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**MINUTES FOR THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2017 AT THE GUILDHALL TOTNES**

Present: Councillor M Adams (Chairman), Paine, Westacott MBE, R Adams, and Barker.

Apologies: Councillor Sweett.

In Attendance: Catherine Marlton (Town Clerk), Sara Halliday (Administrator), Cllr Hodgson, Cllr Parker, Cllr A Simms, Cllr B Piper, Cllr K Sermon, Cllr T Whitty, Press and 3 members of the public

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| No | Subject | Comments |
| 1 | To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council. | It was **AGREED** to accept the apologies. |
| *The Committee will adjourn for the following item:* | | |
| Public Question Time: A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes. | | A member of the public spoke in support of the St Mary’s Partnership Update Report (Item 3 on the agenda) and asked that all members of the Partnership continue to work together on this community project.  Cllr Parker spoke about the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan and it was agreed to take all comments on this matter under agenda Item 10. |
| *The Committee will convene to consider the following items:* | | |
| 2 | To agree the minutes and discuss any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting. | The minutes of the Operations Committee held on 2nd November 2017 were agreed. There were no actions arising. |
| 3 | To consider the St Mary’s Partnership Update Report. | The report was noted. Cllr M Adams, the Town Clerk and Mr Victory will meet on 4th December 2017 to discuss the report’s recommendations.  Cllr Westacott asked to be included in future meetings in her TOTSOC role. Mr Victory agreed to contact her with future dates and further information. |
| 4 | To consider whether the Town Council should submit and pay for the Air Ambulance night landing planning application to SHDC. | It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that due to the Town Council currently having limited capacity, it would not be able to assist in the planning application process over and above reviewing the draft application if required. It was felt that the Town Council funding the planning application was not appropriate in light of the Paige Adams Trust grant of £3000 which has already been approved by trustees. |
| 5 | To note the outcomes of the Community Budgeting survey and the next steps. Can Councillors please diary Monday 11th December 2017 from 6pm for the open public session on community budget outcomes and budget setting. | The Town Clerk updated that the questionnaire themes relating to social and the environment of the town have come out as the top scoring options. After the public meeting on 11th December a proposed 5 year budget will be an item for the Operations Committee agenda in December, before going to Full Council in January 2018 when the precept is set for the year. |
| 6 | To receive an update on the Share Shed occupation of garage. | The Town Clerk explained that there will be a requirement to reclaim this space for storage in the longer term and that this should become clearer once the budget is set. It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the Share Shed lease be extended from December 2017 until 31st March 2018, subject to 1 months notice. |
| 7 | To consider the Council Venues Working Group notes. | Cllr Westacott MBE declared a pecuniary interest as a member of the Elizabethan Society. The Town Clerk briefed that members of the Working Group will be kept up to date on progress of the issues recorded and the Operations Committee will receive future meeting notes. |
| 8 | To note the review of the internal audit provider. | The verbal update from the Town Clerk was noted. It was **AGREED** to continue using the current provider for the internal audit, in the absence of an alternative provider providing better value for money or any additional services.  It was **AGREED** that an interim audit in 17/18 is not required but would be reviewed in future years. |
| 9 | To consider how to budget for the Town Sergeant salary and expenses. | It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that an additional budget line be set up so that, as per audit requirements, so that Mayoral travel expenses can be separated from the Town Sergeant budget line. The Town Clerk explained that no virements would be carried out at this time as the expenditure is variable, but that Operations Committee should still ensure that the combined totals of the Civic budget, Town Sergeant salary and new Mayoral Travel Expenses should remain within the annual budget set. |
| 10 | To consider how to proceed with improvement and resurfacing works of the Market Square in partnership with SHDC. | The Chair proposed bringing Item 11 forward which was **AGREED.** The Town Clerk updated on a recent meeting with SHDC who have funding to resurface and improve the market square, and suggested that community engagement would be required to determine what Totnes wants from the square in the future. An issue was raised about the safety of the Civic Hall steps. The Town Clerk advised that they are the responsibility of SHDC, not TTC. It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk should pursue the Market Square project and report back to Operations Committee in due course. |
| 11 | To consider a report on the Neighbourhood Plan budget and proposed way forward. Papers include a letter from the NPSG with suggestions. | Cllr M Adams declared a pecuniary interest with regards to the Steamer Quay and left the meeting, handing the Chair to Cllr R Adams (noting the absence of Deputy Chair Cllr Sweett). Cllr R Adams opened up the meeting for public comment.  Cllr Parker spoke of her concern about the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) not being completed in time to feed into the Joint Local Plan (JLP) evidence sessions being held in January 2018. TTC needs to be clear at the public meeting on 28th November about what it can and can’t do in the NP.  Cllr Hodgson spoke about the JLP not being a ‘done deal’ and that the purpose of the evidence sessions was to challenge any points the Town Council is unhappy with.  Cllr Simms spoke of his concerns with the letter from the NP Steering Group. The draft NP contains valuable information, but there have been issues of transparency and this needs to improve. He hopes that a more practical and tangible way forward can be found and no-one should be excluded from the process.  Cllr Piper spoke about the compartmentalisation of decision making in the NP Steering Group and the need for the Town Council to represent the community, giving them a voice in taking this work forward in a transparent matter.  A member of the public spoke about the need for the public meeting to explain the history of the NP and how it will be completed.  Cllr Whitty spoke about how the NP Steering Group wishes to work cooperatively with TTC. He expressed his frustration in trying to get Councillors to engage with the NP with little discussion at Full Council and with planned meetings cancelled.  Cllr Birch spoke about the lack of transparency, particularly in relation to the release of the AECOM reports, and his concerns that the NP Steering Group does not function in an inclusive manner.  A member of the public said it was important not to repeat previous mistakes and that the public need to see a clear way forward. There should be no reference to the AECOM reports in the NP. It is important that the NP passes the referendum.  The session inviting public comment closed. Operations Committee members discussed responding to the NP Steering Group letter and **AGREED** that as TTC had promised to listen to the views of the public it would be premature to do so before the public meeting is held on 28th November. The NP needs to be taken forward in a cooperative and transparent manner, and building on the good work already done the Task and Finish Group will focus on re-drafting the areas where the public has expressed concern.  It is **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the Operations Committee creates a Task and Finish Group for the Neighbourhood Plan from its membership, which has the option to include non-Operations Committee councillors and members of the wider community. Meetings will be open to the public and Press, and will be recorded. It was noted that additional members would need to have the agreement of Full Council and would be subject to completing declarations of interest for transparency purposes.  At the end of this item Cllr M Adams was asked to rejoin the meeting. |
| *The Committee will be asked to* ***RESOLVE*** *to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.* | | |
| 12 | To consider any confidential matters arising from the Neighbourhood Plan proposals including staffing costs and structures | It was **AGREED** to fund the staffing changes and structures required to bring the NP to referendum. It was noted that Personnel had also considered and agreed this proposal. |
| 13 | To note the date of the next meeting on **Monday 18th December at 5pm** | Noted. |

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk