

Council Meeting – 25 February 2025

Questions from Members of the Public

Questions from Eloise Rokirilov on behalf of Newton Abbot and District Civic Society

Q1) We understand conversations are still taking place between the MP, officers and interested parties regarding retention of the main Bradley Lane Mill buildings, as previously. Can you update the public on this, and explain why the 1870s stone warehouse, considered by your previous Conservation Officer to be the oldest structure on the site, and of high significance, has already been demolished?

Response from the Executive Member for Assets, Economic Development, and Communication

The matter has been fully reviewed and assessed by the Assets team. Based on their advice it was agreed; it was not feasible to retain any of the buildings. Retaining the buildings would not allow TDC to pursue its wider aims of regenerating the land.

Q2) Can you confirm whether your current Conservation Officer or equivalent member has photographically documented any features of the engine house, and chimney stack, the latter which was proposed for retention, before they were crushed?

Response from the Executive Member for Economy, Estates and Major Projects

All the buildings and structures in the vicinity of the Engine House and Launa Building have been laser scanned, and full 3D-coloured rendered models will be stored digitally. This will act as a permanent record of the area and its form.

Q3) Can you detail how the tannin pits behind the Engine House were dealt with, given their likely high levels of contamination, and use for filtering water from the Mills to avoid chemicals reaching the river Lemon? These appear to be invisible under the rubble that was created by the fast demolition of the Engine House.

Response from the Executive Member for Economy, Estates and Major Projects

The demolition contractor (HCD) has confirmed that save a small amount of vegetative sludge the pits were empty.

To deal with any contamination HCD adhere to the following

- The project is undertaken in accordance with an environmental management system which complies with ENV 18001
- Hepi filters are used to protect drains from dust.
- Any fuel or chemical storage is within bunded enclosures.
- Spill kits are placed adjacent to any work in the event of a spill through broken pipes or during re-fuelling.
- In the event there is a spill, designated site personnel will use liquid absorbent materials such as granules and fine sand to contain the spill. This will then be stored in an appropriate waste container such as an oil drum which will then be removed from site for disposal as Hazardous Waste.
- All standing plant will have drip trays placed underneath them

Question from Alison Eden

Q4) "Review membership of the Standards Committee, with only members who have an excellent behavioural track record being eligible to join it. Meetings should then resume. A Governance Committee should be introduced to reinforce the work of the Standards Committee. As with the Standards Committee, members on the Governance Committee must have an unblemished behavioural track record"

While it makes sense that there is an extra layer of scrutiny of standards committee members via Governance Committee Enforcers, I'd like confirmation regarding who is appointed and by whom to judge the 'unblemished' and what are the precise criteria for 'unblemished' and 'excellent'?

Response from the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate

Should the recommendation be accepted by Full Council, it will be for the Standards Committee/group leaders to determine the practicalities.

Question from Jenny Dingsdale

Q5) *Today, I read that the external audit has highlighted bad behaviour from councillors here.*

Looking at the auditors report, page 20, recommendation 4 is that the council recognise good practice and elect an opposition or independent chair of the overview and scrutiny committee. I tried to raise this in July last year, and was shut down by the chair of full council in a perfect example of the intolerant behaviour highlighted in this audit. Since then, the chair of overview and scrutiny has demonstrated clearly why this is necessary. Will the chairs of full council, and overview and scrutiny now step down and reflect on their behaviour?

Response from the Leader

Dear Jenny Dingsdale, we will be proposing that all recommendations from the External Auditors be agreed. It is a matter for all committee members to elect the Chairs.

Questions from Cathy Mudge

I have a question for TDC meeting next week. It is a follow on from the recent external auditors report of the Teignbridge District Council.

On p27 of the annual audit, point 4 is about raising written complaints with monitoring officer. Given the current state of complaints handling, what improvements will be made to make sure complaints are handled quickly, fairly and appropriately in future?

Q6) *What specific deadlines will be set for acknowledging and resolving written complaints?*

Response from the Leader

Dear Cathy Mudge, we discussed this at our meeting together on the 11th of February. I Have been assured all 16 complains will be actioned according to our constitution. Additionally, the independent person is assisting the Monitoring Officer to reply in a timely manner.

Q7) *What training will be provided to ensure fair and empathetic handling of complaints?*

Response from the Leader

Dear Cathy Mudge, all Officers follow the Officers Code of Conduct and are fully trained.

Q8) *Will there be an option for independent review of disputed outcomes, and how?*

Response from the Leader

Dear Cathy Mudge, the Monitoring Officer reply is in consultation with the Independent Persons if needed and is final.