AGENDA ITEM NO 9

TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 1st DECEMBER, 2026
BRIEFING NOTE

ELECTIONS 2027: PRE-CANDIDATURE & INDUCTION ACTIVITIES

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Elections to Town/Parish and District Councils will be held in Devon on 6th May, 2027. Tavistock Town Council currently comprises 17 Councillors distributed across three wards – Tavistock North (7), South West (5) and South East (5). All seats will fall vacant.

1.2 Historically the Council has taken the view that it is appropriate to promote participation in the democratic process, and encourage interested members of the community to consider standing for election to public office. Contested elections provide an opportunity for the community to express its 'democratic will' and exercise choice through the election of an accountable, representative and diverse Council Chamber.

2. CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 To that end it is proposed that, as in previous election years, a pre-candidature event be run early in the new year (January/February) to provide an opportunity for prospective new candidates to be Councillors to find out more about the role and assist them in determining whether they wish to seek election.

2.2 An indicative information leaflet (Appendix 1) is appended to provide key information and publicity - both for the pre-candidature event specifically, and regarding serving as a Councillor more generally. Some updates and outstanding details will be populated as they become available. These will be accompanied by copies of the adopted Role Profile for Councillors.

2.3 Both the event, and subsequent measures to promote interest amongst prospective candidates would be supported by: -

a) Active publicity with the local media, including advertisements, web and social media postings (alongside the normal national and local publicity given to the election process);
b) Post-election - the normal induction, training and familiarisation arrangements.

2.4 With regard to induction (b) above refers, it is proposed that a full induction again be held in the normal way including:

i. Initial familiarisation on taking Office;
ii. Formal induction session, update and review of what the Council does, operating arrangements, asset, services and staffing etc;
iii. Mini-Bus Tour of the Council Estate;
iv. Councillor Training and Development Programme.

2.5 The Council may also wish to take the opportunity to consider whether certain training should be classified as mandatory – either in general, or specific to certain roles. Reflecting on past comments for example.

2.6 All Councillors (ie including returning former councillors)

a) the DALC 'Being a Good Councillor' Courses 1 (Roles and Responsibilities) and 2 'Powers Duties & Precept' (typically virtual/ evening courses)

b) the virtual DALC (or if provided by the Borough Council their) 'Code of Conduct' Training.

c) Training on the recently enhanced sexual harassment duty.

d) Training on Information Technology Policy – reflecting the new Annual Return content.

2.7 Additionally:

a) Making attendance at an approved 'Chairmanship' training session (to be undertaken within 4 months of being appointed to the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee) a pre-requisite for holding such office;

b) Making attendance at Planning Training a pre-requisite for serving on the Development Management and Licensing Committee.

2.8 The foregoing, if adopted, would be in addition to the normal suite of training offers available to Members on a choice basis following an election. Similarly some other training, such as being a good employer (Budget and Policy Committee Members) or use of Artificial Intelligence may be highly desirable.

2.9 It should however be noted that, whilst training can be a requirement for appointments to committees/sub-committees as such it is a matter for Council to enforce in its appointments. Similarly training – or lack of it, cannot be deployed as a means to restrict the actions of a Councillor when conducting business in a meeting of the full Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Committee and Council:

i) review and, as/if appropriate, endorse the enclosed indicative pre-candidature information leaflet, subject to amendment and updating, and the accompanying approach as set out in para's 2.1-2.3 above.

ii) consider whether to adopt, vary or decline the draft prospective mandatory training requirements as set out in paragraphs 2.6-2.7 above.

iii) consider whether any other provision could/should be made

3.2 The instructions of the Committee and Council are sought.

ADELE CASSIDY
OFFICE & FINANCE MANAGER
DECEMBER 2026
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL