

Report to STC February 2023

Cllr. Hilary Frank



The agenda for the meeting of Cornwall Council's Cabinet on 8th February seems packed to capacity. It contains the draft budget proposals, where the proposal from Cabinet is that the Cornwall Council element of the Council Tax be increased by 4.99% overall, equivalent to a Band D charge of £1,802.79.

As well as the 2023-2024 Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme for the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry, items of particular relevance to Saltash in the Cabinet meeting include the revised parking tariff and the introduction of Community Area Panels to replace Community Network Areas:

1. Revised Parking Tariff

A comprehensive review of parking tariffs across Cornwall Council's 280 car parks has been carried out over the last six months against a broad range of objectives to support the economy, environment, carbon reduction and communities. The proposal is to replace the 120 different tariffs across the 135 chargeable car parks with a 3-zone system. It is proposed that Saltash will be in Zone B.

Zone A Categorised as band 7	Car parks where the highest, premium rate of charging for use and convenience of the parking commodity consideration of levels of local, commuter and visitor usage plus size of attraction that it serves. These car parks will be more sensitive to variances in traffic levels, vehicle congestion, vehicle turn-over and the local air quality impact. In the majority these town car parks will have good public transport links as an alternative mode of journey. These car parks are strategically important, and rates will be set to ensure that the tariff differential is used to invest in the assets to expand on the customer experience
Zone B Categorised as bands 5 & 6	Car parks where the control rate of charging for use and convenience of the parking commodity consideration of levels of local, commuter and visitor usage plus size of attraction that it serves. These car parks will be more sensitive to variances in traffic levels, vehicle congestion, vehicle turn-over and the local air quality impact. In the majority these town car parks will have good public transport links as an alternative mode of journey.
Zone C Categorised as bands 1 to 4	Car parks where there remains the importance of managing traffic levels, vehicle congestion, vehicle turn-over and air quality; but the strategic importance and capacity demand is at a manageable level.

Zones	30 mins Short Stay only	1 Hour	2 Hour	3 Hours	4 Hours	All day 9am to 6pm	Evening 6pm to midnight	Just Park Multisession
C	£0.50	£0.90	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£5.50	£0.00	£2.75
B	£0.60	£1.00	£2.40	£3.60	£4.80	£6.00	£0.00	£3.00
A	£1.30	£2.20	£4.40	£5.50	£6.50	£10.00	£2.50	£5.00

A full public consultation on the Traffic Regulation Order is due to commence on the 2nd March and last for a period of 21 days.

2. Community Area Panels

i. Geography

Last month, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the 19 Community Network Areas were asked to carry out further work creating a draft geography for the proposed CAPs within an upper limit of 12 areas. A fairly broad consensus was achieved, but Chairs and Vice Chairs at the meeting were keen to stress that this geography represents the 'least worst' option given the upper limit of 12 imposed by Cabinet.

The average number of parishes in one CAP if all 212 parishes in Cornwall were evenly distributed across 12 areas would be a little over 7.5. Under the proposals, Saltash will fall under CAP 3, with a total of 29 parishes and 10 Cornwall Councillors, making it the largest in terms of number of parishes (although CAP 12 has a greater population and two more Cornwall Councillors than CAP 3).

Community Area Partnership (CAP) Draft Name <i>[Draft CAP names shown below; each CAP will decide its final name]</i>	Proposed area comprises (CN = Community Network Area)	Number of Parishes	Number of Electoral Divisions	Population ¹ (2020 Estimate)
CAP 1. "Bude and Camelot CAP"	Bude CN AND Camelot CN MINUS Delabole, Michaelstow, St Breward, St Teath and Tintagel Parishes.	24	4	26109
CAP 2. "Launceston and Caradon CAP"	Launceston CN AND Caradon CN	24	6*	40515
CAP 3. "Liskeard, Looe and Cornwall Gateway CAP"	Liskeard & Looe CN AND Cornwall Gateway CN	29	10*	65832
CAP 8 "St Austell, Mevagissey, St Blazey Fowey & Lostwithiel CAP"	CAP 8: St Austell & Mevagissey CN (MINUS St Goran Parish PLUS Grampound with Creed Parish) AND St Blazey Fowey & Lostwithiel CN (MINUS Luxulyan Parish)	18	8*	49749
CAP 9 "China Clay Area and Luxulyan CAP"	CAP 9: China Clay CN PLUS Luxulyan Parish.	6	4*	30508
CAP 10: "West Penwith, St Erth and St Ives CAP"	CAP 10: West Penwith CN PLUS St Erth, St Ives and Towednack Parishes	17	8	53058
CAP 11. "Helston & South Kerrier CAP"	CAP 11: Helston & South Kerrier CN	18	5	35758
CAP 12 "Camborne Pool Illogan Redruth Mining Villages, Hayle and Gwinear-Gwithian CAP"	CAP 10: Camborne Pool Illogan Redruth & Mining Villages CN PLUS Hayle and Gwinear-Gwithian Parishes	12	12	78588
		212 parishes	87 Electoral Divisions	574590

ii. Officer support

The Chairs and Vice Chairs particularly stressed that 'resources need to be appropriate and fairly distributed between the area partnerships; they referred to the central role of the Community Link Officers in ensuring effective localism and considered that there needs to be **at least one such officer per Community Partnership Area.**' Currently, however, there does not seem to be any guarantee that this will be the case.

iii. The key roles proposed are:

