

Minutes of the Council **(Council decisions shown in bold text)**

26 February 2026

-: Present :-

The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay (Councillor Barbara Lewis) (In the Chair)
Deputy Civic Mayor of Torbay (Councillor Foster)

Councillors Amil, Atiya-Alla, Billings, Brook, Bryant, Bye, Carter, Cowell, George Darling, Mandy Darling, Steve Darling, Fellows, Fox, Johns, Law, Chris Lewis, Long, Maddison, Penny, Pentney, Spacagna, Stevens, Strang, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas, Tolchard, Tranter, Tyerman and Virdee

57 Opening of meeting

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

58 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Hutchings, Nicolaou and Twelves.

59 Minutes

The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay proposed and Councillor Foster seconded a motion, which was agreed (unanimously) by the Council as set out below:

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 December 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay.

60 Declarations of interests

At the invitation of The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay, the Monitoring Officer reminded Members of the dispensation granted in respect of Members' interests in relation to the setting of the budget and Council Tax and matters relating to Council controlled companies where Members were appointed as unpaid directors by the Council. It was noted that the dispensation permitted Members to discuss and vote on the budget in respect of these matters without the need to declare an interest.

No interests were declared.

61 Communications

The Leader of the Council:

- a) informed Members that, on 26 February 2026, he welcomed 10 contestants from around the country to Torbay as the Council was hosting the second leg of the Local Government Challenge. The Challenge developed the next generation of local government leaders and the Leader of the Council advised he would be part of the panel of judges; and
- b) was pleased to announce that Ofsted had rated Torbay's Children's Services as good, and, with the consent of The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay, the Leader of the Council invited the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to provide further information on Ofsted's report. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services outlined the good rating was a great achievement for Torbay and the rating covered all areas of the inspection including:
 - the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families;
 - the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection;
 - the experiences and progress of children in care;
 - the experiences and progress of children care leavers; and
 - overall effectiveness.

On behalf of the Council, the Cabinet Member, expressed thanks to the Children's Services Team, the voluntary sector and foster carers for the difference that they make for children and young people.

The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator reported that the call-in procedure had been initiated for the Cabinet's decision on the implementation of the English Riviera Beach Standards (ERBS), which would replace the Blue Flag scheme. The call-in would be presented at the scheduled Overview and Scrutiny Board on 11 March 2026.

62 Petitions

In accordance with Standing Order A23, the Council received a petition requesting the Council to reduce the current speed limit for the Roundham Road area, to 20 miles per hour and provide yellow or red lines at the eastern junction with Alta Vista Road (30 valid signatures).

At the invitation of The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay, Mr Matthews addressed the Council in relation to the petition referred to above.

It was noted that the petition would be referred to the Director of Pride in Place for consideration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking.

63 Members' questions

Members received a paper detailing questions, notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order A12. The paper also contained the answers to the questions which had been prepared by Councillors Billings, Chris Lewis, Long, Jaqueline Thomas, Tranter and Tyerman, and was circulated prior to the meeting.

Supplementary questions were put and answered by Councillors Billings, Chris Lewis, Jaqueline Thomas, Tranter and Tyerman, arising from their responses in respect of questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 18, 20, 23, 24 and 25. [Question 4 was presented by Councillor George Darling in the absence of Councillor Harvey and questions 18 and 24 were presented by Councillor Long in the absence of Councillor Douglas-Dunbar.]

64 Revenue and Capital Budget 2026/2027

Members considered the recommendations of the Cabinet in relation to the Revenue Budget 2026/2027, the Fees and Charges for 2026/2027, the Revenue Reserves Statement, the Capital Strategy 2026/2027 and the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/2027 (as set out in the submitted report and supporting documents).

In accordance with legislation, The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay advised that recorded votes would be taken on all the budget items on this agenda.

Councillor David Thomas proposed and Councillor Tyerman seconded a motion as set out below:

1. that Council Tax is increased by 4.99% for 2026/27, which includes a 2.99% increase plus a 2% levy for Adult Social care);
2. that for 2026/27 net revenue expenditure of £205.3m, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £101.2m, (a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, of which 2% is for Adult Social Care), be approved;
3. that the proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27 be approved;
4. that, in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003, the advice given by the Chief Finance Officer with respect to the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's Reserves, (as set out in the Reserves Statement published in November 2025), be noted;
5. that it be noted that the Brixham Town Council precept for 2026/27 of £656,123 will be included as part of the Torbay Council budget for Council Tax setting purposes;
6. that the Capital Strategy 2026/27 and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 be approved as published for Cabinet on 2 December 2025;

7. that any technical adjustments to the Revenue and Capital Budget be delegated to the Section 151 in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance; and
8. that it is agreed that any underspend from the current financial year, (2025/2026), will be considered for allocation into priority areas, which take into account the consultation results on the 2026/2027 budget.

The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay advised that two notices of motions to amend the Cabinet's revenue budget proposals had been received, in accordance with Standing Order A13.4.

Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded an amendment to the motion as follows:

1. that Council Tax is increased by 4.99% for 2026/27, which includes a 2.99% increase plus a 2% levy for Adult Social care);
2. that for 2026/27 net revenue expenditure of £205.3m, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £101.2m, (a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, of which 2% is for Adult Social Care), be approved, subject to the allocation of £50,000 one off funding to support a programme for improving the appearance of street name signage across Torbay. This would focus on cleaning, refurbishment and repair (on a prioritised basis); and this funding to be identified from the Paignton and Preston Waterfront reduced income allocation of £300,000;
3. that the proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27 be approved;
4. that, in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003, the advice given by the Chief Finance Officer with respect to the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's Reserves, (as set out in the Reserves Statement published in November 2025), be noted;
5. that it be noted that the Brixham Town Council precept for 2026/27 of £656,123 will be included as part of the Torbay Council budget for Council Tax setting purposes;
6. that the Capital Strategy 2026/27 and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 be approved as published for Cabinet on 2 December 2025;
7. that any technical adjustments to the Revenue and Capital Budget be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance; and
8. that it is agreed that any underspend from the current financial year, (2025/2026), will be considered for allocation into priority areas, which take into account the consultation results on the 2026/2027 budget.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment. The voting was taken by roll call as follows: For: Councillors Amil, Atiya-Alla, Carter, Cowell, George Darling, Mandy Darling, Steve Darling, Fox, Johns, Law, Long, Maddison, Penny, Pentney and Virdee (15); Against: Councillors Billings, Brook, Bryant, Bye, Fellows, Foster, Barbara Lewis, Chris Lewis, Spacagna, Stevens, Strang, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas, Tolchard, Tranter and Tyerman (16); and Absent: Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Hutchings, Nicolaou and Twelves (5). Therefore, the amendment was declared lost.

Councillor Cowell proposed and Councillor Long seconded an amendment to the motion as follows:

1. that Council Tax is increased by 4.99% for 2026/27, which includes a 2.99% increase plus a 2% levy for Adult Social care);
2. that for 2026/27 net revenue expenditure of £205.3m, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £101.2m, (a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, of which 2% is for Adult Social Care), be approved, subject to the allocation of £50,000 ongoing funding to reintroduce a rolling programme, on a priority basis, of street cleaning in local community shopping areas (i.e. excluding main Town Centres); and this funding to be allocated from the Brighter Bay budget;
3. that the proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27 be approved;
4. that, in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003, the advice given by the Chief Finance Officer with respect to the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's Reserves, (as set out in the Reserves Statement published in November 2025), be noted;
5. that it be noted that the Brixham Town Council precept for 2026/27 of £656,123 will be included as part of the Torbay Council budget for Council Tax setting purposes;
6. that the Capital Strategy 2026/27 and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 be approved as published for Cabinet on 2 December 2025;
7. that any technical adjustments to the Revenue and Capital Budget be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance; and
8. that it is agreed that any underspend from the current financial year, (2025/2026), will be considered for allocation into priority areas, which take into account the consultation results on the 2026/2027 budget.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment. The voting was taken by roll call as follows: For: Councillors Amil, Atiya-Alla, Carter, Cowell, George Darling, Mandy

Darling, Steve Darling, Fox, Johns, Law, Long, Maddison, Penny, Pentney and Virdee (15); Against: Councillors Billings, Brook, Bryant, Bye, Fellows, Foster, Barbara Lewis, Chris Lewis, Spacagna, Stevens, Strang, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas, Tolchard, Tranter and Tyerman (16); and Absent: Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Hutchings, Nicolaou and Twelves (5). Therefore, the amendment was declared lost.

Councillor David Thomas' and Councillor Tyerman's original motion was then considered and agreed by the Council (by recorded vote) as set out below:

- 1. that Council Tax is increased by 4.99% for 2026/27, which includes a 2.99% increase plus a 2% levy for Adult Social care);**
- 2. that for 2026/27 net revenue expenditure of £205.3m, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £101.2m, (a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, of which 2% is for Adult Social Care), be approved;**
- 3. that the proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27 be approved;**
- 4. that, in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003, the advice given by the Chief Finance Officer with respect to the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's Reserves, (as set out in the Reserves Statement published in November 2025), be noted;**
- 5. that it be noted that the Brixham Town Council precept for 2026/27 of £656,123 will be included as part of the Torbay Council budget for Council Tax setting purposes;**
- 6. that the Capital Strategy 2026/27 and Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 be approved as published for Cabinet on 2 December 2025;**
- 7. that any technical adjustments to the Revenue and Capital Budget be delegated to the Section 151 in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance; and**
- 8. that it is agreed that any underspend from the current financial year, (2025/2026), will be considered for allocation into priority areas, which take into account the consultation results on the 2026/2027 budget.**

The voting was taken by roll call as follows: For: Councillors Billings, Brook, Bryant, Bye, Fellows, Foster, Barbara Lewis, Chris Lewis, Spacagna, Stevens, Strang, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas, Tolchard, Tranter and Tyerman (16); Abstain: Councillor Amil, Atiya-Alla, Carter, Cowell, George Darling, Mandy Darling, Steve Darling, Fox, Johns, Law, Long, Maddison, Penny, Pentney and Virdee (15); and Absent: Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Hutchings, Nicolaou and Twelves (5).

65 Council Tax 2026/2027

The Council received the submitted report in relation to the setting of Council Tax for 2026/2027.

Councillor Tyerman proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion, which was agreed by the Council (unanimously and by recorded vote) as set out below:

- 1. that it be noted on 11 December 2025 Council approved the following Council Tax Bases for 2026/27:**
 - a) for the whole Council area as 49,488.48 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and**
 - b) for dwellings in the Brixham Town Council area as 6,622.66 to which a Parish precept relates;**
- 2. that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table in 5. below.**

That the Council is recommended to approve:

- 3. the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2026/27 (excluding Brixham Town Council) of £101,159,897;**
- 4. that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Chapter Three of the Act:**
 - a. £458,149,581 being the estimated aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account the precept issued to it by Brixham Town Council;**
 - b. £356,333,561 being the estimated aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;**
 - c. £101,816,020 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4 a. above exceeds the aggregate at 4 b. above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);**
 - d. £2,057.37 being the amount at 4 c. above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1 a. above), calculated by the Council, in**

accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);

- e. £656,123 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Brixham Town Council) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act; and
 - f. £2,044.11 being the amount at 4 d. above less the result given by dividing the amount at 4 e. above by Item T (1 a. above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
5. that the Council, in accordance with Chapter Three of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2026/27 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings; and

	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio of each band-to-Band D	6/9	7/9	8/ 9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Torbay Council	1,362.74	1,589.87	1,816.99	2,044.11	2,498.35	2,952.60	3,406.85	4,088.22
Police and Crime Commissioner	202.13	235.82	269.51	303.20	370.58	437.96	505.33	606.40
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority	73.12	85.31	97.49	109.68	134.05	158.43	182.80	219.36
Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements ex. Town Council	1,637.99	1,911.00	2,183.99	2,456.99	3,002.98	3,548.99	4,094.98	4,913.98
Brixham Town Council	66.05	77.05	88.06	99.07	121.09	143.10	165.12	198.14
Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements including Brixham Town Council	1,704.04	1,988.04	2,272.05	2,556.06	3,124.07	3,692.09	4,260.10	5,112.12

Note: Torbay Council's precept includes the Adult Social Care "precept" set in 2016/17 to 2018/19 and 2020/21 to 2026/27.

6. **that it is noted that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992. (Refer to paragraph 5.7 of the submitted report).**

The voting was taken by roll call as follows: For: Councillors Amil, Atiya-Alla, Billings, Brook, Bryant, Bye, Carter, Cowell, George Darling, Mandy Darling, Steve Darling, Fellows, Foster, Fox, Johns, Law, Barbara Lewis, Chris Lewis, Long, Maddison, Penny, Pentney, Spacagna, Stevens, Strang, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas, Tolchard, Tranter, Tyerman and Virdee (31); and Absent: Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Hutchings, Nicolaou and Twelves (5).

66 Torbay Council Annual Pay Policy Statement and Review of Pensions Discretions

The Council considered the Cabinet's recommendations on the Council's Annual Pay Policy Statement, as required under Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (as set out in the submitted report). It was noted that the Pay Policy Statement drew together the Council's overarching policies on pay and conditions which would be published on the Council's website. The report also set out the annual review of pensions discretions as required by the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.

Councillor Tyerman proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion, which was agreed (unanimously) by the Council as set out below:

1. **that the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report is approved; and**
2. **that the Employers Pensions Discretions as set out at Appendix 2 to the submitted report is approved.**

67 Civic Mayor Elect 2026/2027

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders (A9.1), the Council was requested to consider selecting The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay-Elect for the 2026/2027 Municipal Year. The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order A9.1, Councillor Foster had given consent to her nomination prior to the meeting.

Councillor Bye proposed and Councillor Amil seconded a motion, which was agreed (by recorded vote) by the Council as set out below:

that Councillor Foster be selected as The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay (Elect) for the 2026/2027 Municipal Year.

The voting was taken by roll call as follows: For: Councillors Amil, Billings, Brook, Bryant, Bye, Fellows, Foster, Barbara Lewis, Chris Lewis, Spacagna, Stevens, Strang, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas, Tolchard, Tranter and Tyerman (17); Against: Atiya-Alla, Carter, George Darling, Mandy Darling, Steve Darling, Fox, Johns, Law, Long, Penny, Pentney and Virdee (12); Abstain: Cowell and Maddison (2); and Absent: Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Hutchings, Nicolaou and Twelves (5).

68 Deputy Civic Mayor Elect 2026/2027

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders (A9.1), the Council was requested to consider selecting the Deputy Civic Mayor-Elect for the 2026/2027 Municipal Year. The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay confirmed that, in accordance with Standing Order A9.1, Councillor Fellows had given consent to his nomination prior to the meeting.

Councillor Bryant proposed and Councillor Johns seconded a motion, which was agreed by the Council as set out below:

that Councillor Fellows be selected as the Deputy Civic Mayor (Elect) for the 2026/2027 Municipal Year.

The Worshipful The Mayor of Torbay