



AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MONDAY 19TH MAY 2025 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

There are stairs to the Council Chamber but if any member of the public has mobility issues the Council can relocate to the lower Guildhall.

You are hereby SUMMONED to attend the **Council Matters Committee** on **Monday 19th May 2025** at **6.30pm** in the Guildhall for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Committee Members: Councillors L Auletta, C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam, D Peters, E Price and M Trant.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded. If members of the public make presentations, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

This meeting is limited to 90 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

The Committee will convene to consider the following items:

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

To elect a deputy chair for the Committee. No document.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 14th April 2025 and update on any matters arising. Document attached.

4. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor. Document attached.

5. BUDGET OUTTURN STATEMENT

To note the budget outturn statement for financial year 2024/25. Document attached.

6. CHRISTMAS MARKETS 2026

To consider an event report and draft tender document for future Christmas Markets from 2026 onwards. Document to follow.

7. COMMUNITY GRANTS

To review the Community Grant applications and make a recommendation to Full Council. Document attached.

8. INVESTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

To review the Investment Strategy. Document attached.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 9th June 2025 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall. No document.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

10. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for April (financial). Documents attached.

11. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

To consider a property ownership issue (legal). Verbal update.

12. GUILDHALL COTTAGE

To consider the repairs required and future use of Guildhall Cottage (financial). Verbal update.

13. CASTLE MEADOW

To consider legal advice on Castle Meadow access (legal). Verbal update.

14. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

To consider seeking legal advice on the return of the Council's Christmas lights and unresolved functionality issues (legal). Verbal update.

15. STAFF REPORT

To consider a staffing report including details on priorities and hours of work (staffing). Document to follow.

16. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing). Verbal update.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
14th May 2025

USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The open proceedings of this Meeting will be audio and video recorded. If members of the public make a representation, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or Zoom meeting, attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

Televised, vision and sound recordings or live broadcastings by members of the press or public at Council or Committee debates are permitted and anyone wishing to do so is asked to inform the Chairman of the respective Committee of their intention to record proceedings.



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 14TH APRIL 2025 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors D Peters (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock and E Price.

Apologies: Cllrs Hannam and Robshaw.

In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded. The apologies were accepted.

The Committee adjourned for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

The Committee convened to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 10th March 2025 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** unanimously as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUPS

To consider any budgetary recommendations from the following (documents attached):

a. Community Working Group, 1st April 2025.

Item 2b – Christmas Lights. It was **RESOLVED** to the appointment of the Christmas lighting installation contractor as outlined.

b. Economy Working Group, 19th March 2025.

No recommendations.

c. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 26th March 2025.

Item 2 - Bridgetown Alive! Bus Shelter Maps. It was **RESOLVED:**

- To purchase [previously agreed in principle] and install as follows:
 - Higher Westonfields: to install a large landscape map and accompanying Bridgetown information (as detailed in the leaflet). The bus shelter will need painting and weeds/vegetation cut back by the TMO before installation.
 - Coronation Road: a large landscape profile map (with a suitable heading but omitting the detailed information about Bridgetown) is purchased and erected on the inside wall at the left hand end of the shelter (which needs to be repainted and fly posters removed).
- That a further £80 is allocated to cover the revised art work required.

- That the Bridgetown Map/walk is added to the Visit Totnes website.

Item 3a - Request to place a memorial bench for Judy Westacott on The Plains (privately funded purchase). It was **RESOLVED** that the Council accepts the request to place a memorial bench on The Plains on the understanding that the Town Council will provide routine upkeep but that it reserves the right to remove the bench if it becomes unsafe/unserviceable.

Item 3e - Vire Island. It was **RESOLVED** that the following tasks are considered as part of the Phase 1 work to tidy up Vire Island and that quotes are obtained to carry out this work (with the agreement of SHDC):

- Removal of vegetation – spotted laurel and spiky shrub.
- Cut back laurel to 1m in height.
- The purchase and installation of a bench on an existing concrete pad.
- Request that SHDC erect signs to ask dog owners to take care of their animals and stop them digging around the tree bases.

4. MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND BUDGET

To consider the Mayor's engagements since January 2025 and the current budget.

The Mayor's engagements and budget was **AGREED** unanimously.

5. STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

To review Standing Orders and make a recommendation to Full Council.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the revised Standing Orders are adopted with the following amendments:

- Section 26 Committee Terms of Reference - 'Remit' section update with 'Strategy Delivery **Working** Groups' for clarity for all applicable committees.
- Under section 28, 1.5, include reference to hybrid meetings being used as required.
- Update of the Scheme of Delegation with the proposed changes, including removal of Strategy Delivery Group references and from the organogram.

6. RISK REGISTER

To review the Risk Register.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the revised Risk Register is adopted.

7. EARMARKED RESERVES

To review the earmarked reserves.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Earmarked Reserves is adopted.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT

To review the Council's Code of Conduct

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the revised Code of Conduct is adopted.

9. LEGIONELLA MANAGEMENT PLAN

To review the Legionella Management Plan.

The Legionella Management Plan was **AGREED**.

10. APPRAISAL POLICY

To review the Appraisal Policy for officers.

The Appraisal Policy was **AGREED**.

11. BUDGET MONITOR FORMAT

To consider what Budget Monitor information members want to receive monthly.

It was **AGREED** that the monthly budget monitor print outs from Rialtas will be used with wider budget monitor documents quarterly.

