

**Minutes of Okehampton Town Council Policy and Resources Committee Meeting
held on Monday 6th January 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Okehampton**

Committee Members Present: Councillor J Yelland (Chairman)
Councillor A Fisher (Mayor)
Councillor R Colman (Chairman, Property)
Councillor T Leech (Chairman, Planning)
Councillor B Tolley (Chairman, Parks)
Councillor L Bird
Councillor F Hart
Councillor C Marsh
Councillor S Weekes

In Attendance: Mrs E James (Town Clerk)

		Action
514	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> – None	
515	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> – None	
516	<u>Public Participation</u> – None	
517	<u>Members' Questions</u> – None	
518	<u>Minutes</u> – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 4 th and 25 th November, 2 nd and 9 th December 2024 which were signed by Cllr Yelland.	
519	<u>Town Council Grant</u>	
519.1	Feedback received from the following groups and organisations was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything Okehampton for the grant of £2,000 awarded in November 2024 • Okehampton Carnival Committee for the grant of £400 awarded in November 2024 • Okehampton United Ecclesiastical Charity for the grant of £500 awarded in November 2024 	
519.2	St James Chapel – On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded Cllr Marsh, it was RESOLVED that Trustees of St James Chapel, also known as the Mayor's Chapel, automatically receives an annual grant or donation funded from the Grant Budget without the need to complete an application form. The amount for 2025/26 to £1,000, to be reviewed annually.	Finance Officer/ Clerk
520	<u>Okehampton Town Youth Council</u> – The Youth Council were hosting a free First Aid course for young people in February half-term, the cost being met from a grant awarded by Cllr Samuel, DCC and the badges had arrived.	
521	<u>Finance and Governance</u>	
521.1	Councillor Audits – Cllr Marsh reported that she had undertaken an audit of the bank reconciliations, online payments and Lloyds Debit Card transactions earlier in the day.	
521.2	Management Accounts – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was RESOLVED to approve the management accounts, as circulated, for months ended 31 st October 2024 (month 7) and 30 th November 2024 (month 8).	
521.3	Investments – Investments and interest rates were reviewed and noted along with the distribution of council funds across different financial institutions in	

accordance with the Council's Treasury and Investment Policy and Strategy. It was noted the highest interest rate was the CCLA account.

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to retain 3 months of operational costs in the Lloyds current account on an ongoing basis, to be reviewed monthly. Funds to be moved between the Lloyds current account and the CCLA account as necessary to retain this level of funding, providing the Treasury and Investment Policy and Strategy in relation to the maximum amount of the council cash deposits that could be held at one institution was adhered to.

Finance Officer/
Clerk

- 521.4 Reserves** – The Council's General and Earmarked Reserve levels were reviewed. On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council as part of the Reserves Policy that the General Reserve figure for 2025/26 be set as 4 months of the precept plus £80,000 to offset the potential risk of the loss of significant self-generated income from Waitrose Carpark.

Finance Officer/
Clerk

- 521.5 Unity Bank Instant Access Savings Account** – Consideration was given to additional information received, as outlined in the report, in relation to the opening of a new account to hold funds raised by the Mayor for their chosen charity.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to retain the account with Lloyds. Annually at the end of each Mayoral Year an amount equalling the minimum of 12 months charges to be retained in the account.

Finance Officer/
Clerk

- 521.6 Payment Schedule** – On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

522 Policies and Documents

Grant Policy – On the proposition of Cllr Hart, seconded Cllr Colman (1 against) it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the policy to Full Council with an amendment that a representative from the organisation is invited to attend the relevant meeting to answer any questions that may arise.

Cllr Leech declared a personal interest in relation to the Ockment Centre.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** that the organisations who received a large grant most years were invited to submit their application early in the year.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following documents to Full Council for approval.

- Asbestos Management Plan
- Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedure (including sexual harassment)
- Reserves Policy, with an amendment in relation to the General Reserves to be held as at Min Ref 521.4 above.
- Information and Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notices
- Subject Access Request Policy

Clerk

523 Reports of Council Working/Task & Finish Groups –

- 523.1 VE Day 80th Anniversary, 8 May 2025** – No update to report.

524 Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items –

- 524.1 Citizens Advice** – Cllr Leech advised the Annual Report for 2023/24 had been previously circulated to Councillors and outlined some of the information therein.

524.2 DALC Larger Councils Sub-Committee – A meeting was being held on 23rd January, the main topic being Devolution. Cllr Tolley as Vice-Chairman was attending, in the place of Cllr Yelland who was unavailable, along with the Clerk.

524.3 Devon Climate Emergency Group – No update to report

524.4 Fairtrade – Cllr Weekes had been unable to attend the last meeting.

524.5 Museum of Dartmoor Life - Cllr Bird reported the Museum was reopening on 17th March, had opened for Edwardian Evening and over Christmas. Volunteers were working over the winter.

524.6 Police Council Advocate Scheme, Northern Links and West Devon Matters – Cllr Yelland advised she had been unable to attend the last Council Advocate meeting. The schedule of meetings for 2025 had been published and she would be stepping aside from role in May as she would be unable to attend some of the meetings. There had not been a Northern Links meeting. A date for a West Devon Matters meeting was awaited.

525 On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Fisher it was RESOLVED that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items which are CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council.

527 Outstanding Balances – The Clerk advised the situation in relation to list of outstanding balances as of the end of November 2024 and reported on action taken since that date which had resulted in an account being fully paid. The situation in relation to an ongoing debtor was also reported and considered

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council a debt of £520.40 be written off.

Clerk

528 Staffing Matters

528.1 Staff Absences - The Clerk provided an update in relation to staff absences.

528.2 Salary - On the proposition of Cllr Weekes, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to pay three members of staff for hours in lieu accrued because of the workload and staff absences in accordance with the report.

Finance Officer/
Clerk

528.3 Apprenticeship and Groundsperson - The Clerk advised the Apprentice would be completing the apprenticeship in Spring. The apprenticeship vacancy would be advertised in February/March to commence in September 2025 when the new course started. The additional Groundsperson vacancy would be advertised at the same time, internally initially in accordance with the Recruitment Policy.

528.4 Facilities Officer - The Clerk advised that consultation was commencing later in the week and the vacancy for the employment of a Facilities Officer would be advertised in March, internally initially in accordance with the Recruitment Policy.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Weekes, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein. The meeting was closed at 8.30pm