

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Informal Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting
Date and time: Tuesday 26 May 2026 at 10am
Place: Council Chamber, Forde House, Newton Abbot.

Attendees:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members: Cllrs Bullivant (Chair), MacGregor, C Parker, Rollason, Ryan, Swain, J Taylor and Thorne (Vice-Chair).

Executive Members present: Councillors Buscombe, Hook, Keeling, Nutley and Sanders

Other Members: Councillors Atkins and Hayes.

Officers in attendance:

- Charlie Fisher, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer
- Kay Fice, Scrutiny Officer
- Trish Corns, Principal Democratic Services Officer
- Christopher Morgan, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
- Neil Blaney, Director of Place
- Michelle Luscombe, Head of Strategy and Partnerships
- Allie Clark, Senior Strategic Infrastructure and Growth Officer
- Andrea Furness, Licencing Manager
- Tom Pearce, Principal Strategy and Policy Officer (Strategy and Partnerships)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed all of those in attendance to the meeting

Apologies were received from Councillors Major, Steemson and Williams

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Senior Strategic Infrastructure and Growth Officer presented on Economic Development in Teignbridge and took questions and observations throughout.



Economic
Development Informa

Comments/questions/observations made included:

Slide 2: Strengthening Town Centres through Partnership and Planning

- Re Town Centre managers: what is in it for the Towns? The roles are developed based on what the Towns want. Often from a commercial property background, Events management, could be responsible for security and safety.
- Town Councils can identify their own Unique selling Point and promote their Town in the local area and wider afield for business interest
- If enough support and common themes Towns could share a manager.

- Teignbridge District Council are a facilitator – have we asked what they want from Teignbridge? Covered by the One Teignbridge Strategy
- The Local Plan covers all except Dartmoor National Park Towns
- Regarding advertising – that used to happen working closely for example with Visit South Devon.

- **Slide 3: Investing in Employment Space**

- Teignbridge's experience is that there is a demand for businesses wanting to invest in the area e.g. Bowa relocated to Kingskerswell from Ashburton into purpose built premises
- The space behind Aldi in Newton Abbot has been identified as an 'opportunity area' for commercial although there is a SWW drainage issue.
- Estuary Court is a success story as all trade units pre-let with no empty spaces
- Development of land at Drumbridges has an issue with National Grid and is probably 6 years away.
- Collett Way, received gap funding through the Regional Development Agency. Funding is prioritised towards Exeter not Teignbridge.
- All employment sites identified in the local plan are being contacted.

Slide 4: From allocation to Delivery; The Employment Land Pipeline

- The team is aware of the demand but many landowners are not willing to sell .
- Infrastructure: National Grid is prioritising residential developments over industrial.
- Could alternative energy sources be explored for the Arnold White (Drumbridges) site?

Slide 5: Culture Strategy; Identifying a Gap and Opportunity

- Cllr Jackie Hook is a member of the Arts Board led by Elaine Gill which has been responsible for installing the mural in Market Square, Newton Abbot for example.
- There is no dedicated officer resource for culture and arts at the Council.
- The cultural element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £300k was the most oversubscribed grant fund.
- Developing the strategy from 'bottom up' not just 'top down'
- It was recognised that coastal towns have particular issues but towns have the opportunity to engage with visit South Devon at a cost of £250
- Ideas include historic information about Teignbridge e.g. Bricks and links to a museum trail and the Brunel Trail.

Slide 6: Rural Digital Connectivity

- The original Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) investment can no longer be delivered as planned.
- The planned investment of £250,000 is still available but no suitable projects have been identified as deliverable that would provide meaningful impact or represent value for money.
- Cllr Nuttall is Teignbridge representative on the Board.
- Members would find a map from CDS listing the coverage across Teignbridge Towns and Parishes helpful – to be requested.

3. LICENCING

The Licencing Manager described the roles and responsibilities of the Licencing service.

- Licensing is a statutory function, and the Council is required by law to administer and enforce a wide range of licensing regimes. The service seeks not only to ensure legal compliance, but also to support applicants and businesses through the process. Officers provide free pre-application advice and guidance wherever possible
- The service manages a variety of licence applications, each of which must be considered against the relevant legislation, statutory guidance and Council policies. The application is determined under either delegated officer powers or, where appropriate, by the Licensing and Regulatory Sub-Committee. In addition to processing applications, the service also responds to concerns regarding potentially unlicensed premises or activities.
- Fees are governed by a combination of statutory and locally set arrangements. Some fees are prescribed in law, while others are determined locally. Where fees are set by the Council, these are subject to the appropriate advertising and consultation requirements before being approved by Full Council. In considering fees, the Council has sought to take a proportionate approach and increases have been resisted in some areas, such as Gambling Act licensing, where the scope for proactive enforcement activity is limited.
- Complaints can be submitted through the Council's online complaints form, and all credible reports are assessed and, where necessary, investigated. This work can be resource-intensive, particularly where businesses are non-compliant, as these often require significant officer time to resolve.
- The Council applies a graduated and proportionate approach to enforcement, seeking wherever possible to secure compliance through advice, engagement and staged intervention before escalating to formal action when necessary. This reflects both good regulatory practice and the need to use limited resources effectively.
- Looking ahead, the service is also preparing for the impact of forthcoming legislative changes, including new requirements relating to vapes and tobacco. These changes are expected to generate additional workload and place further demands on officer capacity.

At the end of the presentation, a number of questions were asked including:

- Clarification that Housing deals with HMO Licences.
- In terms of the charges are there any areas where we could increase fees? The statutory fees are where the fees are lower than should be charged based on the work
- £500 was charged for Pavement licences based on the amount of work involved
- Discussions regarding linking licensing fees (amongst other things) to the Council's and Town and Parishes overall aims of economic development and how they balance.
- Is there any scope for charging varying fees for Pavement Licences depending on the table numbers/size of the area occupied (written response below).

Under the current pavement licence regime (Business & Planning Act 2020 as made permanent in 2024), it is a flat application fee, not based on the number of tables/chairs.

The legislation provides:

- *The national framework caps fees at £500 for a new licence and £350 for renewals.*
- *This structure is intentionally simple, standardised and applies regardless of the amount of furniture proposed.*

I could not find any current example of a council charging on the number of tables/chairs within this regime. Pavement Licenses are for 2 years.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and contributions.

4. TOWN & PARISH CHARTER

The Charter itself was circulated with the Agenda for Committee members and the Principal Strategy and Policy Officer appraised Members of the presentation (below) and took questions and responded to observations.



Town and Parish
Charter Update for O.

These included:

- The tone of the document could suggest that Towns and Parishes were 'talked to' rather than consulted and set out a 'wish list'.
- Members would like to see the list of who to contact in the authority.
- Implementation of the document needs to emphasise the importance of Teignbridge Councillors being a conduit between the Council and Towns & Parishes
- Officers are increasing communication with clerks and it was felt that members should be included in this communication, particularly the monthly emails
- Need to break down 'them & us' barrier and improve working relationships.
- Officers confirmed that they were working with DALC with regard to developing Clusters where appropriate.

The Scrutiny Officer appraised Members through the summary feedback from the survey undertaken with Towns and Parishes (circulated with the Agenda for Committee members) and the key points were taken on board:

- If repeated, to be clear on questions e.g. Attendance
- Will the charter deliver what the Towns & Parishes want?
- Suggest that respondents are identifiable.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the points raised by Overview & Scrutiny members would be reflected in the report to be considered by Executive in July.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and contributions.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR A FUTURE REVIEW

It was considered by Members that their initial questions and queries had been resolved and there was no current desire for a future spotlight review or task group into the main topic areas discussed.

There was a need for officers to ensure that Licencing, Economy and Planning are joined up to ensure that changes in one do not adversely affect or impact on the others.

6. NEXT MEETINGS AND CLOSE

The Chair highlighted the next meetings of the Committee and closed the meeting:

- Mandatory Overview & Scrutiny Training – 4 June 2026
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 16 June 2026
- Informal Overview and Scrutiny – 14 July 2026

The meeting started at 10:00am and ended at approximately 12:30pm.