Role	Summary
1. Community Action (<i>also supports Community Voice and Community Funding</i>)	
1a Partnership focus	To build relationships between the people and organisations working in and for their communities. To provide a productive space for these partners to collaborate and coordinate their work in place and get things done. To share skills, assets and learning and work together to build solutions, within and across Partnership areas.
1b Partnership focus - Town & Parish Councils	Each Partnership will have a particular role in championing and facilitating the work of its local town & parish councils. They will act as the “go to” place where they can get mutual support, platform where they can share best practice, and pathway for them to progress and seek funding for projects and ideas. The Council will develop the details of this role in partnership with Cornwall Association of Local Councils and town & parish councils across Cornwall.
1c Community Action Plans	Each Partnership will agree a list of top community priorities in their area. To help them do this, they will ask local communities for their views and consider other information, like community plans and profiles. They will agree an action plan to progress the agreed priorities, and keep local communities updated on progress. Cornwall Council will consider the priorities agreed by each area, to ensure these are taken into account in its own strategies and will help support the Partnerships with their action plans. The priorities will also be shared with partner agencies, like the Police, health services and voluntary sector. The Partnerships will be encouraged to explore opportunities, in devising and progressing these plans, for partners to work together more closely and potentially pool budgets to address priority issues.

2. Community Funding (<i>also supports Community Voice/Community Action</i>)	
2a Shared Prosperity Fund	<p>Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have been awarded £132 million from the Government's "Shared Prosperity Fund." This funding is being used to achieve good growth through a range of programmes providing opportunities for communities and businesses, as well as access to new jobs and training. The funding has to be spent by March 2025. The Partnerships will be closely involved in this work, with a particular role on the following programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Levelling Up Programme. This £11.49 million programme aims to help communities develop their place-shaping ambitions. Communities can apply for funding for projects like town centre improvements and neighbourhood infrastructure projects. • The Community Capacity Fund. This £2m programme aims to help communities develop plans for local projects so they are then in a good position to secure large scale funds to deliver those projects. <p>A share of these two funds will be allocated to each Community Partnership Area. The Partnerships will be asked to prioritise which projects the funding should be spent on, to best promote good growth and address issues in their areas. Formal decisions on spend will be taken by Cornwall Council in accordance with its Constitution. In the case of both funds, the Partnerships will also be able to apply to a central "performance" reserve to bring forward more/larger projects.</p>
2b Highways Scheme	<p>Since 2018, the Council has allocated a "Highways Scheme" budget between the Community Network Areas, to support neighbourhood highway improvement schemes that improve highway safety and access. Parish Councils submit proposals for projects in their areas; the Community Networks review the proposals and advise which ones they want to progress as priorities within the funding available. The current three-year programme, which is funded from Government Local Transport Plan funding, runs until March 2025. The annual budget is £1.05 million, with the budget split between areas according to the number of Divisional Members in each area.</p> <p>The Highways Scheme will continue into the new arrangements (as the latter are due to commence in May 2023). The Community Area Partnerships will be asked to prioritise unallocated funds from the current three-year programme. As in the current arrangements, Cornwall Council will make formal decisions on spend, with the Partnerships submitting their views to the area's Divisional Members who will, in turn submit a final proposal to the Portfolio Holder.</p>

3. Community Voice (also supports Community Action):

The Cabinet wants to ensure that the Community Area Partnerships are supported to give their views on issues relating to local service provision, and on policy and strategy as it relates to local areas. It is keen to promote an ongoing discussion between the Council, its strategic partners and the Community Area Partnerships on these issues. Proposals 3a-3d below are particularly aimed at delivering this goal.

3a. Local service delivery, plans and spending	Each Partnership will have the opportunity to look at how Cornwall Council and other service providers are delivering services, implementing plans and spending budgets in their area. If a Partnership wishes to look at a particular issue in this way, the Council will provide it with information about this, so it can feedback any comments, concerns and questions. This will help the Partnerships to support their communities with their priority issues and give the Council and its partners an opportunity to take community views into account when planning their services, budgets and projects.
3b. Cornwall Council budget	Cornwall Council carries out an annual public consultation on its budget for the forthcoming year. Partnerships will be a consultee during this process, so they will have an opportunity to submit comments if they wish to do so.
3c. Local service changes	Partnerships will have the opportunity to comment in cases where Cornwall Council is planning an important service change that affects all or a majority of the local area. Where other service providers are planning to introduce such a change and the Partnership wishes to comment, the Council will seek to support the Partnership in liaising with the service provider.
3d. Cornwall Local Plan	This is Cornwall Council's planning policy framework for the Duchy up to 2030. It has to be reviewed every five years and contains a section on each community area. When it reviews the Local Plan or related statutory planning policies, the Council will give each Partnership the opportunity to input its views.

iv. Final Decision!

Chairs and Vice Chairs had been led to believe that the process would be for draft proposals to be presented to Cabinet, then to Cornwall Council's Constitution and Governance Committee before being debated at Full Council. But the Cabinet papers make it clear that the Cabinet's decision next week will be final, without a debate at Full Council, and 7.3 of the report to Cabinet states that 'It is proposed that the Monitoring Officer will make the changes using their existing delegated authority as set out in Article 24 (paragraph 24.3) of the Constitution which provides that the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to make "changes to the Constitution to give effect to decisions of the Council without further consideration of those changes by the Constitution and Governance Committee or the Council."