

Town Clerk C W Drake
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Launceston Town Council
The Town Hall
Launceston
Cornwall PL15 7AR

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
held on TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2025 at 7.00pm in the Town Hall

- PRESENT** Cllrs Bailey (Mayor), Gilbert (Deputy Mayor), Bullen, Conway, Gordon, Harris, Heaton, Hogan, Lankston, Nancarrow, O'Brien, Penhale, Soanes and Tremain
In attendance: Helen Gribble (Deputy Town Clerk)
2 members of the public
- 2501/19 Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Green and Young
- 2501/20 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- 2501/21 Public Representation Session**
There were no representations made
- 2501/22 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the last meeting, previously circulated**
It was **resolved** to confirm and sign the minutes previously circulated;
(i) Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on Tuesday 17 December 2024 at 7.00pm
- 2501/23 To receive and adopt the minutes of committees and sub-committees, previously circulated**
It was **resolved** to receive and adopt the minutes of the following committees and sub-committees:
(i) Planning and Economic Development held on Thursday 19 December 2024 at 7.00pm
(ii) Library, Arts, Business and Information held on Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 7.00pm
- 2501/24 Reports from Cornwall Councillors**

Cllr Conway spoke about Cornwall Council's Full Council meeting that had taken place that day. Cllr Conway advised the Cornwall Council will be writing to the National Trust and other large portfolio holders of holiday let properties to ask that they consider letting these as permanent lets going forward. Cllr Conway gave a update on A30 Plusha junction. Cllr Conway also advised that at the meeting it had been agreed that Cornwall will look to undertake an individual devolution deal and that all the MP's for Cornwall were in support.

Cllr Tremain spoke in support of the Cornwall only devolution approach but emphasised the need to consider the east of the county which sits on the border with Devon and it is about working together rather than being part of Devon.

Cllr Nancarrow advised the Council that she had written to Ben Maguire MP and the Cornish and Devon about Devonwall.

Cllr Soanes asked for an update on the car park consultation, Cllr Conway advised that the consultation had only recently ended and he would update once the response had been analysed.

2501/25

Reports and Questions from Town Councillors

Cllr Harris reminded the Council that there was a CCTV meeting on Monday 27th January 2025 and advised he would be attending the CALC larger councils meeting on Thursday 23rd January 25.

Cllr Heaton provided an update from the Launceston PPG, following the AGM on the 15th January she confirmed that Mr Paul Ford was re-elect as the chair of the group and Cllr Heaton the vice-chair and that the PPG now has 18 regular members. Cllr Heaton spoke about that a PPG noticeboard has been installed in the waiting area which will be updated regularly, 632 patients were seen by the Winter Pressure Clinical Hub during December, the practice website would be renewed in March, a dementia care review is being offered to patients on the dementia care register at the practice, the NI and National Living Wage increase from April will affect the medical centre and there is no additional government funding to help GP surgeries. PPG members decided to support the following in 2025, Exeter Street Health Inequalities Hub, website improvements, dementia care and a renal dialysis unit in Launceston.

Cllr Lankston gave an update following the meeting of the strategic planning working party. The group reviewed the existing list and set out a list in order of priority. The group have asked for the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 to be added to the February Full Council agenda and that each committee reviews and updates the relevant sections at the committees next meeting. The next meeting of the working party will be held in March and officers of the Council are invited to attend.

2501/26

Report from the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Mayor provided an update on the Mayoral activities

2501/27

Report from the Town Clerk

It was resolved to note the RAG report

Cllr Tremain asked for the transfer of Kensey allotment land to be added to the RAG report.

2501/28

English Devolution White Paper – Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth

Members considered Report 01/25 concerning the above (previously circulated).

It was resolved to note the report

2501/29

Funding update for Council building projects

Members considered Report 02/25 concerning the above (previously circulated).

It was resolved to note the report

2501/30

Correspondence and Matters to Note

It was resolved to;

- i) note the venue usage

2501/31

Urgent Items

There were no items for consideration

Date of the next meeting of the Council

The next Full Council meeting will be an Extraordinary Meeting to be held on Thursday 30 January 2025

The meeting ended at 7.37pm

Signed Date

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MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING
held on THURSDAY 30 JANUARY 2025 at 7.00pm in the Town Hall

- PRESENT** Cllrs Bailey (Mayor), Gilbert (Deputy Mayor), Bullen, Conway, Gordon, Harris, Heaton, Hogan, Lankston, Nancarrow, O'Brien, Penhale, Soanes, Tremain and Young
In attendance: Christopher Drake (Town Clerk)
Helen Gribble (Deputy Town Clerk)
2 members of the public
- 2501/42 Apologies for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllr Green
- 2501/43 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- 2501/44 Budget and Precept 2025-2026**
Members considered Report 01/25 concerning the above (previously circulated).
It was **resolved** to note the report
- 2501/45 Funding update for Council building projects**
The budget and precept request had been resolved by the Finance and General Purposes committee and had been circulated with the agenda for the Full Council.
It was **resolved unanimously**;
i) to adopt the budget for 2025-26
ii) that the precept for 2025-26 be £1,162,399
- 2501/46 Urgent Items**
The Mayor advised that she will be attending the Launceston College prize giving taking place on 13 March

The announcement of recent bank branch closures in the town was noted

Date of the next meeting of the Council

The next Full Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 18 February 2025

The meeting ended at 7.26pm

Signed Date

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MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

held on WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2025 at 7.00pm in The Otho Peter Suites, Launceston Town Hall

- PRESENT** Cllrs Bailey (Town Mayor), Gilbert (Deputy Mayor), Bullen, Conway, Heaton, Hogan, O'Brien, Soanes and Young
In attendance: Cllr Lankston, Responsible Finance Officer, Estates and Properties Manager
- 2501/32 Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies for absence
- 2501/33 Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Bullen declared an interest in agenda item 8 the grant applications received from North Petherwin Football Club, Launceston Football Club and Werrington Football Club.
Councillor Hogan declared an interest in agenda item 7 & 8 the grant applications received from Launceston Town Band
- 2501/34 Public Representation Session**
There were no members of the public present
- 2501/35 Minutes of the last meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2025 were signed as a correct record.
- 2501/36 Finance**
It was **resolved** to:
i) approve the payment listings for November and December 2024
ii) approve the balance sheet for December 2024
iii) approve the budget comparison report for December 2024
iv) The Councillors listed below will carry out the payment check for the following months:
January 25 – Cllr Bullen
February 25 – Cllr Bailey
March 25 – Cllr Gilbert
April 25 – Cllr Bullen
- 2501/37 Budget 2025/26**
It was **resolved** to;
i) agree the budget for 2025/26 of £2,546,563 with a Precept of £1,162,399. This equates to a Band D of £355.46 an increase of £31.09
- 2501/38 Exceptional Grants**
----- Councillor Hogan declared an interest and left the room while the following item was discussed -----

It was **resolved** to award an exceptional grant of £250 to Launceston Town Band.

2501/39

Grants

It was **resolved** that;

- i) a grant of £250 be awarded to the following organisations;

----- Councillor Hogan declared an interest and left the room while the following grant were considered -----

- a) Launceston Town Band

----- Councillor Hogan returned to the room -----

----- Councillor Bailey declared an interest and left the room while the following grant were considered -----

- b) Launceston Youth Music Theatre

----- Councillor Bailey returned to the room -----

- c) Access Theatre CIO
- d) Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust
- e) Launceston Male Voice Choir
- f) Café Scientifique
- g) Launceston Explorer Scouts
- h) 1st Launceston Scout Group
- i) Launceston Street Pastors
- j) Launceston Choral Society
- k) Launceston Repair Café

----- Councillor Bullen declared an interest and left the room while the following grants were considered -----

- l) Werrington Cricket Club
- m) Launceston Association Football Club
- n) North Petherwin Football Club

----- Councillor Bullen returned to the room -----

Annual Automatic Grants

It was **resolved** that the following awards be made:

- i)
 - a) St Mary Magdalene, St Thomas', St Stephen's and St Cuthbert Mayne churches for the maintenance of churchyards - £250 each
 - b) Youth Council – spend up to £3,000
 - c) Launceston Carnival - £750
 - d) Launceston in Bloom - £1,000
 - e) Town CCTV - £3,000
 - f) Friends of Launceston Priory – up to £1,000
 - g) Launceston Municipal Charities - £500
 - h) Launceston Community Transport Partnership - £500
 - i) Launceston Foodbank - £1,000
 - j) Launceston Money Advice Centre - £500
 - k) The Council Tax payments for Cyprus Well - £2,100

2501/40

Award of Appreciation

It was **resolved** to award Awards of Appreciation to Mrs Jennifer Worth.

2501/41

Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 8.33 pm.

