programme of works which might exceed the provision leading to expectation of a higher claim).

288 TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL – MEETING ARRANGMENTS

In accordance with the previous decision of the Council to introduce the current arrangements (temporarily to suspend the operation of the Properties and Finance & General Purposes Committees on a trial basis) the matter was brought for the Sub Committee for review and recommendation.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to the benefits/drawbacks of different arrangements for the administration of the decision making process. The consensus arising was that, on balance, whilst there were merits associated with Committee input to Council decisions a return to previous arrangements was unlikely to represent best fit. However, there was merit in re-designating the Budget & Policy Sub Committee as a Standing Committee of the Council, to review and make recommendations on the more significant policy, financial and strategic aspects of the operation of the Council.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Budget & Policy Sub-Committee be re-designated as a standing Committee of the Council, with no change to the number of Members and in future be convened in the week preceding Meetings of the Council to consider in more depth and make recommendations regarding the more significant policy, financial and strategic aspects of matters to come before the Council.

289 APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Sub Committee considered an application (Appendix 3) for financial assistance received in connection with a Tavistock Canal Poetry Project.

Arising from consideration of the above it was

RECOMMENDED THAT subject to:-

- a) Confirmation from Tavistock College regarding its involvement in the project;
- b) Clarification that the project was not in conflict with other current initiatives in the Heritage field within Tavistock;
- c) It being made clear to the applicant that it was their responsibility to ensure that all appropriate permissions and consents would be secured from the relevant authorities (in particular those of the landlord and the local planning authority where applicable);

a grant of £200.00 be made.

URGENT BUSINESS

In the interests of expediting the business of the Sub-Committee the Chairman agreed take the following item as a matter of urgency.

290 TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL-NEWSLETTER

The Sub-Committee received and noted an emerging draft edition of a prospective Tavistock Town Council newsletter (Appendix 4).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to the outcome of a recent meeting between representatives of the Town Council, BID Company and Chamber of Commerce. More specifically regarding the mutual and community benefits associated with promoting a consistent and common message around the town being 'open for business' for the duration of upcoming works which would see significant scaffolding erection within the centre of the Town. In the circumstances it was the consensus that there was merit in considering the possibility of a shared 'Special Edition' of a

publication promoting the Town and including (as a separate section) the Town Council's newsletter. To ensure probity it would be necessary to ensure that the document did not imply any endorsement by or support from the Town Council to individual businesses.

RECOMMENDED THAT, on the basis outlined above, arrangements proceed with a view to collaboration with the BID Company and Chamber of Commerce on a Special Edition Newsletter for the residents of Tavistock pooling of costs and editorial resources.

291 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.

292 MEADOWLANDS

(**Confidential** by virtue of relating to information of a commercially sensitive nature)

The Sub-Committee received an oral update in connection with the above and was advised that further consideration would be given to this matter by Council at its Meeting on 18th April, 2017.

RECOMMENDED THAT this matter be further considered by the Council at its Meeting on 18th April, 2017.

293 OFFICE STAFFING

(**Confidential** by virtue of relating to information relating to identifiable individuals)

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

In the discussion arising reference was made to a range of issues including, amongst others:-

- Historic and current arrangements with regard to the staffing of the office and associated changes in the pattern of work;
- Options potentially available for the reconfiguration of office space to improve ergonomic design and service delivery;
- The outcome of a previous review in connection with related matters;
- Potential alternative options for the location of staff/services;
- Suggestions made previously.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Assistant to the Town Clerk review the matter in light of the comments made including with particular regard to the possibility of reconfiguring the office space to separate reception from non-reception duties.

The Meeting closed at 9:07pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

CHAIRMAN