

**Assistant to the Town Clerk’s Report October 2024**

For Council Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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

Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	Remembrance Sunday Service
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	Mayor’s Christmas Event
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Civic Ball 2025
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Mayor’s End of Term Event
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day Beacon
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Grants Presentation Evening

2. Cleaning Contract

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

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

From 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 a new cleaning company will start to provide this service, at a cost saving of £ 865 per annum.

3. Grant Applications 2024

The Grant Application period in 2024 ended on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October, with 15 Applications being received by the deadline. The total amount requested was £ 23, 208.47 plus a significant ‘Benefit in Kind’ Application, against a total available budget of £ 20, 000.

The Applications will initially be considered by the Grants Panel, with a report being submitted to the Budget & Policy Committee at its Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The allocation of Grant Funding will be determined by Council, at its Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2024.

4. Activity Log

CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG

CIVIC YEAR 2024-2025

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 17<sup>th</sup> September – 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024;

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

*N.B. Councillors’ names in italics indicate that these were a ‘no show’*

2024 – 2025 Civic Year				
23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024 6.00pm-8.00pm	Code of Conduct	Virtual	DALC	Cllr G Parker
24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 6.00pm-7.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 4 'The Council in the Community'	Virtual	DALC	None
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2024 6.00pm-7.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 1 'Roles & Responsibilities'	Virtual	DALC	Cllr Mrs J Hughes
23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024 12.00pm – 1.15pm	Mastering Emergency Planning	Virtual	NALC	Cllr P Ward
23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024 1.00pm-2.00pm	Being a Good Councillor – Part 4 'The Council in the Community'	Virtual	DALC	Cllr Mrs J Hughes

#### 5. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 17<sup>th</sup> September – 28<sup>th</sup> October 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)

#### 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, when this matter was discussed, with agreement with regard to future arrangements with SeaMoor Lettings being made at the following Council Meeting.

Commercial –

- 9 Duke Street – as previously reported, this unit became vacant on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024;

Both of the above unit is being actively marketed by the Council's Surveyor.

- 15 Duke Street - as previously reported, the property became vacant on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. An expression of interest has been received with regards to the unit, which is being finalised.
- 29 Pannier Market – as previously reported, a Break Clause was invoked on this unit in September 2024, with an expression of interest being received shortly afterwards.

On 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 the previous tenant Surrendered the Lease, with a new tenant taking over the property on the same day. The café was re-opened on Goose Fair Day, under the name of Molly's Kitchen.

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.

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 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the Council's updated website will be provided by the existing Company, Cosmic. This is now being progressed.

9. 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.
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. Civic Events – the Mayor, Mayoress and six Town Councillors, together with the Member of Parliament, other dignitaries and Members of the Community attended at a successful and well received Civic Service on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.
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 Smallcombe (Assistant to the Town Clerk)