

Assistant to the Town Clerk's Report September 2024

For Council Meeting 17th September 2024

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

Wednesday 2 nd October 2024	DALC AGM & Conference (bookable via the ATTC)
Thursday 10 th October 2024	Goose Fair Lunch
Sunday 20 th October 2024	Civic Service (N.B. revised start time 3pm)
Sunday 10 th November 2024	Remembrance Sunday Service
Monday 16 th December 2024	Mayor's Christmas Event
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
Thursday 15 th May 2025	Grants Presentation Evening

2. Grant Application period 2024

In view of the scheduling of Budget & Policy Committee Meetings during the Autumn budget setting period, the Grant Application deadline for this year will fall slightly earlier than previous years on Friday 11th October 2024.

The start of the Grant Application period will therefore be Thursday 12th September 2024. However, application forms are already available to be downloaded from the website.

The Grants Panel will meet on Tuesday 22nd October to consider the Applications received.

If any Members are aware of any organisations planning to submit an application this year, can you please advise them of the commencement date and deadline.

The Grants period will be advertised in the local press, on the Council's website and via social media.

3. Cleaning Contract

We recently received a revised proposal for the cleaning in the Drake Road building from our existing contractors, which amounted to a 54% increase in costs.

In view of this, a market testing exercise is being undertaken to potentially identify a new contractor.

4. Civic Service 2024

As Members will be aware from the list above, the 2024 annual Civic Service is scheduled to take place on Sunday 20th October, 2024.

Please be aware that this year the Service will commence at **3pm** not the usual 6pm.

5. Activity Log
 CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG
 CIVIC YEAR 2024-2025
 COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 30th July – 16th September 2024;

DATE OF MEETING or TRAINING SESSION	SUBJECT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	COUNCILLORS BOOKED TO ATTEND <i>N.B. Councillors' names in italics indicate that these were a 'no show'</i>
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				
5 th September 2024 2.00pm	Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy	(Virtual)	Connect Events via DALC	Cllr G Parker
9 th September 2024 6.00pm-7.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 3 'Local Council Meetings'	(Virtual)	DALC	Cllr Mrs J Hughes
11 th September 2024 6.00pm-7.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 1 'Roles & Responsibilities'	(Virtual)	DALC	None
16 th September 2024 6.00pm-8.00pm	Chairing Local Council Meetings	(Virtual)	DALC	None
2 nd October 2024 10.00am – 4.00pm	Devon Association of Local Councils' AGM & Conference	Exeter Racecourse	DALC	Cllrs Mrs J Hughes and R Poppe

6. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 30th July – 16th September 2024:

- 15 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)

7. Property Units Update

Residential – there is currently one vacant residential property:

- 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.

As previously reported, refurbishment works would be required to both properties, prior to future letting.

Please refer to the Minutes of the Budget & Policy Committee Meeting of the 3rd September 2024 (appended elsewhere on this Agenda), when this matter was discussed and (subject to Council) future arrangements determined.

Commercial –

- 9 Duke Street – as previously reported, this unit became vacant on 10th June 2024;
- 15 Duke Street - as previously reported, the property became vacant on 31st January 2024.

Both of the above units are being actively marketed by the Council's Surveyor.

- We have received a request for a Break Clause to be invoked on one of the premises in the Pannier Market surround. This will take place in March 2025. An expression of interest has been received for this unit, which is currently being progressed.

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

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. Legal Services

In 2024/25 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.

11. 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.

12. Staff Handbook

The Staff Handbook is currently being reviewed to ensure that various sections continue to represent current legal and other relevant standards. 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)