

MINUTES OF THE PENZANCE COUNCIL MEETING held in the Alverne Room, St John's Hall, Alverton Street, Penzance on Monday 13 January 2025 at 7:00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillors SJ Reynolds (Mayor)
W Elliott (Deputy Mayor)

MJ Beveridge
SJ Bosworth
JM How
B Jackson
PA Law
Z Lawlor
J McKenna

PI Osborne
NG Pengelly
J Power
R Sorrell
N Tonner
P Young

Also present: James Hardy (Town Clerk), Cal Bagshaw (Corporate Services Manager), Ben Brosgall (Leisure and Amenities Manager), Anna Renton (Director, Penlee House), Cameron Sil (Responsible Finance Officer), Verity Anthony (Visitor Experience and Retail Manager), Greg Martin (Communications Officer) and Elliot Ridington (Democratic Services Officer).

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Broadhurst, Davis, Marrington and Reed.

Councillor S Elliott was absent without having provided apologies.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

71. TO APPROVE WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests had been submitted.

72. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME

There was no public participation.

73. CORNWALL COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor Dwelly

Councillor Dwelly provided a verbal report to the Council which focussed on the

following areas:-

- i) With reference to the battlefields area, and particularly St Phillips Street, some residents had been working to improve the environment of their alleyways with planting in order to make them pleasant areas to socialise and relax. He had uploaded a social media post regarding this work which had received over 5000 positive responses and he hoped to use the remainder of his Community Chest funding to maintain the area and encourage other residents in the vicinity to do the same. He wished to instigate discussions with Penzance Council to consider whether it might be able to aid the residents in forming a Community Interest Company and whether either the Council, or Penzance BID, could receive his Community Chest grant funding and pass it on to the new organisation when formed.
- ii) As Chair of the Economic Growth and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee he had been due to take part in the consideration of Cornwall Council's plans to sell significant portions of the Cornwall Airport Newquay estate to an American private equity company. However, the report was ultimately withdrawn as, despite over a year's worth of work and negotiations, the proposal ultimately failed Cornwall Council's own due diligence tests.
- iii) With reference to the Government's plans for local government devolution, as far as he was aware, no expression of interest had been submitted by Cornwall Council to join with other neighbouring authorities in order to form a strategic authority, meaning that the local government elections in Cornwall would continue to take place in May 2025. The majority of Cornwall Councillors were opposed to a combined authority and the merging of Cornwall's borders with other areas. However, it was known that Plymouth City Council had expressed an interest in forming a combined authority for all of Devon and Cornwall, but it was necessary to note that the local government structures in Devon were far more complex than in Cornwall. It was therefore hoped that Cornwall Council could continue operating its current arrangements and that it might therefore prove easier for Central Government to devolve further powers to Cornwall, rather than a new combined authority or authorities in Devon, despite Central Government having stated that it would favour combined authority areas.

Councillor George

Councillor George was not in attendance and so no report was provided.

Councillor Marrington

Councillor Marrington had provided her apologies for the meeting and so no report was provided.

Councillor McKenna

Councillor McKenna provided a verbal report to the Council which focussed on the following areas:-



- i) He had been working with the residents of the Alverton Estate in order to address a number of issues which had been caused by the shortcomings of the housing association responsible for the area.
- ii) He had attended a very useful Safer Penzance meeting in December.
- iii) A site visit to the new development at West Cornwall Hospital had been undertaken and the build remained on target in order to open to members of the public in May 2025. The residents of the area had been particularly happy with the efforts of the developer to keep them informed of the different aspects of the works.
- iv) He was working to address an issue at Penzance Football Club whereby a mature tree was dropping debris onto neighbouring properties and might have required pollarding in the future.
- v) Traffic restrictions would be introduced on the new housing development at St Clare in the near future but a number of concerns still remained regarding the management company which had been appointed to oversee the site, with a number of residents receiving bills for unspecified works or services.

74. TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no confidential matters for consideration.

75. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PENZANCE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2024

Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Penzance Council meeting held on 11 November 2024 be approved as true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

(Proposed: Councillor Jackson; seconded: Councillor Bosworth)

Vote; Thirteen in favour. Two abstentions.

76. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF WHICH PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE HAD BEEN GIVEN

No questions had been submitted.

77. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Members noted the Minutes of the following Committees:-

- (a) Planning Committee – 20 November and 11 December 2024
- (b) Arts and Culture Committee – 25 November 2024
- (c) Leisure and Amenities Committee – 2 December 2024
- (d) Finance & General Purposes Committee – 16 December 2024

78. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES FOR DECISION

Finance and General Purposes

a) Three Phase Electrical Supply – Penlee Park

In the past, aspirations had been expressed for the installation of a three-phase electrical supply in Penlee Park and the issue was further highlighted in the summer of 2024, when work was undertaken to establish if power could be supplied to support the Penzance Food Festival. These investigations did not identify a cost-effective option, primarily due to the aim of installing the supply in the lower end of Penlee Park.

Further conversations had recently taken place regarding the need for the Coach House development project to have a three-phase electrical supply installed in order to sufficiently power the new café and it was therefore recommended that options be explored for the installation of the supply at or near the current Council office building.

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

1. It be noted that, at its meeting held on 2 December 2024, the Leisure and Amenities Committee resolved the following:-

‘Options be considered to explore the potential to install a three-phase electrical supply in Penlee Park.’

2. Virements of up to £20,000 be made from the Penlee Park Infrastructure reserve (currently standing at £60,984) to budget line 1015/10 Penlee Park – Capital Projects to install a three-phase electrical supply in Penlee Park.

(Proposed: Councillor Pengelly; seconded: Councillor Power)

b) Future Devolution and Cornwall Council Assets

Having now completed the devolved transfer of the Princess May Recreation Ground, Penzance Council had committed to a community consultation to understand the local community’s aspirations for the site in terms of improvements and future management, which could potentially inform the approach to other sites.

The Leisure and Amenities Committee had committed to developing an Open Spaces Strategy but it had been acknowledged that the significant budgetary challenge for Cornwall Council was having a particular impact on the Environment Service and on open space delivery. Discussions were ongoing regarding additional funding for footpath maintenance, play equipment had been removed from the Heamoor Recreation Ground and there was uncertainty over all play areas as well as the future

maintenance of Town Deal public realm enhancements. This was in addition to recent consultations on the future of leisure provision and on the closure of a number of services.

At the recent Cornwall Association of Local Councils Larger Council's Committee, concern was raised by all town councils regarding the impact of Cornwall Council's budget cuts and its current approach to devolution. As a result, a meeting was being established with the Strategic Director responsible for Localism and Devolution and town council representatives.

In order for Penzance Council to develop any future plans for devolution it was proposed that the Devolution Working Group be convened to develop an options appraisal, taking into account both local priorities as well as future provision and challenges in terms of Cornwall Council budget cuts. To inform this work it was further proposed that authority was delegated to the Town Clerk to enter into direct discussions with Cornwall Council to understand the impact of budget cuts on services locally.

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

1. Meetings of the Devolution Working Group be convened to begin the development of an options appraisal for a future devolution programme.
2. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to enter into negotiations with Cornwall Council to determine the likely outcomes of its budget constraints and the potential for the future devolution of assets and services.

(Proposed: Councillor Tonner; seconded: Councillor How)

79. 2025/26 BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING

a) Arts and Culture Projected 2024/25 Outturn and Proposed 2025/26 Budget

The report and its appendices set out the context and background for the proposed 2024/25 Arts and Culture budget which had been recommended by the Arts and Culture Committee.

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

1. The projected out-turn for 2024/25, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

2. The Arts and Culture proposed budget for 2025/26, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
3. The level of existing earmarked reserves and their respective contributions in 2025/26, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved and adopted.

(Proposed: Councillor Beveridge; seconded: Councillor Young)

b) Leisure and Amenities Projected 2024/25 Outturn and Proposed 2025/26 Budget

The report and its appendices set out the context and background for the proposed 2024/25 Leisure and Amenities budget which had been recommended by the Leisure and Amenities Committee.

