AN ORGANISATIONAL, SERVICES AND STAFFING REVIEW,
INCLUDING A JOB EVALUATION EXERCISE
FOR LOOE TOWN COUNCIL
- CONFIDENTIAL -

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1.0 Background

1.1 The objective of this report is to set out the evidence-based findings of a thorough staffing and organisational review undertaken for Looe Town Council, including job evaluations of all posts based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) pay grade structure and benchmarking across the sector and with comparable jobs, the work to be undertaken during January and February 2015.

1.2 In undertaking the commission we have looked in detail at the job evaluations (section 3) the Council’s staffing (section 4), its democratic structures (section 5), the services being provided now and possible in the future (section 6), the relationships with other town organisations (section 7), the Council’s internal policies and procedures, and issues of budget and finance (all section 8). Ultimately the objective identified is to advise on improvements that can be made to enhance efficiency and effectiveness and to make realistic and evidence-based recommendations that will enhance organisational stability moving forwards.

1.3 Authorisation for the work is to be found in the Town Clerk’s letter of 4 November 2014 following resolution of Council on 3 November 2014.

1.4 In order to be properly briefed to conduct the review there was a pre-meeting with the Town Clerk, a tour of the Council’s key facilities, completion by all staff of a detailed questionnaire survey (see Appendix A), meetings with all affected staff, benchmarking across a large number of similar-sized and resourced parish/town councils, reading of official documentation and one-to-one meetings with a wide number of individuals from the Council, representative organisations and the community. These included:

From the Council
• Councillor David Bryan, Town Mayor at the Guildhall on 21 January 2015;
• Councillor Armand Toms, Deputy Town Mayor on 21 January 2015;
• Councillor Jimmy Dingle at Cornish Racing, Higher Market Street on 21 January 2015;
• Councillor Roy Hendy at the Guildhall on 22 January 2015;
• Councillor Michaela Powell at the Guildhall on 22 January 2015;
• Councillor Martin Gregory at the Guildhall on 22 January 2015;
• Councillor Mrs Edwina Hannaford at Looe Library on 23 January 2015, and
• Councillor Mike Soady in the Harbour Commission Boardroom on 23 January 2015.

From Town Organisations
• Mr John Currah, Clerk to the Trustees, West Looe Charitable Trust at the Trust offices, West Looe Square on 22 January 2015;
• Mr John Warne, Mr Phil Gibson and Mrs Judy Martin of East Looe Town Trust in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall on 22 January 2015, and
• Looe Harbour Board in the Commission’s Boardroom on 23 January 2015.
Members of the Public

- Mr Steve Morton and Mr Colin Clements at The Old Bridge House on 20 January 2015;
- Mr Brian Galipeau at Old Barbican Cottage on 23 January 2015, and
- Mrs Sally Anne Marsh in the Guildhall on 23 January 2015.

1.5 In addition to the above many passing conversations, undocumented, were had with individuals encountered during the week spent in Looe undertaking research.

1.6 A telephonic meeting was conducted with Sarah Mason, Chief Executive of Cornwall Association of Local Councils on 22 January 2015.

1.7 Grateful thanks are expressed to everybody who has assisted with, and fully co-operated in the review.
2.0 A Brief Introduction to the Report

2.1 The Council’s establishment has not been comprehensively reviewed before though the Tourism Information service was subject to reorganisation in 2010. Long-standing issues of alleged dis-function, failure to work effectively as a team and concerns about the lack of effective governance and leadership have all contributed to the decision to embark upon this review. Coupled with this is the need to undertake a job evaluation review across all posts.

2.2 The timing of this report is opportune. It is timely because we are in the throes of a period of austerity which impacts on the public sector, particularly for discretionary services which is why there is such pressure on councils such as Looe to enter into devolution agreements with Cornwall Council. It is equally timely because of pressures on precepts and reductions in Council Tax Support Grant and ultimately discontinuance of same, necessitating a robust and business-like approach to all aspects of the Council’s operations, both back-office and front-line services.

2.3 In terms of services overall the Council is not specifically active. Historically there are reasons for this, not least the complex governance structures in Looe, which date back many generations; specifically a Town Council, two Town Trusts (East and West Looe), and a Harbour Board Commission. As a consequence those organisations, particularly East Looe Trust, provide services that would otherwise be provided by the Town Council.

2.4 Apart from the Council’s representational role, the council provides public toilets at five locations (two owned, two leased and one with ownership at dispute), a tourist information centre, a small events programme, and a number of ad hoc services such as the patients’ car park (leased), the Mariners Garden, and the bowling and putting facilities at West Looe (awaiting a lease). The Council also administers a community chest to grant aid/ pump-prime local organisations/initiatives. Attempts to acquire an allotments site are at an advanced state of negotiation and the Council is leading on arrangements to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan though progress is slow. It is noteworthy that none of the services the Council provides are commercially income-generating. On behalf of the Council the Town Clerk is secretary and administrator of two charities; the Looe Public Schools and Exhibition Foundation and the Mayor’s Charity.

2.5 It is also worthy of note and commendable to record that Looe Town Council has Quality status, something only 7% of all parish and town councils nationally have achieved, albeit the scheme is now being discontinued and replaced with the new Local Council Awards Scheme.

2.6 In financial terms the Council had a precept of £298,016 in 2014/2015 and, at the Council meeting on 19 January 2015 resolved to “increase the precept requirement by 2%” (note: best practice confirms a precise sum should be resolved and this is essential for audit purposes). Because of the limited tax
base (£2,009.93 in 2014/2015) this equates to a Band D parish council tax of £148.27 in 2014/2015, and probably broadly similar in 2015/2016 due to an increase in the tax base. Of the 213 parish and town councils in Cornwall the Band D equivalent parish council tax for Looe in 2014/2015 was the eighth highest in Cornwall, only Bodmin, Bude-Stratton, Callington, Falmouth, St Colomb Major, Truro and Wadebridge are at higher levels.

2.7 Attached as Appendices B1 and B2 to give some context to the previous paragraph is a schedule showing firstly the services provided by some of the most active local councils in Cornwall and secondly precepts for those and certain other large councils in financial year 2014/2015.

2.8 Relationships throughout the Council, both officers and members are strained and this impacts upon performance and outcomes. It has been acknowledged during the review that there are factions on the Council and no effective team-working. A number of elected members expressed concerns that the Council is not especially valued within the broader community and that its public reputation is poor. The Council is perceived as being self-serving, poorly managed and lacking any strategic direction. All of those issues are addressed in detail in this report.

2.9 Recommendations are clearly shown **emboldened** within the report and they are all repeated in the summary section 9.
3.0 The Job Evaluation Process

3.1 This section explains the job evaluation process undertaken. All benchmarking has, except where specifically indicated, been within the local council’s sector and reinforced by job evaluation. For the Town Clerk the NALC/SLCC evaluation criteria have been applied, all other staff have been assessed using Green Book approved criteria.

3.2 In respect of Green Book criteria it needs emphasising that the various criteria are weighted in accordance with defined criteria to give a fair reflection of the job. It is in part to allay those concerns that the benchmarking data is added for each post, something not normally utilised for such evaluation exercises. But because the data group is sufficiently large and is evidence-based this gives significantly added value and reliability to the recommendations.

3.3 The Green Book single status job evaluation scheme requires assessment against thirteen categories detailed below. Of these Knowledge scores highest (16.3%) followed by Initiative and Independence (10.4%).

- Knowledge and Skills (4 categories comprising 38.4% in total) – Knowledge, Mental Skills, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, and Physical Demands.
- Effort Demands (4 categories comprising 25.4% in total) – Initiative and Independence, Physical Demands, Mental Demands, and Emotional Demands.
- Environmental Demands (1 category comprising 5% in total) – Working Conditions.

3.4 Throughout the process job evaluation is designed to reward employees for what they are employed to do not necessarily what they would like to do or could do given their experience or expertise. All evaluations reflect the job requirements and not the abilities of the job holder. That can be difficult for people to understand but in a free jobs market it is up to individuals to make their own career decisions. Pay is one factor in that, conditions of service is another. Working environment and job satisfaction are other important considerations.

3.5 Performance or capability issues are not taken into account during an evaluation exercise but may influence the salary setting process for individual job-holders in that a number of factors will determine the spinal column point on which the employee commences, within the scale, following evaluation,
including qualifications, expertise and experience. Equally where an employee’s performance is exceptional the Council can always fast-track progress up the incremental scale to the maximum of, but not above, the post holder’s salary range. This can only apply where the individual is not already on the scale maximum, or where they are not on a single-point scale.

3.6 It is always within the remit of a Council, should it so wish to reward staff by means of a one-off payment for exceptional performance or some other justifiable reason at any time, subject to noting that such payment is non-recurring and not added on an on-going basis to core salary. In all such cases decisions must be made at Member and not executive level for democratic legitimacy, and must be in accordance with an agreed policy to ensure a clear audit trail. Such approach, properly justified, can always be commended and is a sign of a caring and responsive employing body, mindful of the importance of acknowledging and rewarding exceptional performance, over and above normal expectation.

3.7 In evaluating the various roles at Looe Town Council the assessment has had regard to the different ways of structuring pay grades nationally, which includes:

- Short grades - this is the traditional method with a short number of points;

- Longer grades or linked grades – linking grades or having longer grades means that there are more points within a grade so may give more flexibility to the employer when placing an employee on a grade. However, the authority may be committing itself to higher pay grades in the future if an employee rises up the entire scale;

- A spot salary – this method allows costs to be controlled and can be paired with other supplemental bonus structures, however, good practice in relation to job evaluation and reviews always needs to be taken into account.

3.8 The current situation at Looe is a combination of short grades and spot salaries. Where a post is on an incremental scale, progression upwards should in all cases be subject to annual appraisal and continuing achievement in post. This is simple to achieve where the Council has an appraisal scheme but this is not active in Looe despite reference in the Staff Handbook.

3.9 It is important to note that increments are not a right but a response to effective performance. It is always easy to progress staff up a scale because that is the expectation but if performance is poor and does not justify an increase then no progression should be agreed. This is in the interests of fairness; including being fair to those staff who do perform, and is also proper given the accountability the Council has for stewardship of public money. Recommendations on incremental progression should be made by the Town Clerk for members of staff, and by whoever conducts the Town Clerk’s appraisals for that post. All recommendations should then be formally signed.
off by the appropriate Committee in order to ensure comprehensive Member engagement with, and ownership of, the process.

3.10 The paragraphs that follow in deal with each post on a case-by-case basis with evidenced justifications for recommendations. Every employee of the Town Council has been assessed. Details, with current pay and grading details, are as follows and the salary scales referred to can all be referenced in Appendix C:

- Town Clerk (full-time) – Grade LC3 below the scale, spinal points 39-42 plus two qualification increments for qualification.
- Assistant Town Clerk (part-time 32 hours per week), spinal points 18-23.
- Tourist Information Centre Manager (part-time 35 hours per week), spinal point 25.
- TIC Assistant/Assistant to the TIC Manager (part-time variable hours), spinal point 13.
- TIC Assistant (part-time variable hours), spinal point 10. Currently employed on spinal point 10.
- A seasonal TIC Assistant (variable hours), spinal point 10.
- Public Convenience Cleaning Operative (full-time 37 hours a week plus 7.5 hours for opening/closing toilets), currently on protected annual salary until 3 April 2015).
- Toilet Cleaning Operative/Handyman (Full-time), spinal point 10.
- Cleaner (May to October inclusive seasonal full-time, and four hours per week throughout the year for office cleaning), spinal point 10.

3.11 It needs emphasising that the job evaluations recorded in this section are based on the current jobs being undertaken. Recommendations regarding any changes that might be implemented to any of the jobs in the future are indicated in the appropriate section.

3.12 There are job descriptions in place for all posts though some appear out-of-date. There are no person specifications in place.

3.13 **Town Clerk**

3.13.1 The Town Clerk is Head of paid service, the Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer. There is a responsibility on the Town Clerk to manage all aspects of the Council’s executive services, functions, staffing and other resources efficiently and effectively, and to ensure that all statutory
functions are carried out lawfully and in accordance with the instructions of the Council.

3.13.2 For Local Council Clerks, unlike other staff who are engaged, there is a formal evaluation process, which is formally linked to the job and not the individual.

3.13.3 This evaluation process has been agreed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and is the subject of a formal agreement initially dated 2009. The approved process looks at eight aspects of the job and the skills and knowledge required – these relate to Knowledge, Mental Skills, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Initiative and Independence, Responsibility for People, Responsibility for Supervision and Direction of Employees, Responsibility for Financial Resources, and Responsibility for Physical Resources.

3.13.4 There are a number of elements of the evaluation process for the post of Town Clerk, and these are as follows by category with the assessment, based upon the current role, shown in brackets:

Knowledge
Consider the type of knowledge, what that knowledge is needed for and for what purpose and how that knowledge may be acquired. Knowledge will probably include literacy and numeracy, procedures, equipment, administrative systems, organisational, specialist/technical, and languages/cultures.
(The job requires theoretical plus practical and procedural knowledge in a specialist area or an equivalent level of organisational, procedural and policy knowledge; typically working in a large parish or small town.). Evaluation: LC3 below substantive.

Mental skills
These include fact-finding, analytical, problem solving and judgemental skills plus creative and developmental skills, planning and strategic skills.
(The job requires analytical and judgmental or creative and developmental skills, where there is need to interpret information or situations and to solve varied problems or develop solutions or plans over the short term.) Evaluation LC3: below substantive.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills
All the skills related to developing working relationships with others such as staff, Members, the public, contractors and other partners in the community. They include advocacy, training, team-working, motivation, advising/guiding, persuading and influencing, counselling, negotiating, oral and written communication, presentation skills.
(The job involves exchanging orally and in writing complicated or sensitive information with a range of audiences including Council, a number of committees and other meetings. The job also involves exercising advisory, guiding, negotiating and/or persuasive skills in order to encourage others to adopt a particular course of action. Evaluation: LC3 below substantive)
Initiative and independence
This element considers how much the job-holder is free to exercise initiative and take independent action and plan their own work. The nature and level of guidance and direction available the existence of policies, procedures and precedents and whether the Clerk works alone or with others are all relevant in assessing this aspect of job size.
(The job involves working within recognised procedures, within which the jobholder is required to organise own workload. The work involves making decisions as to when and how duties are to be carried out, and responding independently to unanticipated problems and situations. The jobholder generally has access to guidance on serious problems from senior elected councillors. Evaluation LC2 above substantive).

Responsibility for People
This involves the responsibility the job-holder has for the physical, mental, social, economic and environmental well-being of any people, other than employees. Health and safety responsibilities will feature in this element.
(The job involves considerable direct impact on the well-being of individual, or groups of, including those associated with a number of statutory and discretionary functions. Evaluation: LC2 above substantive).

Responsibility for Supervision/direction of Employees
What challenges does the job-holder face when managing, supervising, training, co-coordinating or developing others? How many employees are there? What sort of work are they engaged in? What kind of management is required? What are the challenges faced by people working in different locations?
(The job involves direct responsibility for the supervision, direction, co-ordination or training/development of other employees. The work involves the allocation of work to a small group or team, checking of work, and the direction of staff, including, where appropriate, on-the job training, e.g. Small team of up to 10 staff (note the establishment of Looe is currently eight employees, of which three are full-time, and the criteria for profile 3 is 10-20 employees). Evaluation: LC2 above substantive based on current establishment though this will likely be LC3 below substantive if and when the new post recommendations are approved.

Responsibility for Financial Resources
This element includes cash, cheques, debits and credits, invoices, budgets and income including precept, business planning and long term development of financial resources.
(The post holder is Responsible Finance Officer. The job involves direct responsibility for financial resources. The work involves being accountable for expenditures from an agreed budget or equivalent income. The responsibility includes contributing to the setting and monitoring of the relevant budget and ensuring effective spend of budgeted sums. The threshold between LC2 and LC3 is currently £250,000 and this covers the range £250,000 to £750,000. Hence an evaluation of LC3 below substantive is achieved).
Responsibility for Physical Resources
These resources can cover premises, systems, tools, equipment, vehicles, plant and machinery, covering upkeep, repair, security, significant assets, planning relating to these resources.
(The job involves direct responsibility for physical resources. The work involves cleaning, maintenance and repair of a range of equipment, buildings and grounds, the security of buildings and land holdings, and the ordering, and stock control of, a range of equipment and supplies. The Council does not have a depot nor significant plant and equipment. Evaluation: LC2 above substantive).

3.13.5 The above evaluations, showing four assessments of LC2 above substantive and four at LC3 below substantive confirms within acceptable tolerance the current grade of LC3 below substantive, namely spinal column points 38-42 plus the additional increments for appropriate qualifications.

3.13.6 Some benchmarking with other broadly similar councils has been undertaken. Salaries within the region for posts in Councils providing broadly similar services (some 30 on the database) all tend to fall within a scale of LC2 substantive to LC3 substantive, with the majority falling in the mid-scale ranges (not all follow the NALC/SLCC grades), though there are inevitably essential differences in complexity of duties and budgets. This does however help evidence the evaluation assessment.

Recommendation 1: That the Town Clerk’s salary scale be confirmed at LC3 below substantive (spinal column points 39-42 plus any additional qualifications for which the post holder has entitlement in accordance with the NALC/SLCC approved scheme.

3.14 Assistant Town Clerk

3.14.1 The Assistant is not the Deputy and that is reflected in the salary and confirmed by letter from the Clerk dated 8 November 2011, though file correspondence is inconsistent between the job title of Assistant to the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk. However it is not the job title being evaluated but the job duties being undertaken.

3.14.2 The post holder supports the work of the Town Clerk across all Council activities, including finance support, and provides full administrative support. The post holder attends some Committee and Working Party meetings as agreed with the Clerk (though the Clerk consistently attends most), assists in the organisation of Civic and other events, deals with correspondence, reception and maintaining the website.

3.14.3 The Green Book assessment scores this position at spinal points 21-23 with knowledge scoring highest, not unsurprising in a small organisation.

3.14.4 The benchmarking with other councils has confirmed the grade based on duties being undertaken as opposed to post title as the duties tend to be generic administrative and are by no means unique to Looe.
Recommendation 2: That the Assistant Town Clerk’s salary grade be confirmed as spinal points 21-23.

3.15 Tourist Information Centre Manager

3.15.1 The Tourist Information Centre Manager is practically full-time and runs the TIC, supervises the two permanent part-time staff and one occasional seasonal and promotes Looe as a tourist destination. There is a job description containing a list of tasks but no clear written objectives.

3.15.2 The Green Book assessment confirms the grade of this post as a scale with a maximum salary point of spinal point 25 though this does assume full management for all aspects of the promotional role; here it is important to emphasise that for Looe to successfully market itself, this must cover all aspects not only tourism. Whilst it is valid to claim tourism as the principle economic driver it is not the only one and broader promotion of the town and the work of the council and other public bodies working locally must not be neglected.

3.15.3 Knowledge scores highest on the Green Book assessment followed by Initiative and Independence and responsibility for people other than staff. Tourism promotion tends to be the preserve of parish and town councils in coastal areas. The service has tended historically to be undertaken by principal councils though being a discretionary service increasingly budget cuts have resulted in service withdrawal or devolution. For those local councils that provide a tourism service a salary scale of spinal point 25 tends to fall in the second quartile of those 16 councils for which data is available.

Recommendation 3: That the Tourist Information Centre Manager’s salary grade be confirmed at spinal points 23-25 inclusive and that his post be re-designated Tourism and Promotion Manager.

3.16 TIC Assistant and Assistant to the TIC Manager and TIC Assistant

3.16.1 These two posts provide tourism and some general information support to locals and visitors out of the Tourist Information Centre including providing information on travel, accommodation, booking tickets, selling retail products as well as providing general administrative support and helping to promote the town and local events. Hours worked are significantly greater in-season than during the autumn and winter months.

3.16.2 One of the two posts is currently paid higher than the other, a change introduced in 2012, though they appear to share the same job description. Cash handling, IT, inter-personal and local knowledge skills are all pre-requisite requirements for both posts. The green book assessments score both broadly similarly though on the basis that the senior of the two takes accountability when the Manager is away the higher grading is justified though only by two spinal points. However both posts are currently paying slightly below the grades that assessment suggests is appropriate, by one increment.
at the top of the scale for the senior post and two increments for the junior. Comparisons elsewhere confirm such evaluations.

**Recommendation 4:** The appropriate evaluated grade for the TIC Assistant/Assistant to the TIC Manager should be spinal points 12-14 as opposed to the current grade of spinal point 13 and the post should be officially re-designated Senior Information Assistant.

**Recommendation 5:** The appropriate evaluated grade for the TIC Assistant should be spinal points 10-12 as opposed to the current grade of spinal point 10.

3.16.3 In addition to the above there is also a seasonal TIC Assistant who works variable hours during the tourist season. This post broadly undertakes the same duties as the above posts on the Information desk. There is no reason to change the grade for this post from spinal point 10 as there is no evidence that the individual is a lone worker unlike the other posts that work through the year. Hence the assessment for independence and initiative would be less.

**Recommendation 6:** The appropriate evaluated grade for the seasonal TIC Assistant should be spinal point 10.

3.17 Public Toilets Cleaning Staff

3.17.1 There are three members of staff engaged in the cleaning function as identified in paragraph 3.10. The senior post dedicates all of his time throughout the year to the service, spending some 75% of his time in cleaning, 15% in ordering stock, sorting and delivering and 10% on broad service liaison, including routine administration. Opening and locking up is undertaken outside of core hours, all at plain-time rate. The second full-time post undertakes cleaning and repairs and out of season when the seafront toilets are closed he undertakes general maintenance work for the Council in other areas of activity, including street furniture maintenance. The third post is seasonal on toilet cleaning plus four hours a week throughout the year cleaning the Council/TIC offices.

3.17.2 It is not for this review to comment on whether the service is best provided by an in-house workforce or by external contracts; that can only be assessed following full service assessment. It has been advised that a difficulty with the previous contractor involving fraud was the prime reason the in-house route was selected. It is further understood that the issue of pay rates was discussed in private session at the Council meeting on 23 September 2013 but for confidentiality reasons those papers have not been seen. Regardless of the background the total costs of cleaning/maintenance are broadly in line with those experienced elsewhere for a similar level of provision and salaries for the two junior posts are appropriate. The senior post that is protected is assessed at a lower level than currently, basically the supervision function accounting for a two spinal point's differentiation. In terms of Green Book assessment the physical demands/skill and working conditions understandably score highest.
Recommendation 7: That the appropriate evaluated grade for the full-time Public Cleaning Operative/Supervisor is evaluated as spinal point 12, with the full-time Cleaning Operative/Handyman and the part-time Office and Seasonal Toilet Cleaner all be confirmed at spinal point 10.
4.0 **Staffing Issues**

4.1 The proposed staffing budget for 2015/2016 is as follows per the approved revenue budget, and these figures include provision for national insurance. The Town Clerk has confirmed that no members of staff have chosen to avail themselves of the designated auto-enrolment pension scheme, per page 17 of the staff handbook, so no provision has been made there. However Council is urged to ensure it has properly advised staff regarding this. The Council does have legal obligations, see

https://www.gov.uk/workplacepensions?gclid=CLvQyv3t3MMCFULtAodxD0A-w

- TIC salaries - £36,000.
- Public Conveniences - £40,000
- Office and Other - £115,000

4.2 The salaries quoted for the Tourist Information Centre and Public Conveniences are those incurred by staff directly providing the service; there is no internal transfer of any part of the central costs. This does of course have the effect of under-estimating the cost of those services as inevitably the Town Clerk and her Assistant do both provide a degree of administrative support for those areas of activity. However this is an internal accounting convention and if the current arrangement is satisfactory to councillors and the internal auditor there is no reason why this should be changed.

4.3 The office and other salaries account for £115,000 and was budgeted for.

4.4 Whilst it must be for councillors to determine where there should be greatest staffing focus, this review has raised concerns about governance standards and the need to ensure strong service management. It is suggested that the Council’s priority must be to get its basic infrastructure right before it embarks upon new areas of work. And the priorities must surely be to give confidence that administrative standards are impeccable; that information available to members is of the highest order so as to ensure sound and effective decision-making; that the finances are in good shape; existing direct services are well run, and that communications and relationships both within the Council and outside are respectful and professional.
4.5 It is concluded that the appointment of a civil enforcement officer and a community officer, as currently budgeted, would not meet the objectives highlighted in paragraph 4.4. Civil enforcement is essentially a Cornwall Council function, can be divisive, and the Council is not sufficiently mature or structured at present to take responsibility for that service. A Community Officer unless there is a clear Plan focus for the post and underlying resources to support his or her work has the potential to create much froth but add little to the value of the work of the Council in the community. These are not seen to be priorities.

4.6 Far better it is suggested is to provide a service manager to manage and improve performance and hence Council reputation across all aspects of the Council’s amenities and operational services and to recruit an Office Apprentice to generate capacity within the office and to free up the Town Clerk to focus on the more strategic and developmental aspects of her workload.

4.7 If the observation that the Council currently appears to operate in crisis mode appears to be unduly critical then that is regrettable. It is meant to acknowledge that the Council has been confronted with a number of issues in recent years in an economic climate the like of which no-one could have predicted nine years ago. That it may have fallen short in what it has achieved is undoubtedly the case but that can be remedied by firm and robust action now. Essentially do what you have to do well, plan for the future, and do not embark on future projects and initiatives without a clear understanding of what you are trying to achieve, how much it will cost and what the implications will be on others, including Town Organisations. The staffing proposals within this report are designed to give the capacity to address such areas, and can be implemented for significantly less than the budget provision currently provided.

4.8 A draft job description and a draft person specification have been prepared for the Amenities Manager. These are attached as Appendices E1 and E2. This would be a full-time post and it is essential that any contract should make clear that some weekend and evening working within core hours is a prerequisite. The job has been evaluated using the Green Book and is assessed at spinal points 23-25, identical to the Tourism and Promotions Manager.

**Recommendation 8:** That a new post of Amenities Manager be created on a salary of spinal points 23-25 and that the duties and person specification for this post be in accordance with Appendices D1 and D2 as attached.

4.9 Including the Town Clerk there are less than two full-time equivalent staff working within the General Office. Whilst not impossible this is tight and there are clearly areas where workload is discernibly falling behind. If an Apprentice is recruited to undertake basic office functions whilst training across a broader remit, which could also include assisting with the TIC in busy periods thereby gaining experience in that area also, then this would direct the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk to appropriate areas of activity, including for
example, the development of a centralised filing system, maintaining personnel records, maintaining IT systems, provision of better information to Members, regular staff appraisals, keeping on top of policies and procedures, performance management and the like. It can be resolved at relatively little cost.

4.10 The recruitment of an apprentice in the general office with a focus on basic office skills such as filing, answering the phone, photocopying, basic clerical duties, maintenance of data base records and the like would take pressure from the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk thereby ensuring they have more time to focus on the more complex support functions, appropriate to their pay grades, unencumbered.

4.11 If the Council should support a Trainee appointment there is a duty on the Council to acknowledge its responsibilities for an Apprentice for training and continual mentoring. It is not a cheap labour option as there can be implications on the time of other staff if the training and mentoring is to be effective. Logically responsibility will rest with the Assistant Town Clerk as the core objective of this post would be to provide efficient and effective administration support to Looe Town Council but in that person’s absence line responsibility would need to pass upwards to the Town Clerk. The extent to which the Apprentice will be able to work at times unsupervised and with a dedicated workload will largely depend on whether an Apprentice is appointed at levels NVQ 1, 2 or 3. Levels 2 or 3 would be recommended. Whilst it is possible to prepare a simple specification for this post the actual job description would need preparation by the Town Clerk based on her knowledge of the Office and where there needs to be specific emphasis.

4.12 This post should initially be of two years duration. The minimum pay rate for an under 18 is £2.73 per hour though a higher level is more usual. After 18 it is the minimum pay rate for the age group. The likely cost in year one is thus likely to be some £7,000. A full list of rates can be viewed on https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates The Council would need to liaise with the appropriate training course provider; Cornwall College at both Saltash and St Austell campuses run a Business Apprenticeship Level 3 course as well as a number of other potentially appropriate courses. City College, Plymouth runs intermediate and advanced courses in Business and Administration.

Recommendation 9: That a new post of Office Apprentice be created at a salary to be determined by Looe Town Council being mindful of national minimum pay rates, and that the person specification for this post be in accordance with Appendix E as attached.

4.13 Organisational Structure

4.13.1 The effect of the changes proposed in paragraph 4.9 would be to create a clear structure to the work of the Council, introduce a management team with clear accountabilities, and create a resultant synergy between the Council’s executive and policy wings. A draft structure chart is attached as Appendix G.
4.13.2 Broadly this review recommends a future structure with three clear and distinctive service arms for Central Administration and Corporate Services, for Tourism and Information Services and for Amenity Services. These would comprise functions as follows. It should be noted this is not necessarily a comprehensive list but it does set out the main elements of each portfolio:

Central Administration and Corporate Services (Committees: Finance & General Purposes Committee for all items other than Planning and Public Representations).

- All Finance (supported by Internal Auditor, Specialist Contractor support (if required) and external contract book-keeper)
- Human Resources (currently supported by Ellis Whittam)
- Democratic Services (including Mayoral support but excluding civic events)
- Website and Information Technology (supported by external contractors as necessary)
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Major Project Co-ordination
- Legal Services (supported by external Solicitors).
- Council Offices
- Planning, including Neighbourhood Plan.

The team providing this service will comprise the Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, and an Apprentice, with specialist external organisational support.

Tourism and Information Services (Committee: Tourism and Amenities).

- All Civic and other Town Events.
- Management and running of the Tourist Information Centre
- Day to day liaison with local and regional business groups and businesses on matters impacting on the economy of Looe
- Production of Council publications and newsletters
- Press and Media liaison, including development of the Council’s social media.

This service will be the responsibility of the Tourism and Promotions Manager, reporting to the Town Clerk, with support from two part-time TIC Assistants (one senior) and one seasonal assistant, all on variable hours.

Amenity Services (Committee: Tourism and Amenities)

- Public Toilets
- Mariners Garden
- Patients Car Park
- Allotments
- Cemetery Grant
- West Looe Bowling and Putting Facilities
- Any Town Council open spaces
• Community liaison on service issues
• Devolved services
• External Contracts.

The team providing this service will comprise the Amenities Manager, reporting to the Town Clerk, supported by two full-time and one seasonal cleaning operatives, and external contractors as appropriate.

4.13.3 This report has identified the need for a corporate governance structure designed to create business units with clear accountabilities and budgets. But these teams must not work in isolation from each other; a culture needs to be developed that identifies situations where the power of team working leads to better outcomes. Accordingly there is a need to ensure there is a process in place to ensure enhanced working together and in partnership. At present there is no real management structure, so no Management Team meetings and no real opportunity to create a ‘Team Looe’.

4.13.4 In respect of the Management Team, this should comprise the Town Clerk, who is overall accountable for all aspects of the Council’s management and business operations, the Tourism and Promotions Manager and the Amenities Officer. Other staff could be asked to attend as appropriate where their expertise is required. Such meetings should have clear agendas and notes, with agreed action responsibilities and a time for so achieving. The meetings should be held at least once within every cycle of meetings, should address corporate and strategic issues and not become involved in minutiae. Monitoring of budgets (on an exception basis), major projects progress, key staffing issues, a sharing of key performance data, and brief service reports (five minutes each maximum) should ensure the meetings take one hour and do not impinge on other workloads. There should then be an obligation on Service Heads to share agreed core messages within their teams.

4.14 Financial implications of Staffing Proposals

4.14.1 The total unallocated staffing budget at present is £45,922 comprising the provisions for the Civil Enforcement Officer, the Community Officer and the single increment over-provision for the Town Clerk. The fact this money is in the budget is of course no reason why any or all of it needs to be spent but the case made for strengthening the wider promotions function (including 8 hours a week additional time in the TIC for the Assistants to facilitate this), providing amenities management, and increasing capacity in the office by appointment of an Apprentice will likely cost approximately £34,000, including national insurance. Conversely the new pay rate for the Senior Cleaning Operative on the Public Toilets following the end of pay protection will save approximately £2,000 including savings in national insurance. In other words all the staffing recommendations contained within this report are affordable within budget should Council wish to support the proposals made.

**Recommendation 10: That a new staff structure as proposed in Appendix G be approved.**
5.0 The Council’s Democratic Structures

5.1 Looe Town Council has a structure of Committees and Working Parties that is extensive and inappropriate given the size of the Council and what it is doing. In addition to Council (17 meetings in the last year, including Special meetings) there are five Committees and countless Working Parties. The structure is more akin to a District Council than a medium sized parish and is unsustainable and the root cause of many of the Council’s governance problems.

5.2 The number of meetings being held is such that Member attendances with notable exceptions are poor. This means that it is mainly the same six or seven councillors who regularly attend meetings and ‘do the work’. And this is borne out by reference to attendance statistics. Including ex-officio members only Environment and Public Protection, and Finance and Works Committee have as many as eight members, Tourism only has four members, Procedures and Planning both have six. Taken across the Council that equates to two committees a member but in reality that is not the situation as the Mayor sits on all five committees (including one as Chair) and two members serve on four. And the members with the most commitments also tend to be those who attend most meetings.

5.3 Not only is this a burden on the councillors who do give their all but it is similarly so on the Town Clerk who is required to attend most of the meetings, prepare the agendas and write the minutes. The criticisms that follow regarding the quality of such paperwork need to be seen in the context of someone who has many other responsibilities other than acting as a committee clerk, which whilst an important aspect of her job is not necessarily the most effective utilisation of her time. The reduction in the number of meetings and freeing up of capacity through the staffing changes already proposed is designed to ensure future enhanced focus and quality in all aspects of the administration and management relevant to the Council’s democratic processes.

5.4 So this section looks at the structure of the Council’s democratic structures, advises the standards that should be aimed at in terms of quality information that can produce informed debate and sound evidence-based decision making, and makes suggestions as to how the Council can better conduct itself in a way to restore public confidence. All of this recognising that the role of an elected member is a selfless act of public service; no-one does it for the money as the Council has resolved not to pay allowances other than for the Town Mayor. Hence there is nothing in this section which is designed to be critical or censorious; rather the proposals are designed to remove some of the unnecessary bureaucracy that exists and which has fundamentally contributed to some of the internal tensions that have been damaging.
5.5 Committees

5.5.1 The first obvious comment to make is that the Council does not need five committees. The second observation is that the committees do require real powers vested in delegated authority. At present all decisions are made at Council or not made as the case may be. There is ample evidence from minutes and limited personal observation that too many items are shuttled back and forth between committees and council with no real clarity on what is required because of the absence of written reports and agendas that give no indication of decision–making required. Furthermore where items are of major significance they are given no more consideration than matters of mere note. The Council meeting on 19 January 2015 was an example of this; the two most important items on the public agenda, namely the budget/precept and the Music Festival were considered late on the agenda and neither satisfactorily dealt with. And the public toilets were debated in private session long after 10 p.m. when members had already been sitting for three hours and attention would inevitably have waned. That is no way to conduct effective business.

5.5.2 With regard to the numbers of committees it is strongly recommended that these be reduced to three in number each with their own dedicated terms of reference. Broadly it is proposed that one should be a Finance and General Purposes Committee, dealing with all aspects of corporate governance, finance and staffing resources; a second, Tourism and Amenities has a focus on the doing side of the Council, its public face in terms of direct service provision; and the third, Planning and Public Consultations, focuses upon public representations. In all of this there is nothing unique and indeed there is intellectual logic and clear structure in what is proposed. This is shown attached as Appendix G.

5.5.3 Attached as Appendix H is a draft Delegations document for the Town Council, including proposed Terms of Reference for the committees proposed. Members are urged to read this carefully. It has been prepared as carefully as possible based on an understanding of what the Council is doing now and might do in the future. The document might need tweaking but is robust and if approved would give clear direction to the Council’s affairs providing the recommendations on administration are agreed as set out in paragraph 5.6. Essentially whilst the schedule of Terms of Reference may appear onerous there is nothing in here that the Council is not currently responsible for. What the document does is show clear accountability; accountability which is missing from the Council’s current arrangements.

