

## **Full Council 26 February 2026**

### **Questions from Members of the Council**

The total time allowed/allotted for Member questions and answers is 30 minutes. Questions are presented in the order that they were received by Democratic Services.

Where a Member seeks to ask more than one question, any second and subsequent questions will be permitted subject to the principle of one question per member and time constraints. Where time allows, any such additional questions will be presented in the order they were received and in rotation.

Each Member has no more than 1 minute to ask their supplementary question. After the allotted period of 30 minutes has elapsed, any member submitting a question that is not able to be heard, will be asked if they agree to the question being referred to the next meeting or dealt with in some other way namely a written response.

### **First Questions**

#### **Question 1 from Cllr Bullivant to the Leader of the Council**

1. Will the Leader join with me in sending a letter of appreciation to Network Rail congratulating them on their work at Dawlish to improve the resilience of the main railway serving the West of England?

The excellent performance of the new sea barriers during the recent period of extreme weather has demonstrated the skill and design capabilities of the Network Rail team to design and deliver the protection that coastal locations require.

It is noted that there were ill judged objections to the design as built, which questioned the need or scale of any Seawall changes or extensions of a new seawall and such challenges have delayed further improvements along the adjacent railway line.

This is important as the recent storms has resulted in serious failures of the old seawall whereas the new seawall shows no impacts at all.

In light of this experience will the leader, on behalf of the council also highlight the major benefits resulting from the investment in the Dawlish seawall and ask that the government support the investment needed to extend the new seawall from the River Exe estuary through to the Teignmouth estuary as originally intended following the failure of the coastal defences in 2014?

#### **Response from the Leader of the Council**

Yes, I am happy to write to Network Rail.

#### **Question 1 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

1. Given the recent storm damage and increasing frequency of extreme weather events, when were the emergency flood plans for Dawlish Centre, Teignmouth Centre, and Shaldon last reviewed and updated? Do these plans account for the combined impact

of storm surges, high tides, and 'green water' overtopping that we are now experiencing much more frequently?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

The emergency flood plans for Dawlish, Teignmouth and Shaldon are developed, owned, and operated by the respective town and parish councils, supported in collaboration with community resilience groups such as Devon Communities Together. These plans are not the responsibility of the District Council; however, Teignbridge continues to provide guidance, support, and relevant information to assist communities in developing effective and robust plans.

Work is currently underway within the Strategy and Policy Team to collaborate with these councils in the review, development, and updating of local flood and emergency plans. This programme includes identifying where plans are already in place, supporting communities to refresh them, and encouraging the development of new plans where gaps exist.

With regard to the specific hazards referenced, updated community-level emergency plans are expected to consider the changing nature and increased frequency of severe weather incidents. While the detailed content and review cycle of these plans sit with the local councils themselves, the Council will continue to ensure that the most current Environment Agency and Met Office data, mapping and guidance are made available to community groups as part of the refresh process.

Teignbridge District Council will continue to work with partner agencies and local councils to strengthen community resilience and support the development of robust and up-to-date local emergency plans across the district.

### **Second Questions**

#### **Question 2 Cllr Bullivant to the Leader of the Council**

During the recent severe storms damage occurred to the old structures around The Point in Teignmouth and along the beaches towards Halcombe. Damage was reported on the sea defences that apparently lie on Duchy of Cornwall or Crown Estate lands.

2. Can the Leader clarify who is responsible for carrying out repairs and what is planned to effect the necessary repairs, particularly those affecting the area around The Point and The Den on Teignmouth sea front?

### **Response from the Leader of the Council**

The majority of the sea wall along the beaches from Teignmouth towards Holcombe are an operational asset of and are maintained by Network Rail or the Environment Agency (for the section of main Teignmouth Promenade). The section of the Point Car Park, Den promenade to the rear of the main sea walls and Eastcliff promenade are the maintenance responsibility of Teignbridge District Council.

The Network Rail asset at Sprey Point, suffered damage with a significant hole in the front face and associated fill being lost from behind. This has repaired by Network Rail with

material brought in by rail during an overnight track closure to limit disruption to scheduled services.

The old structure within the 'The Point' spit, is locally known as the breakwater but is understood to have been constructed as a training wall (to guide the ebb flow of the Teign Estuary to help maintain a shipping channel) in 1906/12 on land owned by the Crown Estate. The breakwater is exhibiting significant movement cracks following recent storm events, particularly towards the southern end. Council Officers have met with the Crown Estates and Teignmouth Harbour Commission. The Crown Estate will be unlikely to contribute to repairs of legacy structures on their land, however both the Crown Estate and Teignmouth Harbour Commission are organisationally supportive of valid mechanisms to repair or enhance.