Signed

Date

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
held on Thursday 30 January 2025 at 7.29pm
The Guildhall, Launceston Town Hall

Present Cllrs Bailey (Mayor), Gilbert (Deputy Mayor), Gordon (Vice Chair), Harris, Lankston, Nancarrow and Penhale and Tremain
In attendance: Cllrs Conway, Heaton, Hogan and Soanes
Christopher Drake (Town Clerk)

2501/47 Apologies
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Green who was substituted by Cllr Soanes

2501/48 Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations

2501/49 Public Representation
There were no representations made

2501/50 Minutes of the last meetings
The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2024 were signed as a correct record

2501/51 Planning Decisions to Note
It was **resolved** to note the applications
Application PA24/08422
Location Manaton Dunheved Road Launceston Cornwall PL15 9JE
Proposal Works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order for Beech (T2) - radial spread reduction of up to 1.5m upon the south elevation. Works will increase light to vegetable garden and greenhouse. Beech (T9) - reduce limb back to growth point to clear fencing due to be constructed. Norway Maple (T60) - remove. Tree is almost dead and now requires removal. Chamaecyparis (T61) - fell. Felling will allow a Red Oak to develop into the space.
Decision APPROVED
Town Council SUPPORT

2501/52 Correspondence and Items to Note
1) Cllr Gordon spoke about the revised National Planning Framework and requested that Cornwall Councillor Monk be invited to attend a future meeting of the committee to discuss the implications
2) Cllr Nancarrow commented on the parliamentary and Mayoral division proposals
3) Members were requested to advise the Clerk of any comments they had in regards to the proposed Cornwall Council tree planting scheme at Broad Park
4) Members noted that the planning application for tree works at Jubilee Bath, Under Lane – application reference PA24/07851 had now been supported by Cornwall Council

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 20 February 2025

The meeting closed at 7.43pm

Signed..... Date.....

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MINUTES OF THE ESTATES & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE MEETING
Held on Monday 3 February 2025
at 10.00am in The Otho Peter Suites.

PRESENT: Cllrs Bailey (Mayor), Gilbert (Deputy Mayor), Gordon, Harris, Heaton, Penhale and Young

In attendance: Martin Cornish (Estates & Properties Manager)
Ewan Murray (Visitor Information Centre Manager)

- 2502/01 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received by Cllr Bullen
- 2502/02 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest
- 2502/03 Public Representation Session**
There were no representations made
- 2502/04 Minutes of the last meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd December 2024 were signed as a correct record.
- 2502/05 Estates & Properties Manager's Report – February 2025**
It was resolved to;
- i) note the update regarding Lawrence House
 - ii) note the update regarding the multi storey car park reports
 - iii) note the update regarding consents for Southgate Arch
 - iv) note the update regarding works at the Ambulance Hall
 - v) note the update regarding Town Hall quinquennial inspection
 - vi) note the update regarding Public Toilet provision
 - vii) note the update regarding Visitor Information Centre works
 - viii) note the update regarding Coach Park works
 - ix) note the update regarding Priory Park tender works. Thanks were extended by the committee to Ewan Murray, Lauren Green and Martin Cornish for their work on this
 - x) note the update regarding the devolution of land at Windmill & Newport

xi) Note the update regarding the new grounds compound

2502/06 Southgate Arch

It was **resolved unanimously** that the Project Management of works to the Southgate Arch be awarded to Scott & Co

2502/07 Visitor Information Centre

It was agreed by the Committee that the Visitor Information Centre close for up to three weeks from the week commencing 24th February for essential works

2502/08 Launceston Castle

Having already agreed the 25/26 year budget, the committee reluctantly had to decline the request from English Heritage for financial assistance in litter picking at the Castle. This will be brought back for consideration for the 26/27 year budget setting

2502/09 Urgent Items

CLlr Bailey raised concern over the large amount of waste collection left out on the streets of the town

CLlr Bailey advised of bin provision on the Haye Common estate

CLlr Gordon asked for the next pre meeting site visit be at Southgate Arch

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Estates & Properties committee be held on Monday 7th April 2025

Date of the next meeting

The next meeting date will be held on Monday 7 April 2025

The meeting closed at 11.01am

Signed.....

Date.....

Agenda item: 9

Committee: Full Council

Date: Tuesday 18 February 2025

Subject: Progress and Information

Summary: To note the update on various items of progress and information

Recommendations.

The Council is recommended to;

- 1) Note the update regarding funding schemes for Town Council projects**
- 2) Note the details regarding replacement equipment at the Town Hall**
- 3) Note the details regarding the planning application and insurance of the former Barclays Bank building**
- 4) Note the details of the latest edition of Launceston Life**
- 5) Note the schedule for the temporary closure of the Visitor Information Centre**

1 Lawrence House Museum and Grant Funding

- 1.1** Officers met with Kelly Spry-Phare, Senior Engagement Manager of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Tamsin Daniel, Heritage Services Manager at Cornwall Council and Cornwall Council Museum Development Officer Stephanie Clemens to consider the funding opportunities available to the Town Council in regards to heritage buildings and town conservation.
- 1.2** Officers were seeking to explore the possibility of a large Heritage Lottery Fund bid that would include works to Lawrence House, the former Barclays Bank and Southgate Arch. Advice received from Ms Spry-Phare was that efforts should be directed at securing the services of a development specialist to ensure that funding was directed at the right areas for Lawrence House and to show that the Council had a clear vision of what it was seeking to achieve. The reasoning is that a grant bid in the future could be sought using the work at Lawrence House as proof of the Council's capability in securing funding and achieving best value. Officers have since spoken to both Ms Clemens and Ms Spry-Phare seeking guidance on the next stage of the process and a further meeting will be held in two weeks' time

2 Town Hall lighting desk

- 2.1** Further to an event held at the Town Hall where the lighting equipment failed to work, a new lighting desk is required to allow the Council to continue to offer the various packages and events currently held at the site. The previous system was no longer able to be updated and so officers have secured the purchase of replacement kit. Whilst the new equipment is on order, a substitute kit has been hired to allow the current bookings to be undertaken.

3 Former Barclays Bank

- 3.1** The planning application for the former Barclays Bank has now been submitted and signage erected at the site in accordance with planning regulations. The application is for the conversion of the former bank building into a multi-functional public library and visitor's information centre, with council offices, internal alterations and external works including

restoration of stone facades and pitched roofs and the replacement of building services with new mechanical systems and air source heat pumps.

- 3.2 The site is now valued and listed as part of the Council's insurance portfolio and officers have undertaken a self-assessment of the site in accordance with insurance guidelines

4 Launceston Life – Spring Edition

- 4.1 The Spring edition of Launceston Life includes full details of the Council's budget setting process and the costs of the Town Council's precept demand for residents according to the Band listing of their property. Similar details have also been published on the Council's website

5 Visitor Information Centre

- 5.1 The Council has previously agreed that whilst repair works to the Visitor Information Centre are being undertaken that the premises will need to be closed. Attached as an appendix is a schedule for the closure period. Details of the closure will be advertised on the Council's media pages as well as signage at the site

Contact officer: Christopher Drake – Town Clerk
Wednesday 10 February 2025

VIC Closure for repairs – Proposed schedule.

21/02/25	Friday – Last full day of service to the public.
22/02/25	Saturday – VIC closed to the public but all 3 working. The electrician starts first thing Monday morning so we have to move computers/electricals/displays/products etc upstairs. Clearly we can't move the photo machine and photocopier so we will have to wrap them.
24/02/25	Monday – Electrician in VIC for the week. Zoe will work this day instead of Tuesday. All VIC staff in OP 2 – I have booked it.
25/02/25 – 01/03/25	Tuesday - Lauren and Ewan on safeguarding training – Zoe day off. For the rest of the week, we will work off site/town hall/ambulance hall/home on on-going projects/Priory/SGS/website/museum etc – Ewan out at schools Wednesday and Thursday. Ewan to Truro on Friday
03/03/25 – 07/03/25	VIC decoration/flooring/plumbing – Staff working upstairs when possible – St Piran's prep on Tuesday – St Piran Parade Wednesday – Ewan to schools Monday
10/03/25	Build desks and refit out downstairs – rationalise storage organisation upstairs.