5.5.4 And because there will now be a clear committee split between matters of governing, matters of direct service provision, and matters of representation there should be no conflicts between committees. And to ensure this further it may be helpful to programme into the diary at the commencement of each Committee cycle a Chairman’s meeting comprising the Council Mayor, the three Committee Chairmen, and the Town Clerk and, on a needs only basis, the two Service Heads. Again this should be agenda led. The meeting would address workload for the coming cycle and share any other information
relating to the working of Council and Committees. This would be a proactive approach and it is one which works with success in many other forward-thinking parish and town councils. There is no need to take formal minutes though notes are advisable. The meeting would have no formal constitutional status.

5.5.5 Furthermore with only three committees there is an opportunity for members to specialise to a greater extent than is currently possible, and there should be no need for any member to serve on more than two committees should the membership be set as follows:

- Finance and General Purposes Committee – 9 members plus Town Mayor as ex-officio;
- Amenities and Tourism – 9 members plus Town Mayor as ex-officio;
- Planning and Public Consultations – 9 members plus Town Mayor as ex-officio (ensuring the make-up of this committee is geographically well spread to ensure effective representation on behalf of both East and West Looe)

5.5.6 There should be no reason to amend the current diary of meetings schedule with Planning and Public Consultations Committee meeting monthly and the two other committees and Council meeting every six weeks. Many medium to large councils now work to a two-monthly schedule with the exception of Planning, and whilst this could be encouraged if everything was working as it should, it is concluded, with some reluctance, that this change would be too radical for the Council at this stage of its development. It could however be kept under review for the longer term.

5.5.7 There is one other very good reason to delegate more powers to committees. At present everything comes through Council. That means the Town Mayor is, and visibly appears as, the political leader of the Council. Notwithstanding every best effort of the individual concerned that is a heavy load additional to the civic leadership role that comes from being first citizen. It can and clearly has created some conflicts, which can be damaging to the individual and the Council. It is far better to separate the roles as happens already in the vast bulk of medium/large and active parish and town councils. It is also why the Town Mayor whilst ex-officio on committees with no obligation to attend should not be permitted to take on any additional Chairmanships.

5.5.8 In addition such arrangement will hopefully be an encouragement to more councillors seeking the Mayoralty in the future because of the lessened policy accountabilities; it is understood that this has been a real issue in the past. The secondary benefit is that it raises the status of the Chairmen, and to a lesser extent, the Vice-Chairmen of the three Standing Committees who will be accountable for the policy and ultimate delivery of the work of their committees, which should make membership of the Council more collegiate and democratic.
Recommendation 11: That from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year the Council should introduce a new structure of Committees in accordance with proposals contained in paragraph 5.5.

Recommendation 12: That from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year the Council should introduce a Scheme of Delegation utilising the draft attached to this review as Appendix H or some other similar version following further evaluation.

5.6 Agendas, Reports and Minutes

5.6.1 Besides the problem of decision-making, which will hopefully be addressed by approving a scheme of delegation and reducing the numbers of committees there is one other issue, which is considered to be fundamental and at the kernel of many of the Council’s current difficulties; this relates to the lack of effective information upon which sound and effective decision-making can be based. And there is nothing complicated or difficult about this. Put simply there are a number of areas of concern and these are dealt with, in turn, in paragraphs 5.6.2 to 5.6.9 that follow:

5.6.2 The agendas are too lengthy. This is self-evident. Council on 19 January 2015 had 19 items in Part A alone. Many of those items were verbal reports, which could as appropriately have been taken as read. Reports from the county councillors and routine items of correspondence are but two examples.

5.6.3 The agendas do not differentiate between items for noting and those where a decision is required. This is fundamental. Furthermore there is no discernible agenda management; items are placed on the agenda in random fashion whereas decision matters need to come first and items for noting later. On 19 January the two most important items were the budget/precept and the Music Festival. They were dealt with at the end, resulting in problems highlighted in paragraph 5.5.1. In particular by the time Council got to those items, tempers were frayed and this was reflected in much of the exchanges. Furthermore neither was discussed with the intellectual rigour to be expected and in both instances referrals back to Finance and Works Committee were necessitated resulting in further meetings.

5.6.4 The agendas do not make clear what is going to be discussed at a meeting. Not only must this be unhelpful to councillors but the public in attendance will be equally uninformed. A one line heading is inadequate. An attached Clerk’s report is essential. With regard to approving minutes of previous meetings at Council the current layout of the agendas is not sufficient. These refer to reports not minutes and do not quote the dates of the meeting to be approved, nor the minute numbers and page numbers, which is essential for audit.

5.6.5 There is little or no supportive background information; no Officer report to inform and advise. If there is a report prepared then it does not find its way on to the website. Such reports are essential for reasons outlined in paragraphs 5.6.1 and 5.6.4. Members cannot be expected to disseminate complex information presented verbally at a meeting. There is need for such
information to be presented as an attachment to the agenda. Such reports need not be lengthy but they do need to include all relevant information, including of a financial nature and make clear what Members are expected to do at the meeting; namely to note, or to recommend on to another committee or Council or to resolve. An evidence-based recommendation can be appropriate though it is essential to remember at all times that unless there is a specific delegation to officers it is elected members who must ultimately make any decision. The following link http://www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk/pdf/meetings/public-services/Agenda%20and%20Report%20-%2009th%20September%202010.pdf takes to a best practice example of a comprehensive Officer report to members showing the sort of detail members should expect to receive. This has been especially chosen as it deals with many of the sort of issues confronting Looe. Although the number of pages looks daunting it needs remembering that much of the content has been cut and pasted from elsewhere. Importantly because the detail of what would be discussed was contained within the report, the meeting was able to run smoothly and efficiently with no misunderstandings (that particular meeting with a lengthy and complex agenda ran from 7.45 p.m. until 9.25 p.m. even with a guest speaker). Reference to that meeting’s minutes http://www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk/pdf/meetings/public-services/Minutes%20-%2009th%20September%202010.pdf shows a well conducted meeting with clarity of purpose and decision. The key message is the more thorough the preparation the more satisfactory the outcome.

5.6.6 Minutes are too wordy and quote individual members far too extensively. There is no need for this. Direct quotations as well as individual Member names should only be quoted when they are appropriate to the narrative; in other words when, for example, a dual-hatted member has explained a policy of Cornwall Council or a member who has been at a meeting elsewhere has reported on a relevant outcome. Quoting of names as extensively as appears to be the case at Looe Town Council is an encouragement for members to speak even when they haven’t anything to say. Also the arguments that often appear in the Council’s minutes are bad for the Council’s public reputation and only help to convey a public view, which may well be unfair and incorrect, that the Council is in a constant state of internal conflict. All of this negativity is unnecessary and bad practice, and can create dissent and bad feeling. Minute 84 of 22.9.2014 confirms that this is a view of much of the Council also, so the practice should be discontinued.

5.6.6 Resolutions are unclear. Best practice dictates that recommendations and resolutions need to be absolutely clear and capable of a single interpretation. If Members do not understand what they are being asked to vote on they should ask for the proposal to be read out exactly as it will appear in the minutes. It is for the Member who is proposing to be responsible for this, not the Town Clerk. Equally if the clerk of the meeting is not clear what has been proposed she should request clarification? One example of this lack of clarity relates to the decisions on precept for at least the last three financial years. For none of those years for example has the resolution clearly stated the actual precept amount. The 2013/2014 resolution referred to Councillor Tom’s
recommendation per Option 1 (minute 174 4.2.13), for 2014/2015 it was resolved to approve a 14% increase (minute 169 15.01.14) and for 2015/2016 a 2% increase (minute 170 19.01.15), though the wording of at least two of those resolutions is extremely confusing. It is surprising that neither the internal or external auditors have raised any concerns about this. Again another historic example of best practice from another Town Council which clearly incorporates all desirable information and is only capable of a single interpretation, greatly assisting public and audit understanding in the process is as follows:

“RESOLVED: That Finance & General Purposes Committee Min. 297 of 27.1.11 entitled “Revenue Budget 2011/2012” be approved as Town Council policy and that this shows estimated payments for 2011/2012 financial year of £973,648 and estimated income of £254,940 resulting in a net cost to the Town Council of £718,708, and that a precept be made on xx District Council in the sum of £691,600 for the financial year 2011/2012 to be paid in two equal instalments of £45,800 by 30th April 2011 and 30th September 2011, and that an amount of £27,108 be set aside from balances to cover the residual funding requirements in 2011/2012 financial year”.

An alternative layout, also satisfactory, albeit the minute references are not quoted, from the Newquay Town Council, meeting of 26 January 2015 stated as follows (note the emboldening of the important word and figures):

“Expenditure Budget 2015/18
A. To receive the F&P budget report and note the contents
B. Recommendation from F&P to set the Town Council’s 2015-16 Expenditure budget with associated EMR movements to £892,544
C. Recommendation from F&P to set the Town Council’s 2015-16 Precept to £810,700 in line with option 2”.

5.6.8 Agenda headings and minute headings do not reference the previous time the item was discussed in order to produce a time-line and audit trail. There is no easy way for members to note the audit trail of a particular item without spending time going back through previous records. That is a lot of cumulative time for 15 councillors who have more important things to do. If the agenda heading simply records the minute reference of the previous occasion that item was considered that would significantly aid members in reviewing past history. Over a period of time an extensive time-line will be drawn up. The SLCC training course on minutes also emphasises the helpfulness of this. Hence the Special Full Council meeting of 4 February 2015 has an item; “4. To Discuss Looe Music Festival’s letter of 4th February 2015 regarding unsold Festival Tickets 2014”. Besides having a written information report with background history as recommended in paragraph 5.6.5 it would assist Members if the agenda heading had instead stated: “4. To Discuss Looe Music Festival’s letter of 4th February 2015 regarding unsold Festival Tickets 2014 (Finance and Works Committee Minute 69.4, 26.01.15).
5.6.9 Page numbering is not appropriate at present. It is usual practice to number pages and minute numbers starting from 1 at the commencement of each civic year. Generally it is good practice to ensure that Council minutes and page numbers run on from one meeting to the next. At Looe that happens for minutes but not page numbers, which always revert to page number 1. All Committee numbers should start at minute 1 and page 1 within the financial year and separate numbering need not apply for each committee, rather they run on in sequential date order. Such conventions need not apply for any sub-committees or working parties. When minutes are approved at meetings each page must be separately initialled and dated by the Chairman of the meeting immediately following resolution of acceptance, with the full signature and date being clearly recorded on the final page. It would be good practice if these changes could be introduced from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year.

Recommendation 13: That from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year the Town Clerk should ensure that Council and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are prepared in a way that is consistent with the recommendations contained in paragraph 5.6 of this review report.
6.0  **The Council’s Services**

6.1  The Council’s services were recorded in paragraph 2.4. They are unusual in that at the present time there is no responsibility for allotments (though a site is being acquired), no cemetery/burial services (though a grant is paid) and no meeting halls or other accommodation that can be let for community use. Furthermore at present there are no large scale land holdings, whether recreation grounds, parks, playing fields, amenity sites, children’s play grounds and the like. With a few minor exceptions the Council’s services are two-fold, public toilets and a tourist information centre.

6.2  Like other parish and town councils throughout Cornwall, Looe has had to respond with some urgency to the decision by the principal council to withdraw from providing public toilets. Because Cornwall has good capital reserves but is pressed in terms of its revenue budget some financial contribution towards required capital improvements was achieved but the expected transitional funding has not been forthcoming. Overall the condition of the facilities on transfer was not especially good and the facilities appear tired with no evidence of significant capital investment in recent years.

6.3  In total the Council has five sets of toilet accommodation in the Town, three east of the river and two to the west; details as follows:

- West Looe Seafront (freehold)
- West Looe Square (in two locations and subject to redevelopment) (freehold)
- Millpool Car Park (leased from Cornwall)
- Outside The Guildhall (part ownership at dispute, part Harbour Board)
- East Looe Seafront (leased from the Harbour Board).

6.4  Although the toilets are important to the Town and there is signposting there is no reference to them on the Town Council’s website; the tourist map on the site only shows car parks but not toilets. The public toilets are free to use and there are no plans to charge. The toilets are maintained by an in-house team.