Although originally a training wall the current Beach Management Plan (BMP) recognises benefits the structure imparts as a breakwater for the limitation of marine driven wave energies into the inner estuary and the defences along the Back Beach and Shaldon.

The Council is finalising the Beach Management Plan which has been developed in collaboration with the Environment Agency. Beach Management Plans (BMP) are strategic documents that set out how a beach and its associated coastal structures will be managed to reduce flood and coastal-erosion risks. They help ensure that coastal areas remain safe, sustainable and resilient in the face of rising sea levels, increased storm frequency and ongoing coastal change.

The current BMP covers Teignmouth and Shaldon, including the Point, and uses scientific evidence and coastal modelling to identify risks, current management regimes and where improvements to our coastal defences are needed, as well as the potential funding and construction mechanisms required to deliver them. The scope of the BMP was increased to include the breakwater and its role for coastal defence and will be included in the development of a suite of FCERM flood and erosion measures for Teignmouth.

The BMP is scheduled to be presented to Council for adoption at the April Executive Committee.

## **Question 2 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

2. What are the designated evacuation routes for each of these coastal communities during severe flooding events? Have these routes been assessed for their own flood vulnerability, particularly given Teignmouth, Dawlish and Shaldon's geographical constraints and limited access/egress points?

## **Response from the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

Designated evacuation routes for coastal communities, including Teignmouth, Dawlish, and Shaldon, are normally established through locally led Community Emergency Plans. These plans are developed by town and parish councils in collaboration with community resilience groups such as Devon Communities Together. Teignbridge District Council is not responsible for determining or maintaining evacuation routes; however, the Council

can and provides guidance, support, and relevant information to assist communities in developing effective and robust plans.

At the strategic level, Devon County Council's Emergency Planning service, develop and maintain countywide emergency, flood, and resilience plans. These strategic documents include high-level considerations for access and egress such as the functionality and vulnerability of routes during major incidents, including severe coastal or fluvial flooding.

The Teignbridge Strategy and Policy Team are currently engaged in work to support local councils in the review and refresh of their Community Emergency Plans.

### **Third Questions**

#### **Question 3 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

3. What specific provisions are in place to evacuate vulnerable residents including the elderly, those with mobility issues, care home residents, and school children during flood emergencies? Are there pre-identified safe assembly points and transportation plans for these groups?

#### **Response from the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

Evacuation arrangements for vulnerable residents are coordinated through established multi-agency emergency response structures. During a flood incident, emergency services, Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council and relevant partner organisations work collaboratively to identify, prioritise, and support vulnerable individuals should evacuation become necessary.

At the county level, the Devon wide Flood Plan sets out strategic arrangements for flood response, including the identification of safe assembly points, the use of designated rest centres, and transportation options that may be activated during larger-scale events. These provisions are designed to support the coordinated movement of residents, particularly those requiring additional assistance.

It is important to note that responsibility for detailed evacuation procedures for specific groups, such as care home residents, supported-living facilities, and educational settings lies with the individual premises. These organisations are required to maintain their own site-specific emergency and evacuation plans. These plans operate alongside, and can be escalated into, the broader multi-agency response if required.

Teignbridge District Council supports this work through participation in multi-agency emergency planning forums and by ensuring that rest centre arrangements are in place should they be activated.

## Fourth Questions

### **Question 4 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

4. Beyond the yellow, amber and red warning system used by the Met Office, what other early warning systems are in place to alert residents of imminent flooding from storm surges wave overtopping and subsequent flooding? What is the expected response time between warning and potential evacuation, and has this been tested against the rapid onset of recent storm events?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

In addition to the Met Office's weather warning system, a number of other mechanisms are in place to provide advance notice of potential flooding, storm surges, wave overtopping and rapid-onset coastal events. The Environment Agency operates the national Flood Warning Service, which issues Flood Alerts, Flood Warnings and Severe Flood Warnings. This service provides targeted and location-specific warnings based on river, tidal, and coastal monitoring data. Residents and businesses are able to sign up to receive warnings by telephone, text, or email, enabling direct notification of imminent risk.