In addition, due to discussions which had been ongoing with the relevant contractor when the initial report was drafted, a proposed £15,000 contribution for footpath maintenance had not been included within the 2025/26 proposed budget. The Leisure and Amenities Committee had therefore revised its recommendation to the Council in order to make provision for this service.

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

1. The projected out-turn for 2024/25, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
2. The Leisure and Amenities proposed budget for 2025/26, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved, subject to the inclusion of a new budget line, consisting of £15,000, entitled 'Parish Footpath Maintenance (1130/7)'.
3. The level of existing earmarked reserves and their respective contributions in 2025/26, including proposed new reserves, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved and adopted.

(Proposed: Councillor Power; seconded: Councillor Osborne)

c) Finance and General Purposes Projected 2024/25 Outturn and Proposed 2025/26 Budget

The report and its appendices set out the context and background for the proposed 2024/25 Finance and General Purposes budget which had been recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

1. The projected out-turn for 2024/25, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
2. The Finance and General Purposes proposed budget for 2025/26, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
3. The level of existing earmarked reserves and their respective contributions in 2025/26, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved and adopted.

(Proposed: Councillor Pengelly; seconded: Councillor Lawlor)

d) 2025/26 Precept Setting

The Local Government Act 1992 required a Local Precepting Authority to prepare a budget in advance of the start of the financial year to enable it to calculate its precept requirement and notify the tax raising authority, in this instance Cornwall Council.

The draft estimates had been prepared based on known commitments and external economic pressures including inflation, nationally agreed pay awards and specific known price increases to contracts. Reports had been prepared by officers and then presented to the respective committee meetings and had been considered earlier during this meeting for the final approval of the projected outturn for 2024/25 and budget for 2025/26.

The earmarked reserve position had been included as a part of the budget reports considered earlier during the meeting and showed estimated levels at 31 March 2025, based on commitments made by Council during the 24/25 year, and also showed the proposed contributions to reserves.

The tax base for the Penzance Council parish had increased from 7,180.31 to 7,643.87 which was a 6.46% increase from 2024/25. This resulted in a positive impact on the precept requirement and reduced it from what would have been an 8.3% increase, if the taxbase had remained at the 2024/25 level, down to an increase of 1.8%.

The taxbase change was primarily due to the newly introduced 'Second Home' Council tax premium, which accounted for 6% of the taxbase increase, with the remaining 0.46% due to new properties within the parish.

In light of the decisions taken earlier during the meeting relating to the budgets for each of the committees, the proposed precept for 2025/26 was as follows:-

Total Precept: £2,499,750

Band D Precept:	£327.03 per annum (annual increase of £5.82/weekly increase of 11p)
Annual Increase:	1.81%

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that a precept of £2,499,750 be set for the financial year 2025/26, representing an increase in council tax charge of 1.81%.

(Proposed: Councillor Pengelly; seconded: Councillor Beveridge)

80. REPORTS FOR DECISION

a) Interim Internal Audit Report 2024/25

The Council was subject to an accounting and reporting regime of limited assurance as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These regulations applied to every local authority in England with an annual turnover of up to £6.5 million.

The interim internal audit report was undertaken part way through the financial year, prior to the completion of the final report at the end of the financial year as part of the annual governance and accountability (AGAR) return.

There were no outstanding recommendations from the previous audit, and no recommendations arising from this audit, and no action was therefore required.

Following consideration, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Interim Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2024/25, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

(Proposed: Councillor Reynolds; seconded: Councillor W Elliott)

81. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

The following reports for information were noted:-

- a) Councillors' Attendance at Meetings
- b) Outcome of Code of Conduct Complaint Received

82. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

A report from the representative to the following Outside Body was noted:-

- a) Penwith 50+ Forum



83. MATTERS ARISING FOR REPORT AT THE NEXT MEETING

There were no matters arising for report at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:42 pm

Town Mayor
10 March 2025

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