6.5  Some research has been undertaken elsewhere in Cornwall to establish how other parish and town councils have gone about taking on the public toilets provision. Two major tourist towns Falmouth and Newquay have taken on the service this past year or two.

6.5.1  Falmouth already owned one toilet of its own and now in addition is leasing two more in the town and four on the seafront. With the removal of transitional funding they are negotiating to convert the leases into freehold acquisitions from Cornwall Council. A further toilet next to the Town Council offices is being converted to an office extension for the Council. At present Falmouth contracts for cleaning/opening/locking with Cormac at about £40,000 per annum and have entered into a one-year extension. But policy is to take cleaning and maintenance services in-house when the year is up to which end a Services Manager is in the process of being recruited. (It should be noted
that that post with more extensive duties is being advertised on a grade of spinal points 26-29. The job description has been adapted for the proposed Amenities Manager post (Appendix D1) with the helpful agreement of the Falmouth Town Clerk. Altogether Falmouth Town Council anticipates total cleaning, maintenance, improvements and UBR costs of about £150,000 per annum. It should be noted that two of the toilet blocks were equipped with charging mechanisms but following consultation these are being removed. The point has been emphasised that charging regimes tend to attract greater damage, the public have ways of circumventing charges (coach trips pay once and the first through holds the barrier open plus other sophisticated ploys), there are capital installation charges and additional emptying, banking and other costs associated with internal financial controls.

6.5.2 Newquay also has a large number of toilets and information on them can be found by following this link from their website http://www.newquaycouncil.co.uk/component/search/?searchword=toilets&searchphrase=all&Itemid=140 It is understood the Council is reviewing options for charging and that this will be subject to full financial appraisal.

6.5.3 So far as inland towns are concerned the public demand for toilets is significantly less because the number of tourists and visitors is significantly less. Camborne is seeking to progress a community toilets scheme as an alternative to direct provision. This is not a realistic option for Looe.

6.5.4 It is not for this report to propose particular courses of action for service delivery but it is essential that any policy decisions are clearly made following a full business appraisal of the options available. And, with regard to the toilets outside the Guildhall and on the East Seafront options should be formulated following close liaison engagement with both East Looe Trust and Looe Harbour Commissioners. Most certainly it is understood that the latter may have an additional area of land available to enable construction of a more impressive toilet block at the Guildhall than is currently envisaged. In respect of the East Looe seafront the current block is so underwhelming and yet its location so important and attractive that a new development encompassing toilets as an integral element within a broader commercial scheme may be worthy of consideration in due course.

6.5.5 As a consequence of the above it is considered that the Council should establish a Working Party reporting to the Amenities and Tourism Committee with clear terms of reference to recommend on future provision and developments and that this should be a comprehensive, and not piecemeal, piece of work designed to ensure that the Council’s investment in the public toilets service does give best value for money given the capital and revenue investment of some £230,000 in 2015/2016, equivalent to over £70 per Band D tax payer.

Recommendation 14: That the Town Council should, before embarking on future costly and piecemeal redevelopment proposals for public toilets in Looe, conduct a comprehensive service review conducted by a dedicated Working Party reporting to the proposed Tourism and
Amenities Committee, and that such Working Party should include representatives of the Harbour Commissioners and two Town Trusts and that prior to commencement of their work detailed terms of reference should be first established and agreed together with a proposed timetable for reporting back.

6.6 Regarding the Tourist Information Centre it is appreciated that this is an award-winning service, and the only networked centre in south-east Cornwall. That notwithstanding, and recognising also the commitment and energy of the staff, the Centre appears tired (it is appreciated the visit was undertaken out of season) and there does not appear to be any master business plan for taking the service forward, nor for ensuring engagement with town promotion generally.

6.6.1 A fundamental issue is that the Council does not have clearly defined business objectives for the service, nor any knowledge as to what the precise costs of running the service are. This latter is because there has not been until very recently a dedicated cost centre for Tourism and Promotion. Now that this has been introduced it should be easier to address issues of productivity and performance. For example it would be helpful to start producing qualitative key performance indicators such as:

- Income generated per £ of salaries and wages
- Income as a %age of operational costs
- %age profit on commercial sales.

6.6.2 But there is one other aspect highlighted by a number of councillors during the review as well as by those third parties who were consulted. And that was the need to ensure that the tourism function should not be undertaken in a silo, in isolation from other aspects of the Council’s business. The Council is not so well resourced that it can afford for this to happen. This particularly refers to the need to maximise the skill sets of individuals, particularly the Manager. It is not in the Council’s interest for him to devote his valuable and more costly time to answering routine front-desk visitor enquiries when the front-desk staff assistants are better placed to perform those duties. Just allocating four extra hours a week to both permanent staff will release eight hours capacity of the Manager to broaden his remit including for promotion of the Town and Town Council, for communication/liaison with the two Town Trusts and the Harbour Commissioners on matters of mutual responsibility – for water bathing quality and publicity of same for example, and for co-ordinating the Town Council’s involvement with events and the like. Not only would this show confidence in the individual concerned, noting that nothing proposed would add to the job’s difficulty or salary assessment, but it would also recognise the capability of the two permanent Assistants, the senior of who could be given responsibility for stock to justify the increased salary and thereby further assist the Manager. However this report makes no formal recommendation on the precise allocation of duties as that is for internal decision.

Recommendation 15: That there should be a Business Plan agreed for the Council’s Tourist Information Centre and Town Promotions, and a
number of measurable key performance indicators should be established with regular reporting back on these to Committee.

6.7 Insofar as other areas of service activity are concerned these are at present relatively routine and not demanding. But there will undoubtedly be pressures brought to bear on the Town Council to take on other devolved services during the coming year(s). Council needs to remember that negotiations for such can only be concluded with the willing agreement of both parties. Cornwall Council will negotiate hard and the Town Council needs to be equally robust. If the Council considers that what is being requested of it is unreasonable or unaffordable, or beyond its capabilities it must resist all blandishments or make clear what its minimum requirements are. Members will not need informing by an outsider that Cornwall Council has significant funding difficulties (£196 million to be saved in four years) but there are not the same pressures on the capital fund.

6.8 Forward Plan

6.8.1 The Town Council does not currently have a Business Plan that sets out the strategic direction of the Council, gives guidance to the Officers as to what the key priorities are and which helps to inform the public what the Council is doing and intends to do and how over the lifespan of the Plan, usually four years or so.

6.8.2 Increasingly Town Councils have Business Plans. They tend to be dynamic documents and not cast in stone but they do give focus to the Council’s strategic direction. Particularly they act as a discipline to stop councillors or officers going off on areas of activity that are contrary to the Council’s plans. For Looe it would enable the Town Council to clearly define its intentions for its core services of Public Toilets and Tourism and Promotion, but equally for other service areas and for its office accommodation, and for working with other agencies for example. And the Council can also include in the Vision its financial objectives, including for precept and how it will generate other funds including from grants and service income.

6.8.3 It is important to stress that such Plan need not be a tome. Indeed half a dozen pages or so should suffice.

6.8.4 It is relevant to observe that a useful starting point could be a Members Away Day supported by senior staff. Ordinarily this is best undertaken immediately following an election, but the next one for the whole Council is not due until May 2017. Ideally therefore this should be programmed for before then if other commitments make this realistic. Certainly it would be commendable to move this forward at the earliest opportunity.

6.8.5 There are many examples of Town Council Business/Forward Plans available for reference on the internet which helps to demonstrate the sort of thing that can easily be achieved. Some of the better ones in existence include:
6.8.6 In addition other best practice examples that can be accessed as PDF documents via a Google search are those for Bradford on Avon Town Council, Uckfield Town Council and Dunstable Town Council.

6.8.7 If the Council wishes to look at a service specific business plan as opposed to one covering the whole work of the council then the Plan produced by Oswestry Town Council for its market service is a particularly robust example, see [http://www.oswestry-tc.gov.uk/markets/oswestry-market-business-plan.html](http://www.oswestry-tc.gov.uk/markets/oswestry-market-business-plan.html)

Recommendation 16: That immediately following the May 2017 Town Council election, but preferably sooner if considered feasible, the new Council should undertake an away day for all councillors supported by senior staff for the purpose of agreeing a Council Forward Plan and Vision to drive the Council’s plans and action for the following four-year period.
7.0 The Council’s Internal and External Communications and Relationships

7.1 The Council’s internal relationships are poor. Frustrations at all levels within the organisation are apparent. Morale is low and respect is lacking. And yet whilst no good could come from denying any of that there is equally no doubt that all councillors and all staff encountered during the review have a real passion for the Town and commitment to see matters improved. The fact that this review has been commissioned by the Town Council is itself recognition of that desire.

7.2 In terms of external relationships, here there is more cause for concern. The Town Council is not perceived as a community leadership body and the profile is low. Informal discussions with members of public encountered during the week the background information for this review was being collected in Looe, many short and passing conversations, did not elicit to any great extent that they were especially dissatisfied with the Council but that they either didn’t know there was a Town Council or what it did. Possibly that is more worrying especially as knowledge about the Harbour Commission, in particular, and the Trusts was far greater.

7.3 Feedback from Cornwall Council suggests that the Council is not viewed as an exemplar. Other town organisations have expressed frustrations that the Town Council is not well-run, does not have a clear forward plan, that it does not work in constructive partnership and that it does not value other groups and bodies in the town as it might. But all stressed that they are open to closer partnership working and dialogue on issues of commonality provided that the Town Council is prepared to show more professionalism and discipline in the way it conducts its business.

7.4 Of major relevance is the need to acknowledge the extent to which decisions by one organisation may impact on another. The Guildhall is an excellent example here. Whilst the Town Council as a corporate body is perfectly at liberty to make its own policy decisions on future office accommodation there must at the very least be an understanding of the impact of such decisions on the East Looe Trust for example. They have many spending obligations/commitments and limited revenue streams. If the Town Council walks away from the Guildhall that would have a major impact on the viability of the Trust and that would have broader consequences for the Town overall. It is known that such consequences have been previously explained.

7.5 Again this review is not recommending any course of action in terms of future office accommodation. That must be for elected members following a full evaluation of options, including possibly the Library building at the Mill Pool as well as options outlined in paragraph 7.4, but two comments may assist. Firstly there is lots of evidence from across the country that the status and influence of a council in the community besides being gained through the positive actions and decisions of elected members and officers is also generated by the centrality and quality/distinctiveness of the accommodation
that they work out of. Secondly PWLB interest rates are currently at the lowest they have been in the last 40 years and subject to securing approval through the County Association/NALC this can represent good value for money and affordable repayment rates if taken out over 25 or 30 years should the Council wish to acquire and renovate a building such as the Guildhall.

7.6 The proposal by East Looe Trust, reported by the Town Mayor at Council on 19 January 2015 for regular liaison meetings between the two Trusts, the Town Council, the Harbour Commission, the Regeneration Trust and possibly others should be commended as a positive step to enhance collegiate working within the Town. Best practice generally recognises more can be achieved in partnership working with other like-minded agencies than attempting to go it alone. The fact that the other organisations are successful and wish to play their part in driving Town progress and standards, and in making improvements should not be under-estimated.

7.7 One other issue needs addressing here. During the review there was a common view expressed that the Council is deficient in telling the public what it is doing. Its press and media relationships are virtually non-existent and the website is not used for dissemination of information to the same extent as many other more pro-active councils. Explaining policies, advising of the Mayor’s engagements, and headlining issues of Town-wide importance such as water quality, which is essential information for example, would all be of great benefit to the Council and the community it serves.

**Recommendation 17:** That the Council does work proactively to enhance its relationships with other local groups and organisations, working in mutual respect and commonality of purpose where issues affecting the future of Looe are concerned.

**Recommendation 18:** That the Council takes steps to improve its press and publicity arrangements, including ensuring the website offering is enhanced to promote and publicise the work of the Council and matters of importance to Looe and its economy.
8.0 The Council’s internal policies and procedures, and Financial Management.

8.1 The Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks with access to its website and comprehensive information database (password controlled) and has use of the Society’s advisory services. Furthermore the Council is able to share information with other clerk’s on a closed e-group, including the opportunity to ask questions.

8.2 The Council is a member of Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) with access to professional advice from Sarah Mason and her team, based at Truro, and there is access to a high-quality website with legal and financial advice (again password controlled). As members of CALC the Council is automatically a member of the National Association of Local Councils with access also to its website and on-demand advisory, including legal, services.

