

AGENDA ITEM 8

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 10th JUNE, 2025 at 6.30pm** at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor S Hipsey	Mayor ex-officio
Councillor Mrs A Johnson	Deputy Mayor ex-officio
Councillor P Ward	Immediate Past Mayor
Councillors Ms M Ewings*, J Moody, R Poppe, B Smith	

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk, Financial Administrator (part Meeting).

*arrived late at the Meeting

38. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the 2025-2026 Civic Year.

A nomination, duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor Mrs A Johnson.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor Mrs A Johnson be elected Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

39. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the Election of Vice-Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the 2025-2026 Civic Year.

A nomination, duly seconded, was received in respect of Councillor J Moody.

RESOLVED THAT Councillor J Moody be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Budget & Policy Committee for the ensuing Civic Year.

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No Apologies for Absence had been received.

41. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 13th May, 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

Noted That – Councillor Ms M Ewings arrived during consideration of the above matter.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

43. SERVICE PLANS 2025–26

The Committee considered the following Plans:

a) **Corporate Service Plan 2025–26, Organisational Risk Register and Annual Summary** (Appendix 2)

The Committee received and considered the Draft Service Plan for Corporate Services 2025–26, together with the Annual Summary and Organisational Risk Register before proceeding to review same in the round, most especially including the identified projects/tasks, and the appraisal/reappraisal of risk.

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

- i) Amendment of s2 (Consultation Plan) so as to refer to the period 2025-26;
- ii) The respective levels of risk identified, associated mitigations and controls, projected levels of severity and likelihood;
- iii) Challenges arising in connection with C7 regarding capacity in the areas identified. Progress within the Community Services Dep't arising from the introduction of temporary additional resource was noted, together with the opportunity toward late Autumn (as other staffing changes came into play), to come to a better informed understanding of needs/performance in Corporate Services;
- iv) The potential relationship as between Risk C2 and the (see next item) Community Services Project P2, with special reference to associated capital funding challenges when compared to the items listed;
- v) Organisational arrangements for professional training in connection with Health and Safety;
- vi) The importance attached to the need to improve (as a minimum restore to normal levels) funding of the Rolling Capital Programme (RCP) to meet organisational funding

- requirements for maintenance/repair of the extensive and historic asset base;
- vii) Uncertainties associated with/potentially arising from, anticipated Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon;
- viii) Progress in connection with the development by the Local Planning Authority of a new Local Plan for the area to meet, inter alia, changed requirements regarding housing supply;
- ix) The potential impact of new legislative/regulatory requirements (such as, but not limited to, the Protect Duty).

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) receive and endorse the Annual Summary and Review of 2024-25.
- b) subject to the deletion of '2021-22', and its replacement with '2025-26', in Section 2 of the Corporate Services Improvement Plan, the Tavistock Town Council Corporate Services Improvement Plan 2025-26 be endorsed and adopted as the basis for the programmed delivery of Council Services 2025-26 (see below regarding Risk Register).
- c) the Council endorse and adopt the Tavistock Town Council Organisational Risk Register subject to:
 - C6 a reduction in 'likelihood' and 'severity' scores from 4 to 3 reflecting positive direction of travel from 2024-25;
 - Regard being had to C7 in relation to matters associated with capacity/related matters in the Autumn/Budget setting round.
- b) **Community Services Service Plan 2025-26** (Appendix 3)
The Committee received and considered the Service Plan for Community Services 2025-26.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Tavistock Town Council Community Services Plan 2025-26 be adopted and endorsed as the basis for delivery of associated services 2025-26.

Noted That in response to questions the Committee was also advised of:

- The position with regard to various play areas and opportunities/constraints associated with replacement;
- anticipated costs/implications of the Projects/Tasks as listed on P7;

- the potential of, and limitations associated with, Council sponsored crowd funding for schemes the public might perceive as 'core activities', alongside experience elsewhere;
- delays in connection with the consultation on the Multi-Use Wheeled Sports Area and Abbey Remains Projects associated with grant/other funding challenges and (for the former) also requests to change project specification adding to costs/complication;
- the Council did not currently have a play park equipment replacement fund as grant/s106 funding was frequently utilised in part.

44. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Committee considered the following reports;

- Bank Mandate** (Appendix 4)
RECOMMENDED THAT the recommendation as set out in para 2.1 of the report be approved and adopted.
- Year-End Overspends** (Appendix 5)
RECOMMENDED THAT the approach as set out in para 3.1 of the Report be endorsed
- Unaudited Financial Statements for the period 2024 – 2025** (Appendix 6)
RECOMMENDED THAT subject to the inclusion of Councillor Hutton on the list of Councillors, removal of Councillor U Mann, and identifying the Mayor as Councillor S Hipsey (Deputy Mayor Councillor Mrs A Johnson) on p3, the unaudited Financial Statements of the Council for the year ended 31st March 2024 be received and noted.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

45. HERITAGE ALLIANCE GROUP

The General Manager had advised that the Notes of the Heritage Alliance Meeting held on Wednesday 4th June, 2025 were not yet available, so would be deferred to consideration at the next Committee Meeting.

46. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

In view of recent developments and associated timelines the following items were brought forward with the consent of the Chairman for information:

- The Committee noted an approach had been received from the Borough Council in connection with a proposed inter-agency meeting to scope the extent of any potential case for community

based closed circuit television. By way of context the background to prior discussions was noted, in particular that when various supporting evidence became available from the Police, a report would be brought before this Council in the normal way reflecting the Council's longstanding commitment to an evidence based, planned approach to business. The Council would be represented at the meeting by Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Past Mayor and an Officer in due course.

- The Committee received and noted an update provided in connection with a recent request(s) to change the flag flying policy of the Council, more especially with regard to duration and/or frequency of flying submitted by Tavi Pride and another. The background to the detailed development of the applicable policy in 2022, which specifically addressed this matter, was outlined. The requests had been referred to the body appointed to determine such applications and, after careful consideration, the settled policy of the Council had been reaffirmed. Namely that, for the reasons extensively considered and previously agreed by Council and endorsed by this Committee, the current policy (ie to be flown either on the designated international day, or such other day as requested by the applicant organisation), continue to apply. This ensured consistency, inclusivity and equity of approach with that adopted for other major occasions of celebration, commemoration, remembrance and the like. The request(s) had therefore been declined and the applicant(s) advised of Council policy accordingly. An accompanying request that the progress flag be flown in place of the rainbow flag had been granted. To assist on other matters of organisation and event support an offer had been made to meet and discuss current and future partnership working, alongside other operational matters, with the organisation concerned.
- Probity and Committee operating arrangements - in response to a question the Committee observed that, with Chairman and Vice Chairman now holding office as both Town and Borough Councillors, there was the potential that on some items of business they might be subject to a conflict of interest (whether or not classed as a declarable interest - it could be in relation to LGR for example), as between those two roles. In such circumstances both acknowledged that they would withdraw from that part of any meeting where such matters arose so as to maintain probity of Council decision making.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

47. 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 FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

48. RE-TENDERING OF ENERGY CONTRACTS

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

The Committee received the Briefing Note of the General Manager (Appendix 7) in respect of the re-tendering for utilities.

During the discussion reference was made to:

- the weightings applied when the assessment of tenders received was undertaken e.g. the use of renewables;
- that the 2025–2026 utilities budgets had already been adjusted (down) in anticipation of potential savings to be made, once re-tendering had been completed.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council;

- a) Approve the tender process outlined in section 2. Current Situation, including:
 - Notifying prospective tenderers and advertise on our website and social media
 - To evaluate the tender based on technical merit (30%) and price (70%)
 - To award the contract for up to 30 months, commencing 1st August 2025 and concluding no later than 31st January 2028.
 - Appoint a Cllr Representative to attend the tender opening , to be held on 16th July 2025.
- b) Authorise the General Manager (or in his absence the Town Clerk) to accept the most competitive tender, or other appropriate arrangement to achieve best value, in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, subject to being within Budget.

- c) Agree that the Cemetery and Communications Officer, in consultation with the General Manager, liaise with the preferred tenderer and authorise the utility contracts on behalf of the Council.

Noted That a Member would be appointed at the Council Meeting on 24th June, to attend the tender opening on 16th July, 2025.

49. TENANCY MATTERS

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

The following oral updates were provided:-

a) Damage to Council Property

The background to damage to Council property caused by a road traffic incident was reported, together with detail of a without prejudice offer received by way of remediation, which was considered fair and reasonable and had been accepted.

b) Tenancy Matter (Debtor)

Receipt of a procedural delay in progressing the matter to conclusion (to early August) was reported, together with two (different) offers received in relation to monthly repayment which continued to be, for reasons previously considered, unacceptable.

A prior offer by the Council, as previously reported, had been made but not taken up. There remained the potential to seek a settlement by mutual agreement prior to final proceedings, if that could be achieved. Accordingly the Council's offer would be remade alongside amended terms regarding payment arrangements to assist the other party, and necessarily subject to adjustment for inclusion of the costs awarded in favour of the Council when the claimant's case was recently dismissed by the County Court. If agreement could not then be reached the proceedings in hand would continue to conclusion.

The Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN