

Assistant to the Town Clerk’s Report January 2025

For Council Meeting 4th February 2025

1. Key Dates for all Councillors’ diaries for this Civic Year;

Friday 11 th April 2025	Civic Ball 2025
Monday 28 th April 2025	Mayor’s End of Term Event
Thursday 8 th May 2025	80 th Anniversary of VE Day Beacon (9.30pm)
Thursday 15 th May 2025	Grants Presentation Evening

2025 – 2026 Civic Year

Sunday 19 th October 2025	Civic Service 2025 (time tbc)
--------------------------------------	-------------------------------

It is also anticipated that the Council will be able to help facilitate a commemoration of VJ Day on 15th August.

2. Civic Ball – 11th April 2025

Preparations are now under way for the next Civic Ball, which is due to take place on the date above. Invitations will be issued early February 2025.

3. Review of Financial Policies and Procedures

The Financial Administrator is currently reviewing the Council’s various financial policies and procedures, in preparation for the Council’s review/adoption of the updated documents.

4. Activity Log

CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG

CIVIC YEAR 2024-2025

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 7th January – 19th March 2025;

DATE OF MEETING or TRAINING SESSION	SUBJECT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	COUNCILLORS BOOKED TO ATTEND
N/a	Introduction to Local Councils	(E-learning)	Via DALC	Cllr R Poppe
N/a	Standards in Public Life	(E-learning)	Via DALC	Cllr R Poppe
2024 – 2025 Civic Year				
29 th January 2025 6pm – 7pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 2 (Powers, Duties and the Precept)	Virtual	DALC	None

30 th January 2025 6.30pm – 8.10pm	Finance for Councillors	Virtual	Parkinson Partnership via DALC	None
3 rd February 2025 1pm – 2pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 4 (The Council in the Community)	Virtual	DALC	None
10 th February 2025 6pm – 8pm	Code of Conduct	Virtual	DALC	None
12 th February 2025 6pm – 7pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 3 (Local Council Meetings)	Virtual	DALC	None
13 th February 2025 6.30pm – 8.15pm	Introduction to Planning	Virtual	DALC	None
18 th February 2025 10am – 11.40am	Introduction to VAT	Virtual	Parkinson Partnership via DALC	None
19 th February 2025 10am – 11.40am	Internal Controls	Virtual	Parkinson Partnership via DALC	None
19 th February 2025 6.30pm – 8.15pm	Heritage Issues and the Planning System	Virtual	DALC	None
25 th February 2025 6pm – 8pm	Chairing Local Council Meetings	Virtual	DALC	None
4 th March 2025 10am – 11.40am	Finance for Councillors	Virtual	Parkinson Partnership via DALC	None
5 th March 2025 10am – 11.40am	The Role of Internal Audit	Virtual	Parkinson Partnership via DALC	None
19 th March 2025 6pm – 7pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 4 (The Council in the Community)	Virtual	DALC	None

5. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 7th January – 3rd February 2025:

- 7 non-chargeable meetings (internal meetings, or a TTC representative attending on behalf of TTC, partner organisations or Mayoral events)

- 0 chargeable meeting/training session
- 0 training sessions (non-chargeable)

6. Property Units Update

Residential – there are currently two vacant residential properties:

- 1 Market Road – as previously reported, this property was previously being used as a welfare facility during the Town Hall works period and was subject of a recent report (see below).
- 2 Market Road – this unit became vacant on 24th March 2024.

The above properties remain as previously reported with works being undertaken by the Works Department to prepare them for occupation, works to be completed by 31st March and with a plan for them to be 'let' from April 2025 by SeaMoor Lettings.

Commercial –

- 9 Duke Street – as previously reported, this unit became vacant on 10th June 2024; A new tenant has been identified, and it is hoped that the shop will re-open in time for Easter 2025.
- 12 Duke Street – as separately reported, this property has now returned to the Council's possession. Marketing is now commencing.

Note – any further information of a more specific nature as might relate to any particular tenancies will need to be picked up under the relevant part of the next section (confidential) of the Agenda.

7. General including ongoing activities in the Admin Office

The Office continues to support the organisation across the range of Civic, administrative, financial and corporate activities.

8. Website & Accessibility update

Booking forms/schedules of charges for various Council activities and other postings are assessed on an ongoing basis and will be updated, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the regulations. Overall site compliance is reviewed annually.

As agreed at Council on 11th June 2024, the Council's updated website will be provided by the existing Company, Cosmic. This is now being progressed.

9. Legal Services

Arrangements will be made, if necessary, to either re-tender or renegotiate legal services for the Council, in view of the timeframe for current arrangements. A review of present arrangements, including with our provider, will be undertaken to help inform next steps. A meeting with the Council's current legal providers (Stephens Scown), and the Council's Surveyor, will take place in February 2025.

10. Lettable Properties and Energy Performance

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and Display Performance Certificates (DPC's) are in certain circumstances a requirement for the letting of properties. However, the position lacks clarity regarding certain classes of Listed premises. Further information is being sought prior to upcoming changes in minimum thresholds for eligible premises in light of recent Government announcements.

11. Staff Handbook

The Staff Handbook is currently being reviewed to ensure that various sections continue to represent current legal and other relevant standards. Model Policies have been obtained from the Council's HR Advisors (SW Councils), which will now be tailored to this Council's requirements. This will be undertaken on a modular basis, with an initial focus on those areas where most change is anticipated.

Report prepared by
Jan Smallacombe (Assistant to the Town Clerk)