PROJECTS	PERSON/S RESPONSIBLE	NOTES	STATUS
Library relocate to new Hub	Town Clerk	RIBA Stage 3 works complete Planning application submitted and out for consultation	Priority project
Lawrence House repairs and future maintenance programme	Town Clerk/Snr Mgt Team Council	Exterior works completed. Contractor working on undertaking internal works. Museum artefacts temporarily stored at rented units in Pennygillam. Working Party group established. Trust status legal advice received from Wheelers Law Group - 4 September Historic Impact Assessment of site undertaken in preparation of pre planning application and copy received 12 November 24 Meeting with Lottery Heritage Fund on 4 February to discuss further stage of funding. Details of meeting included at February Council	Ongoing
Design and build of new grounds compound	Estates Mgr	Site visits have been held and a quotation and design works received. Ecology Assessment undertaken. Planning permission granted. Funding for the site agreed as part of 2025/26 budget	Completed
New skatepark installation at Coronation Park	Town Clerk		
Priory Park play equipment installation project	RFO/ Estates Mgr	Public consultation event held CIL funding bid successful and Expression of Interest advertised in January 2025	

Heads of Terms for skatepark	Town Clerk Coronation Park Trust	Draft Terms agreed and to be signed by CP Trust	STATUS
Town Hall changing room refurbishment	Estates Mgr	Architects have visited the site and quotations have been received. This work will be reviewed following the conclusion of the current priority projects	
Town Hall stage accessibility	Estates Mgr	This work is being reviewed as part of the changing room refurbishment	
Green Room building future use	Council	Council to agree use for the site. This work will be reviewed following the conclusion of the current priority projects Site currently being used to store some grounds equipment due to poor state of container at grounds compound	
Electric charging points installed	Estates Mgr	Works agreed but will be considered once required works to the car park have been identified as these may impact on the installation.	
			Completed

Car park refurbished and new signage erected	Estates Mgr	PCA report received and considered by June Estates and Properties committee. Condition report update received and Council considered details at September meeting. Condition details to be considered	STATUS Priority project Ongoing Completed
Transfer of land for new allotment	Town Clerk	Legal agreement to be agreed	
New cemetery land acquisition			
Conversion of new land at St Thomas as rest garden	Town Clerk	TC working with Barrett Homes regarding flooding issues. Solicitors undertaking legal permissions (costs covered by Barrett Homes). Council seeking compensation for land use and awaiting response from Barrett Homes	
Installation of live streaming equipment at Town Hall	Town Clerk/RFO	OWL system viewed and costed at £1000 +. Report to be taken to future F+GP meeting to discuss funding and suitability	
Adoption of new nature area at Ridgegrove	Town Clerk/ Estates Mgr	Solicitors appointed to undertake legal agreement works and documents signed. Land Registry and funding documents signed and returned. Agreement made and completed and awaiting registration documents	

Adoption of new nature are at Windmill Hill	Town Clerk/ Estates Mgr	Solicitors appointed to undertake legal agreement works documents signed. Land Registry and funding documents signed and returned. Agreement made and completed and awaiting registration documents
Town Vitality Fund works	RFO/VIC Mgr	Meetings ongoing to agree projects and new funding streams.
Quality Gold Accreditation	Town Clerk	Gold statements agreed Dec 23 and TC completing final policy updates. Resolved at March 24 Council that requirements are met. Council agreed not to pursue accreditation further as of May 2024
New town bypass to be investigated	Town Clerk	West Devon Bourough Council and Cornwall Council have been contacted about the project and meeting dates TBA.
Replacement roof at Ambulance Hall	Estates Mgr	
Rail link with Okehampton and/or Tavistock	VIC Manager	Connect Launceston meeting on monthly basis. Proposals supported by GWR, Network Rail

Agenda item: 10

Committee: Full Council

Date: Tuesday 18 February 2025

Subject: Publicity During the Pre-Election Period

Summary: To note the details regarding publicity during the Pre-Election Period

Recommendations.

The Council is recommended to;

- 1) note the details regarding publicity during the Pre-Election Period**
- 2) note the timetable for events for Town and Parish Council elections attached as an Appendix to the report**

1 Publicity During the Pre-Election Period

- 1.1 The pre-election period for local authorities will start from the publication of a notice of election, which will be Friday 14 March 2025
- 1.2 Local government does not shut down from this time and the ordinary functions of councils can continue, but some restrictions may be imposed by law. The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011 is based around seven principles to ensure that all communications activity:
 - is lawful
 - is cost effective
 - is objective
 - is even-handed
 - is appropriate
 - has regard to equality and diversity
 - is issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.
- 1.3 This last principle, to ensure special care is taken during periods of heightened sensitivity, is of particular relevance during the pre-election period. The publication of press notices and information regarding the holding of polls are exempt from these restrictions as is providing factual responses to specific requests for information, for example, information about how people can register to vote.
- 1.4 In general, authorities should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters, ensure that publicity relating to policies and proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate, and comply with laws which prohibit political advertising on television or radio.

2 Legal basis and official guidance

- 2.1 The pre-election restrictions are governed by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986, as amended in 1988. Essentially councils should 'not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party'.

Publicity is defined as 'any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public'.

2.2 The first question a Council should ask is 'could a reasonable person conclude that a Council are spending public money to influence the outcome of the election? When making any decision, the Council should consider the following:

It should not:

- produce publicity on matters which are politically controversial
- make references to individual candidates or parties in press releases
- arrange proactive media or events involving candidates
- issue photographs which include candidates
- supply council photographs or other materials to political group staff unless verified that they will not be used for campaigning purposes
- help with national political visits (as this would involve using public money to support a particular candidate or party). These type of events should be organised by political parties with no cost or resource implications for the council.

2.3 The Council should also think carefully before it:

- Continues to run campaign material to support local campaigns. If the campaign is already running and is non-controversial (for example, on issues like recruitment, recycling) and would be a waste of public money to cancel or postpone them, then continue. However, the Council should always think carefully if a campaign could be deemed likely to influence the outcome of the election. In such cases it should stop or defer them. An example might be a campaign on an issue which has been subject of local political debate and/or disagreement.
- Launch any new consultations. Unless it is a statutory duty or considered normal council business, such as budget consultations. Councils should consider carefully before starting any new consultations or publish report findings from consultation exercises, which could be politically sensitive.

2.3 The Council is allowed to:

- continue to discharge normal council business (including budget consultations or determining planning applications, even if they are controversial)
- publish factual information to counteract misleading, controversial or extreme information.

Contact officer: Christopher Drake – Town Clerk
Wednesday 10 February 2025



Cornwall Association of Local Councils

Unit 1, 1 Riverside House, Heron Way, Newham, Truro TR1 2XN

Appendix 1:

2025 Calendar Of Key Dates For Local Council Elections

Date	Event/Action
Wednesday 6th November 2024	Casual vacancies no longer to be filled via election.
Friday 14th March 2025	Publish of notice of election and candidate packs available
	Pre-Election Period (formerly "purdah") begins
Wednesday 2nd April, 4pm	Deadline for submission of candidate nomination papers
	Deadline for withdrawals of nomination
Thursday 3rd April, 4pm	Publish of statement of persons nominated no later than 4pm
Wednesday 23rd April	Publish of notice of contested polls
	Notice of Uncontested Election issued if applicable
Thursday 1st May	Polling day Pre-Election Period ends at 10pm when polls close
Tuesday 6 May, 2025	Change of Council - Former Cllrs term ends, new Cllrs begin
	Earliest point for issuing summons for Annual Council Meeting
	Point at which any remaining vacancies can start to be filled via co-option
Monday 12th May to Tuesday 20th May (inclusive)	Period where Annual Council Meeting must take place
	Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed before Annual Council Meeting
Thursday 29th May	Deadline for return of election expenses forms
Tuesday 3rd June	Deadline to submit Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
Wednesday 5th November	Deadline for Code of Conduct training to have been completed by all Cllrs

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024

December 2019

Launceston Town Council

Launceston Town Council has 16 elected members. Elections take place every four years, the last being in May 2017. The next elections will take place in May 2021. The Full Council ratifies the decisions made by the committees and makes decisions on the larger issues which affect the council and the town. The council is non-political. The Annual Parish Meeting is held in March and the Annual General Meeting of the Council is held in May. The Council became a Quality Town Council in October 2010.

There are nine full time and thirteen part-time members of staff. The full time posts are as follows;

Town Clerk, Properties Manager, TIC Manager, Support Services Officer, TIC Assistant, Senior Groundsman and three Groundsmen.

The part time positions are;

The Responsible Financial Officer, Administrative Assistant, three Facilities Stewards, TIC Assistant, Senior Library and Information Assistant, four Library Assistants, Library Cleaner and Museum Cleaner

Launceston Town Council assets and services:

- Launceston Town Hall and Guildhall
- The Ambulance Hall
- Lawrence House Museum
- Launceston Tourist Information Centre
- Launceston Library
- Launceston Cemetery
- Dockacre closed cemetery
- Allotments - Dutson, Grammers Park and Kensey Vale
- Coach Park - Western Road
- Multi-storey car park in Westgate Street
- Public conveniences - Westgate Street, Race Hill, The Walk, Newport
- War Memorial
- Southgate Arch (leased to Causley Trust)
- The Roundhouse, Newport
- The Bandroom (leased to Launceston Town Band)
- The Green Room (leased to LADS)
- Launceston Priory Ruins
- Grammers Park and play area
- King's Field and play area
- Stourscombe public open spaces
- The Rest Garden, Newport
- Windmill Wood
- Public seats
- Bus shelters
- Street lights (3)

Launceston Town Council provides the following partnership services with Cornwall Council:

- Grass cutting and horticultural work in the town and surrounding parishes
- Grass cutting of Highways
- Management of the Town Square
- Management of the Parade Ground

Launceston Town Council manages the town square and parade ground on behalf of Cornwall Council. Maintenance remains the responsibility of Cornwall Council.

The original Strategic Plan set out Launceston Town Council's aims and objectives for five years from 2008. The second plan (2015-2019) continued to build on those aims and objectives. The plan outlines the policies through which the Town Council will seek to achieve the best possible outcomes for the town and the community.

The Strategic Plan is based on the terms of reference for the Council's committees:

Finance & General Purposes

Staffing

Planning and Economic Development

Lawrence House Management

Estates and Properties

Tourism and Information Services

Each committee has its own objectives and policies, which flow from the Town Council's Mission Statement and strategic objectives. Committee budgets are detailed in the Town Council's annual budget, which is drawn up in November.

Mission Statement

The primary role of Launceston Town Council is to provide a democratic and representative voice for the community. It will support, and contribute towards, the sustainable economic and social well-being of the town, having regard to the needs and wishes of the local community. Launceston Town Council recognises its obligations to deliver cost-effective quality services. Launceston Town Council will work with other councils to ensure that the town remains at the heart of the local community.

Aims and Values:

- To show clear and positive community leadership
- To be open and accountable, and to conduct the Council's business with integrity and impartiality
- To consult effectively and to represent the views of the residents at all levels of local and national government
- To promote continuous improvement of Council services, and of services provided by others
- To use resources effectively and efficiently
- To support the local economy by using local service providers whenever possible
- To respond quickly and efficiently to all enquiries
- To arrange civic and ceremonial duties in a dignified manner to uphold, enhance and promote the status of the town

Strategic Objectives

- To promote equality of access to services
- To enhance the quality of life of residents by providing services and facilities which reflect the identified needs of the community
- To ensure that public services are responsive to the needs of the community
- To build and maintain effective working relationships with statutory agencies and other partners

- To improve and preserve the town environment and to champion ways to address the climate and nature emergency
- To improve communications between Launceston Town Council and the community it serves, including local parishes
- To support local organisations through councillor representation and by making grants available
- To make the Town Hall a hub of community life
- To provide tourist and community information services to the town
- To protect services provided by other agencies eg Launceston Hospital, Registration Services
- To use the General Power of Competence to develop the Council's work
- To support all members of staff in regards to their health and wellbeing

Achieving the Council's strategic objectives

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To work with Cornwall Council to ensure the best result for Launceston in all decisions taken in relation to service provision
- To continue the councillor surgeries at the monthly town Market
- To continue to enhance the Council's social media profile
- To contribute council news to Launceston Life (published quarterly, delivered to 12000 homes in and around Launceston)
- To continue to provide news stories to the local press

Medium term objectives (2/3years)

- To explore other methods of improving communication
- To ensure that Launceston benefits from the Unitary Authority by delivering a range of services on behalf of Cornwall Council
- To support and encourage the Youth Council
- To make individual councillors portfolio holders for specific tasks
- To be accredited as a Quality Gold Council in the Local Council Award Scheme

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To continue to develop and strengthen the relationship with Cornwall Council
- To work with the Chamber of Commerce and the commercial property sector to keep Launceston as a viable and thriving town centre

Strategic Plan - Monitoring and evaluation

- The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually
- Individual committees will continually review progress
- On-going dialogue with partner organisations and the community will take place
- Comparison with the Annual Plan to ensure aims and objectives are complimentary

Finance & General Purposes Committee

This committee covers all matters relating to Council's finances and the efficient and effective management of its resources.

Strategic Objectives

- To manage the Council's resources efficiently and effectively
- To build and maintain a suitable general reserve as well as allocating and reviewing relevant earmarked reserves
- To ensure that risk assessments are undertaken for all relevant areas of the Council's work and for

all assets

- To respond to consultation documents on behalf of the Council
- To put in place and operate systems and procedures which process transactions effectively and cost-efficiently.
- To review the Council's asset register on an annual basis

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To continue to support the town's CCTV system
- To set a four year budget

Medium term objectives (2/3years)

- To manage any devolution of assets and services from Cornwall Council

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To maximise income from all sources in order to minimise increases in the precept

Staffing Committee

The Staffing Committee is responsible for ensuring that all legal obligations are met with regard to employment and remuneration. The committee formulates employment policies, and oversees recruitment, staff development and training. In the event of a grievance or dispute the committee will make recommendations to Council on procedure. The Council, as a corporate body, is the employer.

Strategic Objectives

- To ensure that staff are qualified, trained and motivated to provide high quality services to the town
- To regularly review staffing requirements to ensure that all areas of work are properly supported
- To review and update the Employee Handbook
- To review the staffing levels to ensure they are proper and consistent

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To maintain a basic training programme for councillors and staff
- To support members of staff who wish to take the Working With Your Council course
- To support the Town Clerk in his role as Membership Secretary for the Cornwall Society of Local Council Clerks

Medium term objectives (2/3 years)

- To develop a focused training programme for all councillors

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To retain staff and their expertise, to ensure continuity, stability and quality

Estates and Properties Committee

The committee has responsibility for the physical assets belonging to the Council (Town Hall and Guildhall, Ambulance Hall, Library, car park and public conveniences, priory ruins, Southgate Arch, Roundhouse, Band Room, Green Room, coach park, war memorial) and for advising the council on the best future uses of the buildings. In addition the committee has responsibility for Launceston Cemetery, the closed cemetery at Dockacre Road, Windmill Wood, allotments at Dutson, Grammers Park and Kensey, King George's Playing Field (Priory Park) and Grammers Park. Also included within the committee remit are grass cutting and footpaths service agreements with Cornwall Council. The committee is also responsible for environmental issues affecting the Town Council and the town. The committee also advises on prospective purchases or leases

Strategic Objectives:

- To develop the Town Hall to its full potential
- To ensure that all properties are properly maintained, and that a rolling programme of works is followed
- To protect the historic Priory site
- To review the Council's property portfolio
- To maintain all open spaces to a high standard
- To minimise the Town Council's carbon footprint through using less (energy, materials) and recycling more
- To take on more service level agreements with Cornwall Council for public open space within the town
- To ensure an attractive, litter free town environment

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To continue to actively market the Town Hall as a venue, particularly for conferences and meetings and ensuring the venue provides a diverse range of arts and entertainment for all ages
- To continue a maintenance program to include cyclical scheduling for all Council owned properties.
- To continue to improve the standard of the allotment gardens and services to tenants
- To improve play facilities in the town
- To make Launceston a Plastic Free Town
- To support environmental initiatives within the town

Medium term objectives (2/3years)

- To continue making the Town Hall a thriving centre for community activities
- To continue to improve the income generated by Town Hall lettings with an increase in marketing
- To make better use of The Walk and Zigzag as community resources
- To identify areas where the council can become 'greener'
- To digitise the cemetery records and make them available online
- To work with Residents Associations to help keep Launceston tidy
- To make Newport and Riverside more attractive for leisure activities
- To ensure that the local footpaths network is accessible to walkers

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To explore the feasibility of acquiring adjoining land from British Gas to extend the Priory site
- To develop the site allocated for a cemetery extension and provide a new cemetery
- To be in a position to offer leadership on environmental issues
- To consider forming independent allotment associations to manage the sites

Lawrence House Management Committee

The Management Committee of the Lawrence House Museum consists of seven councillors, the Curator of the museum, the Chairman of the Friends of Lawrence House, the Museum Administrator, representatives of the Museum volunteers, the Town Clerk acting as Secretary and the Responsible Financial Officer acting as Treasurer. The museum is funded through a grant from the Town Council and from donations from visitors, as well as the occasional bequest. The Management Committee oversees the development of the museum and its collections, and is advised by the Curator.

Lawrence House is owned by the National Trust and has been leased to the Town Council on a 99 year repairing lease from April 1992.

Strategic Objective

- To conserve and document evidence of the culture, history and natural history of Launceston and district, and to present it to the public through imaginative educational displays and events.

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To increase community use of the building
- To recruit additional volunteers, who may work in conjunction with other Council volunteer schemes
- To identify potential grant funding streams

Medium term objectives (2/3years)

- To continue to computerise the town archive
- To encourage continued primary schools involvement with the museum
- To continue to catalogue acquisitions
- To identify potential income stream increases to include the provision of a café/tearoom/retail

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To give future tenants of the flat a caretaker role
- To identify potential business and individual sponsors
- To identify potential grant funding streams
- To increase corporate and group use of the house and garden

Planning and Economic Development Committee

The Committee considers all planning applications in the town and makes recommendations for approval or refusal to the Planning Committee of Cornwall Council. The committee's terms of reference include Town Centre management, the Town Square and associated events and liaison with the Chamber of Commerce, to maximise the Town Council's role in influencing the further development of the town.

Strategic Objectives

- To maintain a proactive role in the future development of the town and its surroundings
- To achieve a sustainable future for the town, its inhabitants and the local community
- To ensure that all planning development is appropriate and beneficial and builds on the unique character and geography of the town
- To support the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies in promoting beneficial economic development
- To monitor changes in legislation

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To take a proactive role in the development of any town planning strategies
- To ensure the views of the local community are incorporated within the plans for future development
- To ensure the Town Council's views are given appropriate weighting in decision making
- To promote use of the town centre, including the Parade Ground

Medium term objectives (2/3years)

- To develop a system of local plans which are appropriate to the needs of the town
- To encourage redevelopment of underused and outdated sites in the town centre

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To preserve the historic character of the town
- Review infrastructure requirements to ensure they match development plans

- Ensure that development plans reflect the aspirations of the local community
- To be prepared to adapt to changes in legislation which may assist economic development and local employment

Tourism and Information Services Committee

The committee is responsible for developing tourism, promoting the town and managing and expanding the role of the Tourist Information Centre. A business plan for the TIC was approved by Full Council in July 2012.

Strategic objectives:

- To promote Launceston as a visitor destination
- To offer a range of visitor and community services through the TIC
- To support local tourism businesses
- To facilitate and promote local events, arts and cultural opportunities
- To position the TIC at the heart of the community
- To incorporate the services provision of Launceston Library within the committee's portfolio

Short term objectives (1 year)

- To streamline the running of the monthly markets
- To continue to develop internet marketing strategies including social media
- To continue to explore ways to increase footfall to the TIC and town Centre
- To improve signage within the town and at all entrances to the town
- To promote Launceston to coach operators and other groups throughout the south west
- To visually improve the car park and coach park
- To rename the service as the Visitor Information Centre

Medium term objectives (2/3 years)

- To raise the profile of the service in Cornwall and the South West
- To continue to increase the range of services through partnerships
- To continue to develop new products to improve sustainability of the service
- To continue to review and develop new marketing materials to increase awareness of the town and its attractions
- To use best endeavours to increase turnover year on year

Long term objectives (3 years +)

- To endeavour to increase turnover to cover running costs
- To make the centre the visitor marketing arm of the Council
- To increase the number of visitors to Launceston

Agenda item: 12

Committee: Full Council

Date: Tuesday 18 February 2025

Subject: Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England

Summary: To consider the details regarding the Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England consultation

Recommendations.

The Council is recommended to;

- 1) note the details regarding the Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England consultation**
- 2) agree a response to the consultation in line with that proposed by the Cornwall Association of Local Councils**

1 Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England

- 1.1 Local Government bodies, including Parish and Town Councils, have been lobbying Government to introduce sanctions within the standards and ethics regime since 2011. The lack of meaningful sanctions for the most serious breaches of the code has been identified as a significant barrier to confidence in local government and standing for election and is a key strand in the Civility and Respect Pledge.
- 1.2 The Government has recognised the need for a change in the standards regime and has launched a consultation on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England.
Proposals include :
 - the reintroduction of a single national model code of conduct
 - the governance arrangements around managing the standards regime, including voting rights
 - new powers to suspend councillors found in serious breach of their code and if appropriate interim suspension
 - a new category of disqualification for gross misconduct or multiple suspensions within a 5 year period
 - a role for a national body to deal with appeals.
- 1.3 The consultation is open to all local authorities including parish and town councils, councillors, officers, residents and local government sector bodies and closes on February 26 2025. Responses must be made online and every local council is being encouraged to make a corporate response.
- 1.4 The Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) has published a commentary to the individual questions and included its draft response. The commentary is intended to provide some background to the proposals and considerations for local councils when drafting their response. The paper draws on information provided by the Monitoring Officer and was

shared with Cornwall Council's Standards Committee at a meeting on 6 February 2025 to consider its response.

- 1.5 Attached as an appendix to this report is the CALC response and the Town Council is recommended to agree its response in line with that proposed by CALC

Contact officer: Christopher Drake – Town Clerk
Wednesday 10 February 2025

STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND

Appendix 1

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
4. Who we would like to hear from			
1	Who are you responding to this consultation as		[Insert name of Council]
5. Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework			
5 a) Mandatory minimum prescribed code of conduct			
2	Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?	A single prescribed code of conduct which covers all elected members will help with consistency, creating a national framework of Standards and Ethics as well as developing best practice across all tiers of local government. In Cornwall there is a single code across all tiers which works well and promotes high standards across all councils.	YES
3	If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?	It is important that there is flexibility to add to what might be in a prescribed code. Having a model code with the ability to add for local variation e.g. threshold for gifts and hospitality, varying responsibilities for unitary members etc would be useful. It would be helpful if there was a caveat that local councils adopted the principal authority code (including additions) but were able to adapt for their local need, so that the consistency in local standards across all tiers is maintained.	YES – it is important that there is flexibility on what can be added to the model code.
4	Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for member to co-operate with investigations into code breaches?	This is already in the Cornwall Code and should be retained. Not all complaints automatically proceed to investigation; some are referred for other action especially those relating to employment matters/bullying harassment and intimidation. It would be helpful if the requirement was to 'cooperate with investigations or other steps leading to the determination of allegations of breaches of the code.'	YES
5 b) Standards Committees - these questions relate to the role and governance of the Standards Committee of Cornwall Council			
5	Does your local authority currently maintain a Standards Committee		YES
6	Should all principal authorities be required to form a Standards Committee	The Cornwall Council's Standards Committee also manages complaints including the Local Govt Ombudsman, vexatious complainants and complaints against the organisation and its staff. This does lead to a focus being on those complaints rather than ethical standards, and it would be helpful for a member	YES – whilst the functions could be delegated to another committee, there should be a body drawn from the principal council, lay members and parish and town councillors

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		panel to hold the responsibility for the code itself making recommendations to the Standards Committee from time to time. The panel would then be able to consider trends in complaints and decisions and make recommendations on additional materials and training.	responsible for maintaining the code, responding to trends in complaints and behaviours and making recommendations as required.
7	In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?	In some cases allegations are taken forward for determination without the need for a full investigation. Under current arrangements decisions are delegated to officers and there are no hearings for complaints under the code of conduct. There should be scope for determinations to be made by an officer under delegated authority but with a clear understanding of the threshold which would require a full investigation and referral to the Standards Committee or a panel of Committee members for determination.	YES (There is no text box for commentary so by answering yes it allows for the Standards Committee to set its own local procedures.)
8	Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?	There appears to be some confusion in this question. <i>The independent person</i> has a practical role as part of the triage and assessment process, including supporting the subject member. It is essential that Independent Persons remain impartial and should not be co-opted onto any committee which sets the policy and procedures of the standards regime. <i>Independent lay members</i> of the Standards Committee should be eligible to vote. They provide objectivity and insight into support the committee to ensure fairness and integrity in the ethical standards regime. They are only involved in setting policy and procedure and play no part in the assessment process.	YES (for a lay person) this is important for ensuring objectivity. Note : this is another closed set of responses but CALC supports giving voting rights to lay members including parish and town council representatives to demonstrate further objectivity and impartiality in the decision-making process. Coupled with locally determined rules in relation to procedures and where decision-making sits on allegations, particularly those formally investigated, would be a helpful strengthening of the regime.
9	Should the standards committee be chaired by an Independent Person?	Pre 2012 the Standards Committee had to be chaired by a lay person. Under the current regulations as a committee of Cornwall Council only Cornwall Councillors are eligible to serve as Chair or vote. An independent chair could provide a greater	YES

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		confidence in the effectiveness of the code and standards in local councils. It would also offer a greater ownership of the code and process by local councils.	
10	If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.	This provides an opportunity to put forward observations relating to the preceding questions that have limited, closed responses. Councils can expand on any other issues they wish to raise.	
5 c)	Publishing investigation outcomes		
11	Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?	As the local authority responsible for the standards regime, Cornwall Council already publishes Decision Notices on its website. It also publishes a quarterly summary of complaints in and decision-making process, and an analysis of complaints in an annual report. It withholds complainant details where it has agreed to confidentiality in accordance with our adopted procedures and are mindful of its obligations under GDPR. It does not accept anonymous complaints. Local councils already publish decision notices within the minutes their meetings and may publish decision notices on their website, but there is no obligation to do so.	YES – the public should have full access to all allegations and investigation outcomes, subject to any necessary considerations of confidentiality. In the public interest, this should be the responsibility of the authority issuing the decision notices rather than the local council to which it refers.
5 d)	Requiring the completion of an investigation if a member stands down		
12	Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?	An elected member should not be able to resign rather than face accountability through the complaints process. Therefore the CALC believes that there is a need for an assessment process which at least speaks to whether the actions would have been a breach of the code. There should also be some mechanism to reinstate an investigation if the member stood for election/co-option within a specified period of time.	YES – it is important that there is at least an assessment about whether the actions of a former councillor would have been in breach of the code. This is essential where the matter relates to a staff grievance.
5 e)	Empowering individuals affected by councillor misconduct to come forward		
13			No response – Cornwall Council data required
14 - 16	Questions relating to individual experiences of making complaints under the code of conduct	These questions are not relevant to the corporate response see Q17	

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
17	In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?	Individuals are put off submitting an allegation for a number of reasons including : The lack of any meaningful sanction and the submission of a complaint being seen as a waste of time and effort. Repeat fit for tat complaints often to demonstrate peer pressure or to push a particular view. A fear that any complaint relating to member behaviour as part of a grievance will further destroy working relationship especially without any significant sanction. They may also prevent witnesses from coming forward. Confidentiality v anonymity in the process. The subject member is entitled to know who has made the complaint and this information must be made available. Complainants often feel unable to proceed if they fear being drawn in to the pattern of bullying and intimidation. Cornwall Council's procedures allow for confidentiality in limited circumstances including a reasonable belief of a risk of harm, consequences to their employment, medical justification, it being clear from the specifics of the complaint who has made the complaint, and the public interest. There are some occasions where the ethical framework may not be the best place to raise a complaint. Criminal conduct and civil matters may be better handled outside of the standards regime.	Note : the question provides a free text box for comment. The narrative might include comments about - Confidentiality especially for staff - Options for reporting criminal behaviour to the police - Clarity to manage expectations of what a standards regime can deliver - The need for a clear assessment framework for assessing grievance complaints against members. - Clear support for all parties within a complaint process including the subject member
6. Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards			
18	Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?	The proposed introduction of the power of suspension is to be welcomed and will give local authorities the ability to deal with the most serious and disruptive behaviours. There needs to be clarity as to what the trigger(s) for suspension would be so that there is fairness and consistency and creates a body of caselaw to inform the application of the new sanctions. The power of suspension should be introduced for the most serious breaches of the code, and that power but should be	YES - the decision to suspend for serious code of conduct breaches should be for the standards committee Note : there is also a free text box for this question

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		applied by the committee responsible for discharging the ethical standards functions rather than delegated to an officer.	
19	Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?	This consultation addresses the suspension of local and principal authority members but may require different paths to suspension for each tier. The CALC comment considers the path for the suspension of local councillors. Under previous regimes this power was exercised by an independent external body but it proved to be a slow and unduly expensive process. Whatever structure is in place the process should be transparent, responsive and cost effective; complaints will relate to the most serious and harmful behaviour and it is important that the process is responsive to the needs of all parties. The CALC would therefore suggest either referral after investigation for decision by the full Committee with any appeal being heard by an independent panel set up by the Standards Committee for the purpose.	YES – the standards committee should have the power to suspend local councillors for the most serious breaches of the code of conduct especially those related to bullying, harassment and intimidation. Note : There is a free text box for further comment.
20	Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?	In warded local councils there are normally other members to cover the role of the absent councillor. However it is essential that where a Cornwall Councillor has been suspended the local authority is able to nominate an alternative point of contact for residents and to respond to local council matters.	YES – councils should be required to ensure that the residents and local councils within a division have an alternative point of contact during a councillor's suspension
6 a) The Length of Suspension			
21	If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?	The proposal is that the maximum period of suspension should be 6 months and reserved for only the most serious breaches of the code; this seems reasonable and proportionate. It would be helpful for there to be guidance, either statutory or developed locally, as to what will constitute the most serious breaches. There is also merit in developing guidance on when suspension for a lesser period might be appropriate i.e. less than six months	YES – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of up to 6 months to allow for where a lesser period might be appropriate.
22	If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?	The frequency of needing to impose such a serious sanction is expected to be low, and perhaps the introduction of the	Infrequently and for the most serious breaches of the code

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		possibility might act to encourage members to moderate their behaviour.	especially relating to member behaviour
6 b) Withholding allowances and premises and facilities bans			
23	Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?	Most local council do not pay member allowances and therefore this question focuses on payments to principal authority councillors. The consultation recognises that suspension should not by default result in the withholding of allowances or bans from entering council premises or using council facilities. It proposes that withholding allowances and bans from entering council premises or using council facilities may stand independently as separate sanctions.	YES – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors
24	Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?	For the revised approach to work there must be meaningful sanctions other than suspension, particularly for breaches that justify sanction short of suspension, but with the power of suspension available if needed.	YES – premises and facilities bans are an important additional tool in tackling serious conduct issues
25	Do you agree that the power to withhold members' allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?	It seems sensible to legislate to allow the withholding allowances, premises bans and facilities bans as discrete sanctions, with the ability to apply them in combination where appropriate. As most local councillors do not receive allowances sanctions could be extended to include the restricting the use of council resources including IT equipment, council email addresses, social media and access to individual officers i.e. Mayor's Secretary	YES
6 c) Interim Suspension			
26	Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the	The concept of interim suspension – the removal from office during an investigation creates a tension. In the UK, a person is	YES – powers to suspend on an interim basis are necessary for the

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
	outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?	innocent until proven guilty and there are rights enshrined in human rights legislation. But an employer has a duty of care to its employees to protect them from harm and the standards regime needs to be able to respond to this duty if it provides a safe work environment. An interim suspension would require a preliminary assessment including consideration of previous complaints and decisions in order to justify action. In employment law there are criteria to be met before any suspension from the work place and the same should be applied to elected members. It should be noted however, that case law does not permit an employer to address a grievance relating to member behaviour with reference to the Standards Regime. In the most serious cases or where the matter is referred for 'other action' it must be clear which authority would be entitled to recommend/apply any interim suspension.	most serious behaviours especially where employees may be at risk from a continued ability to harass and intimidate in the workplace. Note : there is the option to also provide further comments.
27	Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?	Where criminal conduct is perceived the standards investigation is suspended whilst police undertake their investigation. This can be slow and may take more than six months. It is important that the Council has other tools it can use to manage the most serious of complaints including the removal of access to facilities, buildings and council resources.	YES – the option to apply premises and facilities bans should be available whilst serious misconduct is investigated.
28	Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?	If the power of interim suspension is introduced, the safeguards must match the potential impacts. The sanction should not be used punitively against a member without review on a regular basis against a number of set criteria. A maximum of 3 months suspension at a time seems proportionate, but there is also an argument that reviews should be more frequent, perhaps monthly, and there should be wellbeing checks on the subject member to inform the reviews and any support needed.	NO – the period of interim suspension should be no more than 3 months and subject to regular review but with guidance on the number of consecutive terms. Note : there is an option to provide further comment which may want to address the maximum number of consecutive terms and make links to time beyond the end of other investigations.

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
29	Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months and then subject to review?	There should be clear guidance on the number of consecutive terms of suspension which could be applied i.e. during an extended police investigation, civil action against the member for a significant breach of equalities legislation, violence or fraud. Consideration should also be given to whether the maximum number of interim suspensions should be fixed or the same as suspension for a proven breach. Where the standards regime is not in control of the pace of other investigations, it should have the ability to apply additional terms of interim suspension if appropriate.	YES Note : there is the option to provide further comment.
30	If following a 3 month review of an interim suspension a standards committee decide to extend, do you think there should be safeguards to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run unchecked?	As above	YES
30a	If you answered yes to above question, what safeguards do you think might be needed to ensure that unlimited suspension is not misused?	As above	Note : this is an option to provide further comment
6 d) Disqualification for multiple breaches of gross misconduct			
31	Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?	Disqualification is a serious sanction, but in some cases might be appropriate. As with the first suspension, the second suspension which triggers disqualification would need to be considered carefully and have regard to, amongst other things, human rights. A criteria based only on the frequency and number of suspensions in a given period does not take into account the seriousness of the breaches. It also fails to address the impact this behaviour has on the effectiveness and morale of the council and its staff. Therefore the CALC believes that there is a difference between two six-month suspensions for gross misconduct/serious misbehaviour and a number of short terms of suspension cumulative over a set period. It is the impact of the behaviour, the damage caused and the lack of change or acceptance which should warrant a disqualification after repeat offences. The	Options: YES – but for a different length of time and/or within a different time limit (3 years) Note : there is the option to also provide further comments.

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		CALC believes that the standards regime should be able to apply the sanction on a case-by-case basis against a number of identified thresholds for more than one suspension within a 3-year period. A three-year period contains the behaviours within an electoral cycle giving the council a chance to move forward and work proactively for its community. The democratic deficit created by disqualification should be remedied relatively quickly through an election or co-option unless it occurred within six months of an election.	
32	Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?	The safe route is to legislate for the use of interim suspension during investigation, giving the subject member an opportunity to respond to accusations before applying sanctions including suspension. However the CALC believes that it is appropriate to consider a move to immediate disqualification for where a subject member has been found guilty of criminal offences, physical violence and fraud. As the current legislation is limited to a custodial sentence of 3 months or sexual/domestic violence, the regime needs to be able to address other criminal behaviour.	Yes Note : there is the option to also provide further comments.
6 e) Appeals			
33	Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?	It is right and proper that there is a right of appeal for a member who is suspended, and even more so if they are facing a second suspension that triggers disqualification. An appeal against suspension should be to a body that is independent of the local authority that has made the decision to suspend. If the appeal is against a second suspension in a 5-year period, it would be reasonable and proportionate for disqualification to not take effect unless and until their appeal is dismissed.	Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision
34	Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?	The suggested 5 days in which to appeal seems disproportionately short for submitting detailed arguments against suspension. It is perhaps appropriate for notice of appeal to be lodged within 5 days of the decision to suspend, with a longer period to then submit detailed arguments.	Yes – notice of intent to appeal should be within 5 days of the decision is appropriate to ensure an efficient process
35	Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is	Locally where the filter process identifies a lack of sufficient information, the complainant is offered a further 14 days to	NO