The expected response time between a warning being issued and a potential evacuation varies significantly between events, as different storm related events escalate at different rates. For this reason, evacuation decisions are made dynamically by the emergency services and partner agencies, taking into account local conditions, the nature of the hazard, and the level of confidence in forecasting information.

Should events be significant, the UK Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a nationwide public warning service designed to notify people rapidly during life-threatening emergencies, such as severe flooding, extreme weather or public safety incidents. Alerts are sent directly to mobile phones and tablets. The EAS provides a fast, geographically targeted method to warn residents and visitors in the immediate at-risk zone without relying on local media, social media, or opt-in systems. Decisions to utilise the system would be made by a multi-agency decision, with the Environment Agency identifies if there is imminent hazardous coastal flooding with the Lead Government Department (typically Cabinet Office or DEFRA) authorising alert issue.

Multi-agency partners, including Teignbridge District Council, participate in regular emergency planning exercises to test procedures, communication, and operational capabilities. These exercises are designed to test responses to both gradual and fast-developing scenarios to ensure readiness across all agencies involved.

## Fifth Questions

### **Question 5 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

5. In light of climate projections showing increased storm intensity and sea level rise, what assessment has been made of critical infrastructure vulnerability (including roads, rail, utilities, and emergency services access) in these communities? What timeline exists for implementing additional flood defences or resilience measures?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

Climate projections indicating increased storm intensity and sea-level rise are recognised across all risk-management authorities, and assessments of critical infrastructure vulnerability are undertaken through a combination of national, regional and local groups. Responsibility for the detailed assessment of coastal defences, roads, rail infrastructure, utilities etc. lies with the respective statutory agencies, including Teignbridge District Council, the Environment Agency, Devon County Council, Network Rail, the respected utility companies, and emergency-service partners.

Teignbridge District Council works closely with these organisations through established multi-agency resilience and technical forums together through established strategic planning and development management processes. This ensures that emerging climate-risk information, including assessments from the Environment Agency on coastal flooding (including overtopping) is shared and incorporated into ongoing planning, asset-management and emergency-response arrangements.

Regarding timelines for the implementation of additional flood defence or resilience measures, these sit with the relevant infrastructure owners and are subject to national funding frameworks, design development, environmental assessments, and partnership contributions, therefore it is not possible to provide defined timescales. However, Teignbridge District Council continues to support these processes by providing local evidence such as facilitating Beach Management Plans, partnership working, and aligning district-level planning and policy, and coastal-management work with wider resilience initiatives.

### **Sixth Questions**

### **Question 6 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

6. Given the severe damage to existing coastal defences - including the destroyed pier section, damaged seafront walls in Dawlish, the severely damaged Shaldon Marine Parade wall, and the cracked breakwater at the Point car park - what immediate repair and reinforcement work is planned? What is the timeline for these repairs, and what interim measures are in place to protect these communities while defences remain compromised and vulnerable to further storm damage?

## **Response from the Executive Member for Environment, Climate and Sustainability**

The question references four distinct coastal defence structures

1. The Pier - this isn't a coastal defence structure instead, it is essentially a privately owned commercial premises which spans over a short section of the sea wall defences. Any timetable for repair, or otherwise, of the pier will be determined by the private owners.
2. Seafront walls in Dawlish – The sea wall and trackside walls at Dawlish are the operational responsibility of Network Rail. It is our understanding that all necessary repairs have been undertaken.
3. Shaldon Marine Parade wall – the wall at this point was built by the Environment Agency as part of a wider scheme to protect the village, and also functions as a fluvial flood storage asset. Works are ongoing to assess the extent of the damage to Teignbridge District Council assets and works are being mobilised to stabilise damage to highway assets along Marine Parade.
4. The Point Breakwater - The affected section of the breakwater at The Point was built around 1906-12 on land owned by the Crown Estate. Teignbridge District Council have met with the various stakeholders connected to this legacy structure and will continue to liaise with them as they develop plans to reduce further damage to the area.

## **Seventh Questions**

### **Question 7 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Economy, Estates and Major Projects**

On 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026 an article was published by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, in which a member of Teignbridge staff reported on voyeurism, upskirting and sexual harassment of women and girls. "The importance of working collaboratively with other agencies to find solutions including the police, social services, youth services, housing providers and addiction services was highlighted by (officer) who recalled a previous incident at the location where the podcast was recorded – Newton Abbot's Courtenay Park.

(They) told how disturbing voyeurism claims of men taking photographs of young girls under the doors of public toilets in the park were tackled after the community safety partnership worked with the council to instal panels to cover the gaps under the toilet cubicles in just two weeks.