12. YEAR END TIMELINE

To note the year end timeline for financial year 2024/25.

Noted.

13. S137 VALUE FOR 2025/56

To note the revised S137 value for 2025/26.

Noted. However, the Council has subsequently adopted General Power of Competence which supersedes this.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 19th May 2025 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

15. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for March (financial).

These were reviewed and **AGREED**.

16. GUILDHALL MUNIMENTS ROOM INVENTORY

To consider an inventory of the muniment room (financial).

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that:

- the process for considering relocation and disposal is as outlined in the report; and
- to dispose of four boxes of old leaflets, papers, cassette tapes and two candlestick holders.

17. BUILDING CONDITIONS SURVEY

To note a summary of the building conditions survey and to consider a quote for works (financial and commercial).

Noted. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the quote for stone masonry work is accepted, and that an exception to financial regulations be agreed regarding chasing a third quote due to the specialist nature of the work required.

18. ANNUAL APPRAISALS

To note the outcome of the annual officer appraisal process (staffing).

Noted.

19. STAFF ATTENDANCE

To note sickness and overtime balances (staffing).

Noted.

20. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing).

A staffing report was tabled at the meeting. The following decisions/recommendations were **AGREED**:

- The Clerk will draft a business case for an additional member of the Town Maintenance Team, including job plan, hours, salary and job description. This will go directly to Full Council for consideration.
- The Clerk will draft a report on priorities and hours of work as outlined in the report, for consideration by May Full Council.
- The performance related increment payment proposed.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

April 2025



INVESTMENT STRATEGY

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

AGREED JUNE 2024

NEXT REVIEW JUNE 2025

Totnes Town Council has adopted the following Investment Strategy, which establishes formal policies and practices for the effective management and control of the Council's investments, and the associated risks, and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Financial Regulations.

1. Introduction

In preparing its Investment Strategy the Council is required to comply with the guidance notes issued under Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 and guidance within 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England' Practitioners Guide.

The legislation and associated guidance is optional for parish & town councils where investments are not expected to exceed £500,000 and no action is required below £10,000. However, for Councils where the sums involved exceed £500,000, the guidance is mandatory.

The Guidance recommends that a council produces an annual Investment Strategy which sets out its policy for managing the investments and giving priority to liquidity (ensuring the funds invested are available for expenditure when needed) and security (protecting the capital sum invested from loss). It is recommended that this Strategy be approved by the Full Council annually.

2. Definitions

Specified Investment - one which is made in sterling, is not long term (less than 12 months) not defined as capital expenditure and is placed with a body which has a high credit rating or made with the UK Government, a UK Local Authority or a parish or community council.

Non Specified Investment – any financial investment that does not meet the criteria to be treated as a specified investment and for which there can be greater risk and where professional investment advice might be required.

3. Investment Policy

Treasury Management Investments

Totnes Town Council acknowledges the importance of investing any temporary surplus funds held on behalf of the community in a prudent manner. The Council will aim to achieve, first and foremost, security and liquidity whilst seeking the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

In accordance with Section 15 (1) of the 2003 Act the Council will have regard to such guidance as DCLG may issue on behalf of the Secretary of State.

For prudent management of its treasury balances, Totnes Town Council will use:

- Deposits with banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities which are specified investments.
- Other recognised funds specifically targeted at the Public Sector which are specified investments.
- No investment in stocks or shares, or in non-specified investments.

The choice of institution and length of time which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity will be at the discretion of the Responsible Financial Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council Matters Committee.

The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Town Council is to support effective treasury management activities.

Non-financial Investments

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) maintains that the borrowing of monies purely to invest, or lend and make a return, is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

The Responsible Financial Officer will carry out a risk assessment for any new non-financial investment proposals which will be provided to the Council Matters Committee. The risk assessment will include

- Whether and, if so how, the Council uses external advisors be they treasury management advisors, property investment advisors or any other relevant persons.
- How the Council monitors and maintains the quality of advice provided by external advisors.
- What other sources of information are used to assess and monitor risk.
- Risks associated with the liquidity of the asset and any debt.
- Any risk associated with the investment failing to achieve any expected net profit and the contingency plans for this scenario.

Information about any proposed investment and borrowing will be provided to members by the Responsible Financial Officer setting out any risks and opportunities in terms that a layman would understand to avoid the risk that locally elected members may not always have the background and expertise to understand the risks associated with the decisions that they are being asked to make.

Totnes Town Council will only invest in non-financial investments where a professional assessment has been obtained to confirm that there are reasonable grounds to believe the realisable value of the asset, including the attributable costs of purchase, will exceed the purchase price within 12 months of the purchase.

Borrowing to purchase land and buildings by Totnes Town Council will only be obtained through the Public Works Loan Board.

Where the Council has borrowed to finance any non-financial investments the Responsible Financial Officer will report the following indicators to the Council Matters Committee annually:

- Loan to Value Ratio
- Investment Cover Ratio (the total net income from property investments compared to the interest expense)

- Gross and net income (The income received from the investment portfolio at a gross level and net level, less costs, over time)

Where there has been a significant change in year on year performance against any of the indicators presented the Responsible Financial Officer should include an explanation to the Committee.

In addition the Responsible Financial Officer will report on any need to realise the capital tied up in the non-financial investments to ensure no capital loss arises.

The Council will review this Strategy annually and reserves the right to make variations to the Strategy at any time, subject to the approval of Full Council.