8.3 This section of the report covers the main areas of governance, specifically Standing Orders, Financial regulations, policies and procedures and financial management. Issues relating to Terms of Reference and a Scheme of Delegations, which are essential for good governance, have been previously dealt with in section 4.

8.4 There is no doubt that the Council recognises the importance of effective governance. The fact that a committee is dedicated to Policies and Procedures with more work undertaken by a Working Party would tend to confirm this. But policies and procedures cannot be drafted by a committee, rather they are the responsibility of the Proper Officer, for advising when legislation or changed circumstances necessitate a new policy or amendment to an existing one, to draft proposals and then to recommend to the appropriate committee. It is then for elected members to undertake the necessary scrutiny and due diligence and ensure that the Council conforms to its statutory and legal responsibilities. The demands on clerks are so much greater than they were ten years ago, and it is for that reason that post holders must ensure they keep abreast of legislative change and new developments. It is especially important not to re-invent the wheel but to have regard to all the best practice and advice which is readily available from those organisations that the Council subscribes to, namely SLCC, NALC/CALC and the Council’s employment specialists.

8.5 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

8.5.1 The Council has detailed Standing Orders. These are regularly reviewed and available for public reference on the website. However the Standing Orders on the website are dated May 2013 and are not up to date. There is, for example, no reference to the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which came into effect in August 2014 and which gives the public right to report from local council meetings, including filming, blogging, photographing and use of social media (including committees). Guidance issued by Cornwall Association of Local Councils is attached as Appendix I and more detailed guidance is available on their website.
8.5.2 The Council has Financial Regulations also. These too are available for public reference on the website. These are up to date, November 2014. It is important to ensure that for transparency and audit purposes when contracts are let (Financial Regulation 11) this is appropriately referenced in the official minutes of the Council or its Committees as appropriate.

8.6 Code of Conduct

8.6.1 Issues pertaining to the Code of Conduct are set out in the Localism Act 2011 paragraph 28. Paragraph 29 deals with the law affecting the Register of Interests, section 30 with disclosure of pecuniary interests on taking office, section 31 with pecuniary interests in matters considered at meetings or by a single member, section 32 with sensitive matters, section 33 with dispensations (in relation to section 31 (4)) and section 34 with offences. These are not optional extras to be adhered to or not according to circumstance and whim but essential and legal requirements to ensure open, transparent and lawful governance.

8.6.2 Responsibility for adhering to the Code rests with the individual member and failure to do so can lead to sanction and in extreme cases (see section 34) a criminal conviction. It is the responsibility of the Clerk as Proper Officer to ensure all councillors are aware of their obligations, including providing them with the appropriate documentation to complete their declarations immediately upon election/lawful co-option.

8.6.3 All this information is readily available for reference on the NALC/SALC/SLCC websites and in Charles Arnold Baker. The provisions of the legislation require the monitoring officer of the relevant principal authority (Cornwall Council) to establish and maintain a register of interests of elected and co-opted members. This register must be available for public inspection at a place within the principal authority’s area (it is – County Hall) and published on their website; see [http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/10340661/looe-201317.pdf](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/10340661/looe-201317.pdf) However the Localism Act 2011 goes on to say that if the local council has its own website the declarations for individual councillors should be published on that also, and as at early 10 February 2015 they do not appear to be so recorded.

Recommendation 19: That having regard to the content of paragraphs 8.5 and 8.6 of this review report Council does ensure that its Standing Orders are fully up-to-date recognising recent legislative change, and that the individual Declarations of Interest completed by councillors are posted on the Town Council website in accordance with legal requirements.

8.7 Policies and Procedures

8.7.1 The Council has a number of policies and procedures, some but not all of which are to be found on the Council’s website. The fact that Council currently has a separate committee dealing exclusively with this matter is a positive
sign of recognition of the importance of this area. Although there is no definitive list of policies and procedures a Council needs to have, partly because this may depend on whether the council employs staff, owns land, provides services, the level of its spend and/or precept etc. there are a number of policies that are a common requirement to have for all local councils with at least one employee. The following schedule, though by no means comprehensive shows how the Council performs and where the document can be located:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy/Procedure</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Tick if Attached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisals</td>
<td>Yes, statement</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay, Hours of Work, Annual Leave, Absence and Sickness</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Friendly Policies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>Yes, statement</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary Procedure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability/Disciplinary appeal Procedure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance procedure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Conduct</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Calls/Private Mail</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Communications</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petitions Policy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press Contact</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>S/O’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Usage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of landlines and mobile phones</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>On-going/Under review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Opportunities</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistle Blowers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud and Corruption</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Scheme</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of Information, Information Disclosure</td>
<td>FOI adopted</td>
<td>C.C. Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety, including COSHH</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints Procedure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Contractors and Suppliers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>S/O’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Policy</td>
<td>Yes but not written up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer/Member Protocol</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure and Barring</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.7.2 A number of the above which are recorded in the Staff Handbook are not policies as such rather than detailed statements of intent. As and when resources permit these should be reviewed to ensure they are in line with Council policy intentions.

8.7.3 Clearly given the level of reserves the Council has there is an urgent need to formulate an Investments policy. Such policy needs to pay especial attention to management of risk whilst ensuring an appropriate level of interest at a time when interest rates are at historic lows. Similarly a policy dealing with Disclosure and Barring is essential if any member of the Council’s staff may come into contact with young or vulnerable people in the undertaking of their work.

8.7.4 It is also important to ensure, even though this is addressed within the Council’s acceptance of its Health and Safety at Work etc. obligations as set out in the 1974 legislation and subsequently, that there are documented risk assessments for the identification of sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace. Whilst the Council is probably already taking steps to protect its employees, the risk assessment approach will help management decide whether it has covered all it needs to. Assessments to cover events management (each event requires separate documented assessment), and for dealing with syringes/sharps in public toilets, are but two examples relevant to the work of Looe Town Council.

8.7.5 The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 was published by the Department of Communities and Local Government on 1 May 2014. With reference to paragraph 16 of the new code, Part 2, which deals with publication of specified information, including expenditure items over £500 for example, this will not be mandatory and will remain recommended for a parish council with a gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) between £200,000 and £6.5 million even when the new regulations are in force. When the new regulations are in force, Part 2 of the new code will be mandatory for all authorities with a gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) which exceeds £6.5 million. It is noted that the Council has commenced work on the Code, including undertaking a gap analysis, and this is commended. However whether this requires a policy or a simple statement at the end of Financial Regulations confirming the Council will abide by the 2014 Transparency Code as a minimum requirement is open to consideration. Ultimately the single key new area is to publish details of contracts over £500, something most councils do as a matter of course on their payments lists, which are posted on their websites.

Recommendation 20: That Council should note the content of paragraph 8.7 and agree a programme of action to address the identified issues.

8.8 Financial Management

8.8.1 The quality of the Council’s financial information could be strengthened. This is recognised by the Town Clerk and elected members. Essentially if effective policy is to be made there needs to be a greater understanding of budgets
and costs. Decisions should be made based upon a firm evidence-based financial assessment. Individual officers need to be responsible for their services and fully understand their finances. To do this there needs to be regular financial information supported by narrative and produced on a cost centre basis; this has not been delivered to date though the QuickBooks package, the Looe Harbour Commissioners incidentally use a similar system, is perfectly capable of doing this. This suggests that the tools available are not currently being used to their full potential.

8.8.2 Essential financial information for Officers with service responsibilities needs to be much improved. At present it is difficult to accurately identify the costs of providing the Council’s core services on an individual cost centre basis. There needs to be a direct synergy between the budgets and the relevant committees.

8.8.3 Essential information to be regularly presented to the Finance Committee should include a statement of the Council’s financial position including:

- A schedule of all bank accounts, individually listed, with terms (i.e. 18 month, 2 years etc.), current interest rates and balances and the comparative balances where appropriate for the same period in the previous year (report not less than quarterly).

- %age of invoices paid within 30 days on a month by month basis with an explanation where the Council’s performance target is not met (report to every cycle);

- A schedule of all cheque, BACS, direct debit and standing order payments again showing for each month (report to every cycle);

- A schedule of all outstanding debtors (over three months) (report not less than quarterly).

8.8.4 Equally each committee with its own budget should receive a financial report on financial performance to date within the financial year in a format and time frequency as agreed by members.

8.8.5 Finally it is necessary to highlight the importance of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, which require relevant bodies of Looe’s size to complete an Annual Return which is submitted to the external auditors by the 30th June having first been approved by full council and signed by the Mayor. It is a statutory requirement that the members take responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control and give answers to nine questions in ‘Section 2 – Annual governance statement’. This is not a tick-boxing exercise Members must take their responsibilities seriously and it is a requirement that the Responsible Finance Officer prepares detailed supportive notes in order to assist council’s consideration of the Annual Governance Statement.
8.8.6 Essentially Council is required to answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to each of the statements, 1 to 9 on the Return. In the event of a ‘No’ response, explanations have to be provided to the external auditor together with a description of the action that is being taken to address the weakness identified. It is not intended to rehearse the detail of all aspects of the Return but it is known problems were experienced in 2014, and partly this was due to concerns about the Council’s system of internal controls (question 2). Here the Council needs to confirm that “We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness”. Another Quality Council sets out to its Members the extent to which it achieves this. That Council confirms the key elements of its internal control system as confirmed in the italicised response below. A copy of that Council’s detailed Committee papers with background on all nine responses is being forwarded to the Town Clerk under separate cover to assist in this exercise in future years.

“The council’s system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level and the effectiveness of each of the key elements is periodically reviewed by the Council. Key elements of the internal control environment include: Standing orders, Establishment of policy and decision making committees, Performance plan and budget reviews, Local code of corporate governance, Local council risk system, Scrutiny groups, Staff training - Investors in People, Monitoring officer, Internal audit, and External audit”

Recommendation 21: That having regard to the content of paragraph 8.8 of this review report Council does agree that financial management information is more forthcoming to the appropriate committees on a regular basis, that officers are accountable for the financial performance of services for which they are responsible, and that the Town Clerk does ensure that in future years completion of the Annual Return and Statement of Internal Control is properly explained to Members and that councillors exercise due diligence in approval of this.
Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the Town Clerk’s salary scale be confirmed at LC3 below substantive (spinal column points 39-42 plus any additional qualifications for which the post holder has entitlement in accordance with the NALC/SLCC approved scheme.

Recommendation 2: That the Assistant Town Clerk’s salary grade be confirmed as spinal points 21-23.

Recommendation 3: That the Tourist Information Centre Manager’s salary grade be confirmed at spinal points 23-25 inclusive and that his post be re-designated Tourism and Promotion Manager.

Recommendation 4: The appropriate evaluated grade for the TIC Assistant/Assistant to the TIC Manager should be spinal points 12-14 as opposed to the current grade of spinal point 13 and the post should be officially re-designated Senior Information Assistant.

Recommendation 5: The appropriate evaluated grade for the TIC Assistant should be spinal points 10-12 as opposed to the current grade of spinal point 10.

Recommendation 6: The appropriate evaluated grade for the seasonal TIC Assistant should be spinal point 10.

Recommendation 7: That the appropriate evaluated grade for the full-time Public Cleaning Operative/Supervisor is evaluated as spinal point 12, with the full-time Cleaning Operative/Handyman and the part-time Office and Seasonal Toilet Cleaner all be confirmed at spinal point 10.

Recommendation 8: That a new post of Amenities Manager be created on a salary of spinal points 23-25 and that the duties and person specification for this post be in accordance with Appendices D1 and D2 as attached.

Recommendation 9: That a new post of Office Apprentice be created at a salary to be determined by Looe Town Council being mindful of national minimum pay rates, and that the person specification for this post be in accordance with Appendix E as attached.

Recommendation 10: That a new staff structure as proposed in Appendix G be approved.

Recommendation 11: That from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year the Council should introduce a new structure of Committees in accordance with proposals contained in paragraph 5.5.

Recommendation 12: That from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year the Council should introduce a Scheme of Delegation utilising the
Recommendation 13: That from the commencement of 2015/2016 civic year the Town Clerk should ensure that Council and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are prepared in a way that is consistent with the recommendations contained in paragraph 5.6 of this review report.

Recommendation 14: That the Town Council should, before embarking on future costly and piecemeal redevelopment proposals for public toilets in Looe, conduct a comprehensive service review conducted by a dedicated Working Party reporting to the proposed Tourism and Amenities Committee, and that such Working Party should include representatives of the Harbour Commissioners and two Town Trusts and that prior to commencement of their work detailed terms of reference should be first established and agreed together with a proposed timetable for reporting back.

Recommendation 15: That there should be a Business Plan agreed for the Council’s Tourist Information Centre and Town Promotions, and a number of measurable key performance indicators should be established with regular reporting back to these to Committee.

Recommendation 16: That immediately following the May 2017 Town Council election, but preferably sooner if considered feasible, the new Council should undertake an away day for all councillors supported by senior staff for the purpose of agreeing a Council Forward Plan and Vision to drive the Council’s plans and action for the following four-year period.

Recommendation 17: That the Council does work proactively to enhance its relationships with other local groups and organisations, working in mutual respect and commonality of purpose where issues affecting the future of Looe are concerned.

Recommendation 18: That the Council takes steps to improve its press and publicity arrangements, including ensuring the website offering is enhanced to promote and publicise the work of the Council and matters of importance to Looe and its economy.

Recommendation 19: That having regard to the content of paragraphs 8.5 and 8.6 of this review report Council does ensure that its Standing Orders are fully up-to-date recognising recent legislative change, and that the individual Declarations of Interest completed by councillors are posted on the Town Council website in accordance with legal requirements.

Recommendation 20: That Council should note the content of paragraph 8.7 and agree a programme of action to address the identified issues.
Recommendation 21: That having regard to the content of paragraph 8.8 of this review report Council does agree that financial management information is more forthcoming to the appropriate committees on a regular basis, that officers are accountable for the financial performance of services for which they are responsible, and that the Town Clerk does ensure that in future years completion of the Annual Return and Statement of Internal Control is properly explained to Members and that councillors exercise due diligence in approval of this.
Appendix A

Chris Rolley Associates

Looe Town Council – A Job Evaluation Review

Please complete this form by Monday 5 January 2015 without reference to your job description.

Job Questionnaire

Name……………………………………………………………

Job title………………………………………………………………………………..

1. In a short simple statement describe the main purpose of your job

2. List the main key tasks & accountabilities (keep this simple but in a way that makes it clear what you do & are responsible for). Against each task please estimate the percentage of your time you spend on it, on average.
3. Do you directly manage other staff – please indicate who / how many?

4. Who do you report to?

5. Do you have authority to

- Recruit and/or dismiss staff?
- Incur or authorise expenditure?

6. Dimensions

Please indicate here any facts & figures associated with your job.

- Do you control a budget, if so for how much money?

- Do you control / responsibility over other assets such as property, plant, machinery? Please indicate what value and whether you are responsible for this or are only indirectly accountable through using it.
Set out some volumes related to your key tasks e.g. how many callers, letters, events etc.? Estimates only are needed.

7. Decisions

Give some examples of decisions you take on your own in relation to your work.

8. People & communications

List here the categories of people you come into contact with and need to communicate with as a part of your job. Briefly describe the nature and method of the communication.
9 Knowledge / skills

Briefly set out the key areas of knowledge that you require in your job. Also set out the skills and/or qualifications that are required to do the job. Do you consider you have had adequate training for the job you do and if not please advise what your needs are.

10. Describe the main changes that have occurred to your job over the past five years (or since your appointment if in post for a lesser period) and also briefly describe any changes that you would like to see for the future.

Signed…………………………………………        Date…………………………..

When completed please seal in an envelope marked “Private and Confidential for the attention of Chris Rolley” and leave with the Town Clerk by no later than Monday 5 January 2015. Thank you for your co-operation.
## Services provided by active Town Councils in Cornwall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodmin</td>
<td>Allotments, Berry Tower, Bus Shelters, Car Parks, CCTV, Cemeteries, Churchyards, Clocks, Coldharbour Pitches, Museum, Parks and Open Spaces, Play Areas, Public Conveniences, Shire House Room Hire Facilities, Shire Hall Information Centre and Walker Lines Gymnasium (currently being disposed of).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liskeard</td>
<td>Public Hall, the Town Information Centre, Guildhall Complex, the Forrester’s Hall Complex, the Fountain, the War Memorial, the Pipe Well, the Town Museum (run as a Charity), Allotments and Floral Arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redruth</td>
<td>Allotments, Bus Shelters, Floral Displays, Murdoch Day events, Parks, Gardens and Play Areas, Regeneration and Tourism Information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadebridge</td>
<td>Allotments, Car Parks, Cemetery, Dog Control Orders, Parks and Playing Fields, Play Areas including Skatepark, Tourism Information, Town Hall bookings,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B2

**Band D Council Tax for Larger/Active Town Councils in Cornwall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Council</th>
<th>Band D £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average for all Parish and Town Councils</td>
<td>77.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camborne Town Council</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodmin Town Council</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bude Stratton Town Council</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camelford Town Council</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falmouth Town Council</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayle Town Council</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helston Town Council</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illogan Town Council</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston Town Council</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liskeard Town Council</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looe Town Council</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lostwithiel Parish Council</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newquay Town Council</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penzance Town Council</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redruth Town Council</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltash Town Council</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Austell Town Council</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Columb Major Parish Council</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro City Council</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadebridge Town Council</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

PROPOSED AMENITIES MANAGER

SCP 23-25

Responsible to: Town Clerk

Responsible For:

1. To manage and motivate all Amenities staff to ensure they are adequately briefed to enable them to undertake work in a correct, safe and timely manner, including: work rota setting to ensure staffing complement, unsociable hours working and on-call service are maintained and, identifying training and development requirements to continuously improve staff technical skills. This also includes disciplinary, capability and associated issues up to first stage.

2. To oversee the work of contractors to ensure work is carried out to specification, in a correct, safe and timely manner and a satisfactory standard.

3. To set contract specifications for cleansing, maintenance and other contracts.

4. To ensure the compliance regimes applicable to Council buildings and facilities are adhered to.

5. To assist the Tourism and Promotions Manager with event management including traffic management, signage, barriers etc. as appropriate.

6. To have a good working knowledge of a variety of areas of facilities and amenity management, in order to:
   - ensure compliance and log keeping in terms of the safety of Council facilities and services;
   - to obtain quotations for the program of works and one off projects;
   - ensure the safe operation, renovation and cleansing of public conveniences;
   - any working on public areas and highways;
   - oversee Council operatives or contractors undertaking minor grounds works, horticultural works, and small works repair and maintenance.
7. To be on alarm call out list and to attend as required and maintain the on call rota for staff. To liaise with the police on all parks and buildings policing and security issues.

8. Be the Council’s representative liaison with Cornwall Council in respect of matters of enviro-crime.

9. To co-ordinate all matters relating to the Council’s allotments service and ensure that at all times there is full conformance with legal obligations contained in the Allotments Acts.

10. To assist in the setting of appropriate budgets and ensuring the cost effective delivery of services within allocated budgets.

11. To monitor the use of consumable items and spares and make arrangements for their replenishment.

12. To ensure the clearance of litter, weeds etc. from all areas is carried out, including designated footpaths and that all bins are maintained.

13. To be the Council’s first point of contact with the relevant burial authorities.

14. To oversee and manage the Patient’s Car Park, the Bowls and Putting Green Facilities, the Mariner’s Garden and other Council landholdings in accordance with the obligations of any leases or other agreements pertaining thereto.

15. To maintain bins, seats, shelters, noticeboards and other street furniture that is in the ownership of Looe Town Council.

16. Assist and advise relevant volunteer groups in their efforts, including those undertaking floral and related initiatives.

17. To ensure all vehicles, plant and equipment used are regularly maintained with routine operating requirements, including the completion of records.

18. To monitor facilities, plant and equipment to ensure safe working practices with health and safety regulations, and to the correct reporting / maintenance system. To understand and ensure adherence of the relevant health and safety regulations and their applications including:
   - promoting safe working practices at all times
   - ensuring safe and secure storage of materials and equipment
   - carry out operational risk assessments

19. To adhere at all times to the policies and instructions of the Council.

20. To serve and attend meetings, civic events and awards ceremonies as a representative of the Council as required.
21. The above list is an example of the duties; there will be other duties that might reasonably be required.

CJR/draft/February 2015
### Draft Suggested Person Specification for the Amenities Manager

**Appendix D2**

**Looe Town Council**

#### Essential Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Qualifications And Experience</th>
<th>Desirable Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Evidence of a commitment to continuing professional development.</td>
<td>- Appropriate management, administration or professional qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5 GCSE’s Grade A-C including two of English, Maths and Science.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Evidence of ability to provide leadership to enable, motivate and develop staff.</td>
<td>- Knowledge of current employment legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evidence of ability to prioritise work, set targets, achieve positive outcomes and delegate effectively.</td>
<td>- Experience of supervising and effectively coordinating an outdoor workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evidence of ability to organise and manage resources effectively.</td>
<td>- Previous public service experience.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Excellent oral and written communication skills, including an ability to relate to, and communicate with councillors, staff, members of the public and external agencies.</td>
<td>- Experience of PR and handling media enquiries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ability to provide objective advice to councillors in a timely and coherent manner, including analytical report writing and analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Information Technology</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Experience and practical ICT skills including Windows, Word, Excel and the Internet.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Meetings and Administration</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Practical experience of committees and report writing.</td>
<td>- General knowledge of the law as it affects Local Councils.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge and experience of budget management.</td>
<td>- Experience of bidding for external funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ability to fully grasp the full implications of all financial decisions.</td>
<td>- Ability to interpret and implement complex financial regulations.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Willingness to work out of office hours in order to attend Council meetings and Council business</td>
<td>- First Aid at Work certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ability to operate with complete impartiality in a political environment.</td>
<td>- Good knowledge of HASAW and related legislation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Full driving licence and use of own vehicle.</td>
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</table>

Note: Assessment of whether criteria are met will be from the application form submitted followed by interview where appropriate. In respect of qualifications original certification will be required.

CJR/draft/February 2015
Appendix E

Looe Town Council

Draft Suggested Person Specification for the Office Apprentice

**Essential**

5 GCSEs grade A – C (or equivalent).

Good written and oral communication skills.

Good computer skills including in relation to word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and updating of websites.

Good attention to detail.

Good clear handwriting.

Numerate

Flexible approach and prepared to work outside of normal office hours when necessary.

A team player.

Ability to organise and prioritise own work and meet deadlines.

Smart appearance.

**Desirable**

Previous office experience.

Note: Assessment of whether criteria are met will be from the application form submitted followed by interview where appropriate. In respect of qualifications original certification will be required.

CJR/draft/February 2015
Appendix F

Proposed Looe Town Council Establishment

Town Clerk and RFO

Amenities Manager

Public Cleaning Operative Supervisor

Cleaning Operative / Handyman

P/T Office and seasonal Toilet Cleaner

Assistant Town Clerk

Tourism and Promotions Manager

1 P/T Senior Tourist Information Centre Assistant

1 P/T and 1 P/T seasonal Tourist Information Centre Assistants

Apprentice Office Assistant
Appendix G

LOOE TOWN COUNCIL
PROPOSED DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

COUNCIL
Every six weeks

CHAIRMAN’S GROUP
Council, Committee Chairmen and Town Clerk
Every six weeks (prior to Council)

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Every 6 weeks

TOURISM & AMENITIES COMMITTEE
Every six weeks

PLANNING & REPRESENTATIONS COMMITTEE
Every four weeks
Appendix H

LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

(DRAFT) PROPOSED COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE
(February 2015)

INTRODUCTION

Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows local Councils to appoint one or more Committees or Sub-Committees to discharge any of its functions. It is not necessary for the Council to ratify Committee decisions where delegation applies. The membership and terms of office of Committees is fixed by the Council, and of Sub-Committees and of Working Parties by the appointing Committee. In constituting such Sub-Committees and Working Parties the Council or Committee as appropriate shall have full regard to the implications on the Officer and Member workload of such creation, and such shall only be established following consideration of a written report outlining the purposes of such body, why the matters in question cannot be dealt with direct by the main committee, and proposed terms of reference.

The scheme outlined below may be amended at any time by the Council with or without any recommendation from a Committee, Sub-Committee or other body.

DEFINITIONS

In this scheme, the following words and phrases shall be given the meanings outlined below:

“Council” refers to Looe Town Council

“Council matters” means those items specifically included in the approved Terms of Reference as falling within the specific purview of Council.

“Committee” means one of the following Committees:

Planning and Public Consultations Committee
Tourism and Amenities Committee
Finance and General Purposes Committee

“Corporate policy” refers to any policy matter, which may affect or relate to the work of more than one Committee of the Council.

“Committee overlap” refers to any matter other than one of policy which is related to the work of more than one Committee

“Service Policy” refers to any policy matter which does not affect more than one function of the Council and does not relate to the work of more than one Committee.
GENERAL

Compliance with the law: The Council Committees and Sub-Committees can only act within the law and in accordance with the Council’s approved Standing Orders and Financial regulations.

Budgets: Committees can only exercise delegated powers if there is budgetary provision for any proposed expenditure. They can vire monies within their overall budget in accordance with the provisions of the Council’s Financial Regulations. If no budgetary provision is available, delegated powers may only be exercised subject to obtaining approval for a supplementary estimate, and this must be done through referring the matter firstly to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, which will then make a recommendation to the full Council.

Committee Conflict: there may be occasions, particularly when there is conflict between Committees regarding which one has powers to deal with a particular matter. In such cases, the matter shall be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and that Committee shall in turn make a recommendation or refer the matter to the Council. The Council shall then determine the matter.

Council Matters: where Committees are considering Council matters they shall not have delegated powers to determine such matters, but shall report or make recommendations to Council.

Concurrent powers: The Council may at any time exercise any of the duties and powers within the scheme which are delegated to the Council’s Committees or Sub-Committees. A Committee may at any time exercise any of the duties and powers of its Sub-Committees.

Committee membership: The Mayor is an ex-officio voting member of all the Council’s standing Committees, but not of sub-committees or working parties. The Mayor may not be Chair of any standing Committee. A member may not be Chair of more than one standing Committee.

Considerations with regard to decision-making: In making any decisions or recommendations each Committee should consider the implications in relation to: Best practice, and any Council Corporate and Service objectives/policies.

RESERVATIONS WITH REGARD TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The terms of reference of all committees are subject to the following reservations:
   a. That powers be exercised in accordance with any policy adopted, or directions given, by the Town Council.
   b. That any proposal which involves any major changes in the existing policies approved by Council, shall be submitted to the Town Council for approval.
   c. Urgent/emergency matters which would normally be referred to a committee may be dealt with through the convening of a special meeting although if, in the opinion of the Mayor, this is not practical, they shall be dealt with by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of Committee (or in his/her absence the Vice Chair) and the Mayor and be subject to written report to the next appropriate Committee or Full Council meeting, whichever comes first.
   d. All meetings of standing committees will normally commence at 7.00 pm.
   e. There will be a quarter of an hour public session with members of the public being able to speak. This is subject to a separate scheme.
PROPOSED COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE (February 2015)

(a) The Power of raising loans, approving the annual budget, and setting the Precept;

(b) The power of incurring capital expenditure not specifically included in the Council's approved estimate of expenditure for the time being;

(c) The appointment to or co-option on a Committee or Sub-Committee of a person (on a strictly non-voting basis) who is not a Member of the Council or the Committee;

(d) Standing Orders and the functions and constitution of Committees and Sub-Committees;

(e) Approval of the Annual Return and Statement of Internal Controls;

(f) Appointment or nomination by the Council of persons to fill vacancies on outside bodies arising during the Council year;

(g) Filling of vacancies occurring on any Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council during the Council year;

(h) The appointment or dismissal of the Town Clerk;

(i) Cessation of any Council service;

(j) Granting of civic honours such as Honorary Freedom or Twinning Awards, and

(k) Any other matter required by law to be determined by the Council and which cannot be delegated to a Committee, sub-Committee or officer, or which the Council may determine as Council business.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (January 2015)

Note on delegated powers – Committees can resolve all matters within their terms of reference except Council and Corporate matters.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Subject to the foregoing, and to observance of decisions of the Council on matters of principle or policy, all the Council's powers and duties shall be delegated to the Standing Committees in accordance with the following terms of reference unless otherwise specified.

The acts and proceedings of a Committee shall:

(a) Where they are delegated to the Committee, so far as is legally permissible be deemed the acts and proceedings of the Council;

(b) As regards other matters, be subject to confirmation by the Council, and when confirmed shall be deemed the acts and proceedings of the Council;

(c) In all respects be subject to the provisions of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations except as otherwise determined by the Council.
(d) The Council may at any time without prejudice to executive action already taken revoke any executive power delegated to a Committee.

PLANNING AND PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS COMMITTEE

(a) The making of representations to the Local Planning Authority on applications for planning permission which have been notified in accordance with relevant legislation;

(b) The making of representations in respect of appeals against the refusal of planning permission;

(c) The undertaking of street naming under powers delegated by Cornwall Council, and to make representations regarding house naming and street numbering;

(d) To consider and monitor strategic, Unitary and other developmental plans, proposed listed buildings, conservation areas, tree preservation orders and building preservation orders which impact upon Looe, and the making of all appropriate representations.

(e) The facilitation of economic development initiatives for the benefit of the Town and the making of recommendations on all related matters and liaison as appropriate with other agencies;

(f) To co-ordinate the Council’s work in respect of Neighbourhood Planning

(g) The making of representations to the appropriate Planning Authority in respect of other planning matters not otherwise referred to in Terms of Reference (a) - (f) above.

(h) To consider all matters relating to highways, footpaths and bridleways, and to make representations to other authorities regarding these matters.

(i) To consider all matters relating to transportation and car parking issues, including traffic and parking regulations orders, and to make representations to other authorities regarding these matters.

(j) To consider other matters relating to the physical environment of the town, but which are not under the direct control of the Council, including disabled access issues (excluding those relating to Town Council services), matters of environmental regulation and enforcement, and recycling of waste materials.

(k) To consider and to make representations to other authorities in respect of applications for liquor, gaming and public entertainments licences.

(l) To consider and to make representations to other authorities in respect of any other public service matters and consultations that may impact upon Looe.

TOURISM AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

(m) Dealing with all Tourism and Amenities Committee matters falling within the purview of Looe Town Council, and the management and effective control of all budgets, including for:
(i) Looe Tourist Information Centre;
(ii) Town and Tourism Marketing and Promotion, including the production of Council newsletters and promotional materials;
(iii) Public Toilets and associated stores;
(iv) Allotments;
(v) The Patients’ Car Park;
(vi) Mariner’s Garden;
(vii) Open Spaces and other amenity land in the ownership or under the control of the Town Council;
(viii) War memorial;
(ix) Environmental work undertaken by the Town Council on behalf of Cornwall Council where this has been agreed by policy including for example fly posting, weed control and litter picking;
(x) Street Furniture including litter bins, salt bins, bus shelters, notice boards and Council signage.

To manage all Council events and activities, other than those of a strictly civic nature.

(n) To establish service policies, approve programmes of work, monitor performance and take decisions in respect of those matters detailed in the budget schedule above and to provide reports on the implementation of service policies.

(o) To manage and review all arrangements within the town relating to services directly provided by the Town Council.

(p) To make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee regarding staffing requirements relating to the staff primarily engaged undertaking the Committee’s work.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

(a) The making of recommendations in respect of items (c) to (h) of the matters to be dealt with solely by the Council;
(b) Dealing with all matters relating to the general day-to-day administration of the Council;
(c) Dealing with matters specifically referred by the Council or any other Standing Committee and with all matters not specifically referred or delegated to any other Standing Committee;
(d) Dealing with all matters pertaining to the performance, terms and conditions of service, and superannuation of the Council's staff and making appropriate recommendations relying on, where appropriate, the Scheme of Conditions of
Service of the National Joint Councils, the National Association of Local Councils, and any approved Local Conditions of Service;

(e) Dealing with all aspects of the Council’s Corporate Governance including the management and control of budgets for central services, administration, the Council’s civic and Mayoral services, corporate management, external and internal audit, performance management, democratic representation, and community and other grants

(f) To establish service policies, approve programmes of work, monitor performance and take decisions in respect of those matters detailed in the schedule above and to provide reports on the implementation of service policies;

(q) To deal with all matters referred by the Council or any other standing Committee and with all matters not specifically referred or delegated to any other standing Committee;

(r) To deal with all matters relating to staffing including appointments and terms and conditions of service;

(s) To recommend to Council the annual budget, variations and supplementary estimates relating to budgets of the standing Committees, and any Corporate plans, strategies and policies;

(t) To act as lead Committee in respect of any partnership initiative of a corporate nature with Cornwall Council, East and West Looe Trusts, Looe Harbour Board and any other public body;

(u) To advise the Council on financial matters, particularly the financial implications and funding of any capital or revenue projects;

(v) To advise the Council in relation to matters of legislation, policy and procedure and to ensure that the Council is in full compliance with any statutory obligations at all times;

(w) To receive Auditors’ reports and to make recommendations regarding any matters arising from such reports;

(x) To monitor the performance management of the Council and the Council’s responsibilities for effective performance, the drafting of the Annual Report/Forward Plan, the operation of service reviews and any necessary recommendations to the Council for implementation;

(y) To approve payments of accounts in accordance with the Standing Orders, to monitor the level of Council income/expenditure compared with the Council’s approved estimates and to control the management of the Council’s financial resources including bank accounts and investments;

(z) To consider financial grants to organisations;

(aa) To control the collection of income and the write-off of irrecoverable debts to a limit as agreed in the Council’s financial regulations with any sum greater than this requiring full Council agreement;

(bb) To ensure that the training needs of members and staff are met, and to ensure that the Council provides a safe working environment with regard to health and safety and other statutory obligations;
(cc) To maintain any Council archives and civic treasures, and

(dd) To consider community safety matters, including liaising with other authorities regarding policing, neighbourhood warden schemes and CCTV.
Advice on Open and Accountable Local Government

Government is currently implementing increasing transparency and scrutiny requirements. The most high profile change is the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which came into effect in August 2014 and brought in the public right to report from local council (and principal local authority) meetings. It was published with an associated guide Open and Accountable Local Government which helps explain the rights.

The law gives the public and press the right to report, which includes filming, blogging, photographing and use of social media at council meetings (including committees), in most circumstances, although not for legitimately confidential items. Councillors can also report from the meetings but must take care not to disrupt the meeting and in the interests of natural justice, should still be listening to and participating in the debate so that they can make informed decisions.

Whatever form of reporting is used, editing and re-use (retweeting, republication etc.) of the result is readily possible. However, councils will be aware that reports from meetings in written form including tweeting and blogging have been fairly commonplace for some time. Covert filming and audio recording have not been unknown either. Now, the difference is that such reporting activities will usually be conducted overtly and councils will be preparing themselves properly for facilitating and managing this reporting, in anticipation that the likelihood of reporting has risen. You must provide reasonable facilities for those reporting from meetings.

Local councils raise a compulsory levy from the council tax payer and have statutory powers to spend uncapped amounts of public money. As well as being a rewarding role, being able to take these decisions is a privilege and carries a weight of responsibility. Local councils are a valuable tier of local government embedded within the community with a broad public service remit. Indeed, there is a drive to ensure that more areas can benefit from being parished. Filming and other means of reporting can be a valuable way of engaging with the public and demonstrating the value of your services and assets. Conversely, a failure to act in an open and transparent way can be damaging to the reputation of individual local councils and can be picked up by the national press and Government in a way that damages the reputation of local councils as a whole. It is now much easier for good and bad publicity to be spread, with Government encouraging lay journalists to blog and tweet (which in turn can be picked up by national journalists) and with YouTube and other websites providing a portal for local affairs to be broadcast.

Although council meetings are meetings in public and not public meetings, good engagement with the public is essential for the good working and reputation of the council. The right balance needs to be struck between getting on with business without undue disruption and an appropriate level of engagement. The role of the Chair of the meeting is crucial to its success. Agreed policies and protocols for
dealing with publicity and reporting can help the Chair and the council as a whole to handle such issues in a business-like and appropriate way.