(Officer) said: "While we weren't aware of any incidents actually taking place the fear was in the community and that had to be responded to."

(They) also explained powerful community protection warnings (CPWs) can be. (They) recalled how a man was reported to be upskirting teenagers on buses but it was very difficult to obtain evidence. Working with the police, the community safety partnership

secured a CPW to stop him travelling on buses in the district. There have been no further incidents reported since."

7. Can the council provide specific details of the voyeurism incidents reported at Courtenay Park public toilets, including; when these reports were made, how many reports were received, who reported them (members of the public, police, park staff), and what the nature of the allegations were? Were these reports made to the police and if so, were they investigated and what was the outcome of any investigation into what are criminal offenses under the Sexual Offences Act 2003?

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

As stated in the interview, concerns were reported to the council via youth workers who were engaged with a group of young women. After checking with the Police, there were no reported incidents and no specifics came from the young women to enable any incidents to be reported.

### **Eighth Questions**

#### **Question 8 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Economy, Estates and Major Projects**

8. Why were these serious safeguarding incidents involving alleged voyeurism of young girls not reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Full Council through portfolio reporting? If these incidents occurred before July 2024, what was the justification for not informing elected members of criminal allegations involving children in council-managed facilities, particularly given our statutory safeguarding responsibilities?

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

As stated, there were no recorded incidents in relation to Courtenay Park the response was to impact on fear of crime rather than in response to specific incidents. The incidents on the bus were reported to Police and responded to in partnership and are not related to a Council managed facility.

### **Ninth Questions**

#### **Question 9 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Economy, Estates and Major Projects**

9. How does the council reconcile the swift two-week response to install panels covering gaps under toilet cubicles at Courtenay Park with the later contentious debates around single-sex spaces and floor-to-ceiling cubicles at Broadmeadow 'village changing rooms'? If gaps under cubicles were recognized as a safeguarding issue requiring urgent action in one facility, why was this not immediately applied as standard practice across all council facilities, and why was this experience not referenced during the Broadmeadow discussions?

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

The panels were installed to address the fear of crime issues as a retrofit. The designs in Broadmeadow were consulted on by Devon and Cornwall Police designing out crime and this did consider the height of the doors to prevent these types of incidents.

## **Tenth Questions**

### **Question 10 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation**

10. Last year, I raised a number of questions over the early closure of the Lido due to leaks following the extensive investments that took place on site. Recently at an Overview & Scrutiny meeting you stated that £37000 had been spent by TDC on repairs related to that leak. You had been asked previously if the leak was the fault of the contractors on site and if so were they to pay for it?

## **Response from the Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation**

We have responded previously and confirmed the leak was not due to any works by contractors. The leaks were simply from a deteriorating pipe due to the age of the infrastructure, in a different area of the land and not to be conflated with any other activity on the site.

## **Eleventh Questions**

### **Question 11 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation**

11. Was the leak the result of the contractors work and if so why were they not expected to correct the work at their own expense or via indemnity?

## **Response from the Executive Member for Leisure and Recreation**

See the response to question 10.

## **Twelfth Questions**

### **Question 12 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

In the 2024 Budget approval one of the recommendations was to reduce reliance on central funding through 'Invest to save' where possible.

12. How many opportunities for investing to save and reduce reliance of CG funding were able to be taken?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

The peer review recommendations included setting up an invest to save reserve of £500,000. Over 2 subsequent financial years we have now been able to build up the reserve to this level and as a result will be able to utilise the funds as part of our continued work to deliver savings through the Modern 25 process. Any returns will be calculated as part of the normal business case procedure moving forward. We continue to explore and deliver savings through investment in projects such as the recent Broadmeadow leisure centre which has shown increased memberships and usage since reopening.

In addition, every use of internal borrowing has to justify it's return in excess of the interest and 'debt' repayment. This return is available to the Council to fund front line services. A list of schemes that were funded by internal borrowing is shown on page 3 of appendix 12a of the reports going to Full Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Thirteenth Questions**

#### **Question 13 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

13. If any were taken, how many opportunities were taken?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

Please see response to Question 12.

### **Fourteenth Questions**

#### **Question 14 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

14. What was the amount invested?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

Please see response to Question 12.

### **Fifteenth Questions**

#### **Question 15 from Cllr MacGregor to the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

15. What are the expected savings?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate**

Please see response to Question 12.