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
	taken not to investigate their complaint?	provide additional supporting information. There is no opportunity for a complainant to appeal, but they are able to make further complaints in the future which will be considered on their merits. An additional layer of appeals would provide a heavy administrative burden on the process and does not seem necessary if the assessment process and criteria and clear and in the public domain.	Note : there is the option to also provide further comments at Q37 but predicated on a yes response to this or the next question
36	Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld?	Cornwall Council acts as the external independent body for local councils and the standards regime. Consideration of complaints are therefore undertaken independently by an outside body and any appeal would need to provide evidence as to why it was appropriate and in the public interest. It should not be used as a means of disagreeing with the outcome.	NO Note : there is an option to provide further comments at Q37 but predicated on a yes response to this or the next question
37	If you answered yes to either of the previous two questions, please use the free text box below to share views on what you think is the most suitable route of appeal for either or both situations.	This is the opportunity to add true value to the responses to this group of questions if you have answered yes to questions in this section. You may wish to consider : • What is proportionate. • Needing to demonstrate why an appeal is appropriate by reference to the evidence, and not simply disagreeing with the outcome. • The public interest	Note : this is an open text box to provide further comment to Q35-37
6 f) Potential for a national appeals body			
38	Do you think that there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?	It is also a reasonable proposition in the context of transparency and fairness being seen to be done, especially where appeals relate to the behaviour of principal council members. It would also create the benefit of the final arbiter being an independent body and remove any appeal from the member's own authority. However, the principal council is already an independent authority for appeals for complaints against local councillors. Currently local councils do not fall within the remit of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman which would need	YES There should be an external appeals body for principal authorities limited to sanctions of suspension and disqualification. An external appeals body would help uphold impartiality for the most serious decisions.

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		significant additional resource and staff who understood the local council sector to make it work. It would need to be clear who was able to make an appeal (complainant and/or subject member) and the thresholds/evidence that would be required to meet the public interest. The standards regime is a statutory function of the principal council and it should be able to set up an appeals panel drawn from independent members and laypeople. There is a cost to managing an external appeals process; appellants would need to evidence why an appeal was in the public interest, not just use it as a way of disagreeing with the decision.	
39	If you think there is a need for an external appeals body, do you think it should be : • Be limited to hearing elected member appeals • Be limited to hearing claimant appeals • Both of the above should be in scope	Cornwall Council's Standards Committee will consider the following options as a starting point for discussion. The CALC supports the option for an appeals process for local councillors but feels that an opportunity for appeals by a complainant for an increase in sanctions would be inappropriate and would recommend the following : (a) independent body determines appeals by the subject member against suspension and disqualification of a principal councillor, (b) all other appeals including appeals against local councillors are dealt with locally.	Options: • Be limited to hearing elected member appeals • Please explain your answer [free text box]
7. Public Sector Equality Duty			
40	In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?	Question 40 asks whether it is thought that the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework would particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities. The consultation confirms that <i>"We will produce a full Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) assessment, and all necessary impact assessments, as the policy proposals develop further following this consultation."</i> Provided local authorities are complying with the PSED and	Options: • it would benefit individuals with protected characteristics • it would disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics • neither Note : there is the option to also provide further comments.

Q No.	Question	Background	CALC Draft Response
		making reasonable adjustments to enable service users to access the ethical standards complaints process, such as by providing information in different formats or assisting with recording complaints, it is difficult to see how the proposed changes will benefit or disbenefit those with protected characteristics. Similarly, members who are subjected to allegations that they have breached the code and who have protected characteristics should have reasonable adjustments made to ensure they are able to respond to complaints.	

Note : For further information on Cornwall Standards regime, can be found on the [Standards pages](#) on the Cornwall Council website.

The processes for submitting a complaint and the assessment criteria and procedure can be found on the direct links below.

- [How to make a Complaint](#)
- [Assessment procedure](#)



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Cornwall
PL15 7AR

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27 September 2024

Dear Chris

VAT advice for the library/community hub building

You engaged us to advise the council on the VAT implications of converting a building into a library/community hub, including any options to minimise the VAT impact.

We have undertaken this work using information (see Appendix A) that you provided in person, by email and on the council's website. Please check the accuracy of Appendix A before you rely on this advice.

VAT rules for councils

- 1) We have attached a basic introduction to the VAT rules for councils and any reader not already familiar with the rules should read Appendix B at this point.

VAT implications of the library/community hub

- 2) Non-residential building work is normally standard rated (20% VAT), so the total VAT incurred on a £1.15 million renovation project will be around £230,000. The council's ability to reclaim this VAT depends on how the building will be used.
- 3) Much of the building will be used for non-business purposes, such as council offices, leases for £1 or less, providing a free public library and information point. VAT can be reclaimed in relation to non-business activity, under Section 33 of the VAT Act.
- 4) There is likely to be a small amount of taxable sales income, from the sale of tourist goods, charges for photocopying or use of equipment and admission to events. The council is VAT registered and can reclaim VAT on associated costs.
- 5) The cost of the depot project appears to relate entirely to non-business or taxable business activities, which the council can reclaim VAT on. Expenditure on this project should have no impact on VAT recovery for the new building.

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- 6) The activity that presents a challenge is the hire of rooms, which is a business activity and exempt from VAT (under Group 1, Schedule 9 of the VAT Act 1994). A council is restricted in reclaiming VAT on related costs (see Appendix B for more details).
- 7) Up to 25% of the floor area (about 60% of the first floor and 10% of the second floor) is potentially available for hire for meetings, activities or hot-desking. In practice, these areas are likely to be used mainly for council non-business purposes and we estimate that less than 10% of the use will be for VAT-exempt room hire.
- 8) In simple terms, up to 10% (about £23,000) of the VAT on renovation could relate to VAT-exempt business activity. This exceeds the £7,500 and 5% thresholds referred to in Appendix B, so this part of the VAT cannot be reclaimed without further action.
- 9) This could also mean that the council may not be able to reclaim VAT on 10% of the running costs, due to the partial exemption rules. We haven't seen any estimated running costs, so we have no way of assessing this yet.
- 10) VAT-exempt income also creates a risk of having to repay some of the VAT reclaimed on renovation later, if the proportion of room hire increases over the next 10 years compared to initial assumptions (see 'Capital Goods Scheme' below).
- 11) We have set out potential options to avoid these risks. Only options relevant to the council's circumstances and intentions have been listed.

Option 1

- 12) Operating the site purely for non-business or taxable purposes, with no room hire, would allow the council to reclaim all the VAT on the project. However, this may not achieve the council's objectives or maximise use of the facilities.
- 13) Significant room hire within the next 10 years could result in the council having to repay some of the VAT (possibly up to £2,300 a year).

Option 2

- 14) There is a useful provision in VAT Notice 749 (section 8.5) that allows councils to assess whether exempt-related VAT is below threshold when averaged over 7 years.
- 15) The council already has some VAT-exempt activities, including room hire in other buildings. If the council's annual partial exemption calculation is normally at least £2,000 a year below the threshold, this could be a viable approach.
- 16) Only two years can be estimated, so the calculation would be based on estimates for 2024/25 and 2025/26, plus actual figures for 5 previous years.
- 17) This approach carries an element of risk, in that the council cannot accurately project room hire over the next 10 years. As with option 1 above, this risks the council having to repay some VAT.

Option 3

- 18) If the council wants the ability to hire rooms out, or charge rent for offices in future, the safest approach to achieve full VAT recovery is to make an Option to Tax on the building (explained in Appendix C and described in VAT Notice 742A).

- 19) This is a formal decision that VAT will be charged on rent or hire, for a minimum of 20 years. In return, the council will be able to reclaim VAT on renovation and running costs (because the VAT will relate to taxable business or non-business activities).
- 20) VAT would also have to be charged on the price if the building was sold within the next 20 years, but this seems an unlikely situation after spending £1.5 million.

Capital Goods Scheme

- 21) Construction work of over £250,000 is subject to the VAT Capital Goods Scheme (CGS), explained in VAT Notice 706/2, but modified for local authorities by Section 9 of VAT Notice 749.
- 22) Where a council reclaims VAT on the basis that the building will be used for non-business purposes, but the proportion of VAT-exempt use turns out to be higher in the year of completion, or any of the following nine financial years, the council must review (and possibly repay some of) the VAT reclaimed.
- 23) We don't recommend an approach that carries this risk, or creates the extra work involved in doing the annual calculations.

Recommendations

- 24) If the council wants the flexibility to hire rooms out, making an option to tax on the new building will allow the council to hire rooms out and still achieve full VAT recovery, without having to do complex calculations or risk having to repay VAT.
- 25) The council should make a formal decision to opt to tax (before any work takes place) and submit form VAT1614A to notify HMRC within 30 days of that decision.
- 26) The council should follow the guidance in Appendix C and VAT Notice 742A.

Disclaimer

- 27) This advice covers the situation based on the information that the council has provided, but The Parkinson Partnership LLP cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions on the council's part in providing that information.
- 28) This advice is provided exclusively for Launceston Town Council and The Parkinson Partnership LLP accepts no liability towards any other party that may access or use this information as a result of it being disclosed by the council.

I hope that this covers the issues, but aftercare remains in place if you have questions.

Yours sincerely



Steve Parkinson
The Parkinson Partnership LLP

Appendix A - What you told us

- 1) Launceston Town Council (LTC) has been provided with £1.5 million funding from Cornwall Council to buy and convert a building into a new library and community hub.
- 2) Currently the library, which is a service delegated to LTC from Cornwall Council, is in a building that is not fit for purpose. The library staff transferred to LTC in 2019 and we understand that the relocation plans include a transfer of the book stock to LTC.
- 3) The new building is intended provide a central, accessible hub, accommodating the library, registration service (no rent is expected), town council offices and information centre, as well as having the potential to offer room hire or short-term office space.
- 4) Purchase of the building has already taken place at a cost of £350,000 and the council are now at design stage. No VAT was paid on the purchase price. The remaining budget for the project, including professional fees, is £1,150,000.
- 5) Most of the ground floor will be occupied by the library, with toilets and a lift to the upper floors. The first floor will include activity and meeting rooms with a kitchenette and the second floor will include offices for the council and registrar's staff.
- 6) The building will be run by the council, with charges for some activities. We have not seen any estimate of income or running costs for the building.
- 7) Another project is being undertaken to develop a council depot for staff who maintain the cemetery and open spaces, as well as cutting grass under an agency agreement with Cornwall Council.
- 8) The council is registered for VAT and has confirmed that it undertakes annual VAT partial exemption calculations to verify its entitlement to reclaim VAT on its exempt business activities.

Appendix B – VAT rules for local councils

Entitlement to reclaim VAT

Where councils act as a public body, providing freely available services using taxpayers' funds, they can normally treat these activities as non-business and recover associated VAT under Section 33 of the VAT Act 1994. This also includes services charged for under a statutory regime, such as burials, allotments and public conveniences.

Until early 2023, the hiring out local authority sports facilities was regarded as a business activity for VAT purposes. Following the recent tribunal decision in Chelmsford City Council [2022] UKUT149 (TCC), HMRC issued new guidance in March 2023 that the provision of sports facilities (including the provision of changing rooms) to the public by a local authority could be treated as a non-business activity.

Where a council supplies goods or services (including use of premises) in return for any form of payment, this is a business activity for VAT purposes (Section 5, VAT Notice 749 - Local Authorities and Similar Bodies) and the rules are different.

Taxable business activities

Only a VAT registered council is entitled to reclaim VAT on costs relating to taxable business activities and they must charge VAT on their sales at the appropriate rate.

Unregistered councils are not entitled to reclaim VAT on costs related to activities that produce taxable income. A council would need to register for VAT if it expected to have taxable income of more than £6,000 in a financial year. The £90,000 VAT registration threshold does not apply to local authorities.

VAT-exempt activities

Some business activities (such as room hire and leases of land) are exempt from VAT. Councils that receive VAT-exempt business income can only reclaim VAT on associated costs (such as construction, maintenance and running costs) if the amount of VAT is 'insignificant', which HMRC define as under £7,500 per financial year, or under 5% of total VAT incurred in the year (whichever is greater) - also known as the de minimis threshold (Section 7 of Notice 749).

Councils need to assess the value of VAT that they incur on all of their exempt activities in an annual process known as a partial exemption calculation. HMRC provide a Model Special Method of Partial Exemption in section 8 of VAT Notice 749.

If the VAT incurred on costs related to VAT-exempt business activities exceeds both thresholds, the council would be unable to recover any of it, for the financial year involved (the council can still reclaim VAT incurred on its non-business activities). This generally presents a problem for councils constructing new buildings for hire.

For minor breaches of the threshold, section 8.5 of VAT Notice 749 allows a council to look at the average of its exempt-related VAT over a 7-year period.

Appendix C - Making an Option to Tax

An Option to Tax is a decision by the council that all future supplies of a building or area of land will become taxable supplies. VAT must then be charged on all room hire and leases, but the council is able to reclaim any VAT incurred as it relates to taxable business activities.

The council would need to make a formal decision to make an Option to Tax, identifying on a map the area of land that will be covered by the Option. HMRC must be notified of that decision within 30 days. Once the Option is in place, the council must charge the appropriate rate of VAT on all taxable supplies from the site.

The council will not need HMRC's permission to Opt to Tax, unless it has made prior use of the site for VAT-exempt purposes (in which case it is likely to meet the conditions for automatic permission, specifically condition 3).

An Option to Tax cannot normally be revoked for at least 20 years, although the council will have a six-month "cooling off" period in which it can change its mind after making the decision. The ability to reclaim VAT will apply to all running costs and any future refurbishment costs of the building, as well as the initial construction costs.

Making an Option to Tax would affect hirers, as VAT would be added to all charges for use. Local groups are unlikely to be able to reclaim VAT and the council may wish to consider this when setting charges for hire.

If property is hired to a charity for its non-business activities (other than as a general office) then these charges remain VAT exempt and are not affected by the option to tax (Paragraph 2(2)(b) of Schedule 10 of the VAT Act 1994). However, this seems unlikely to be significant.

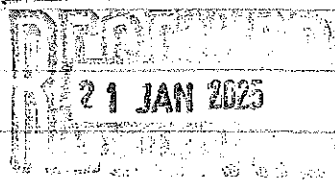
The Option to Tax only affects the supply of land and property by the council and has no impact on other supplies (such as sale of goods or refreshments), which are still taxed at the appropriate rate of VAT for those supplies. The option does not affect services provided by anyone who hires or leases property from the council.

The council should ensure that it follows the guidance in VAT Notice 742A, or seek further advice, if it decides to make an Option to Tax.

Venue Usage From 21/01/2025 to 20/02/2025

	Bookings Count	Hours Booked
Ambulance Hall (Main Hall)	20	67
Entire Town Hall	0	0
External Hires	2	8
Guildhall	12	48.5
Kitchen Bar and Reception Area	13	91.75
Main Hall	31	166.75
Otho Peter Suite 01	6	23.5
Otho Peter Suite 02	13	121
Otho Peter Suite Both Rooms	13	87
Town Square	6	32
Total	116	

KEVIN WADLAND



To all Town clerk & all Town Council Trustee I the (Horse)
I would like to know. What is the Lawrence House (Mos)
going to be open to the Town. and the planning of the House
and the Finance for the work as it will be open to the
Town & the Area. Let me know. in Planning Application.

in Lawrence House Trustees in Insurance cover is close.

- 2 AM the Bank to be open to the Town and on the way be
done inside we all need to know on the clock into way on one
side of it. put this to all Town Council for a Meeting Full Council
on Local Need. in Planning Application

Let me know Let all clerk SEE this letter

KEVIN WADLAND

- 3 AM the Town Council put in for all the Town Sports
to will help the Town

Mr Kevin Wadland

25 FIVE

.

3 February 2025

Dear Mr Wadland

Re: Lawrence House, Library Hub and car parks

Further to your letter received at these offices on Tuesday 21 January 2025, regarding Lawrence House, the Library Hub and car parks please see below details in respect of these:

Lawrence House

As per my letter dated 7 August 2024, following a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and additional funding from the Town Council, we are undertaking a full refurbishment of Lawrence House. Due to the historic nature of the site, all works and permissions have had to be sought from Cornwall Council, the National Trust (who lease the building to the Town Council), as well as working with Historic England.

Works to the outside of the building have now all been completed and we are currently working with Historic England and the National Trust to agree the location for a lift that will ensure full accessibility to the site. As such, plans for the internal structure are currently being reviewed to ensure that they are fully compliant with the historical aspects of the building.

I am meeting with National Lottery Heritage Fund officers on 4 February to look at the next round of funding that will allow further works to the site. In the meantime, at the January meeting of Full Council, it was agreed that that the remaining funding be used to design the interior of the site and for the agreed rentable living space to be completed and let, thereby allowing for an income stream. In addition, it is proposed that monies be spent on completing a number of rooms including the Mayors

Parlour, which will again allow for income generation as well as ensuring visitors can begin to access the site and see proposals for the future of the remainder of the site. The Council is working with architects to scope the site in regards to what works can be undertaken and following this a planning application will be submitted.

Former Barclays Bank conversion to library

A planning application and Listed Building Consent application for conversion of the site has just been submitted, under planning application numbers PA25/00380 and PA25/00381. The application is for the conversion of the former bank building into a multi-functional public library and visitor's information centre, with council offices and includes internal alterations and external works including restoration of stone facades and pitched roofs, replacement of building services with new mechanical systems and air source heat pumps.

Once planning has been approved, then works to the exterior of the building will commence. At this stage it is not possible or indeed sensible to state an opening time to the site due to the large amount of renovation works that will need to be undertaken and the unknown element of what may be found and could be further required once these works begin.

Car parks

The Town Council has formally requested that it be considered as a viable option for inclusion of the procurement of Cornwall Council car parks, should Cornwall Council offer the sites for sale

I will include a copy of your letter, along with this response on the next Council agenda for the meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday 18 February.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Drake
Town Clerk