

Okehampton Town Council
15th September 2025
Meeting Report

Date:	8 th September 2025
Name:	Emma James

10. Projects and Consultations

10.3 Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan - To consider recommendations from Cllrs Colman, Cummings and Richards in relation to the area to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying statement to be submitted to WDBC

Application under Part 2 (5) (1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area

Okehampton Town Council give notice that we wish to make an application under Part 2 (5) (1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012/2015 for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

A map identifying the area to which the application relates, being the area covered by the introduction of the new Okehampton Town Boundary in 2027, as agreed following the Community Governance Boundary Review between Okehampton Town Council and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council.

Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council gave permission at a meeting on 1st April 2025 for the land that will transfer to the Town in 2027 to be included within the Okehampton Neighbourhood Plan.

This area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area for the following reasons: -

Okehampton Town Council have agreed that the area for which its responsibilities will cover should be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure the interests of the Community are upheld in future planning. To provide a vision for the future of Okehampton, while maintaining the standards of properties and developments to suit the demands of a growing Town in Devon.

To investigate and suggest ways to support the local infrastructure, from roads to public services like health care, transport, education and development of jobs in the area. This list is not limited to these suggestions.

It is true that there is limited scope for any further developments of any kind in Okehampton Town Councils areas, the greater scope is within the former Hamlets areas. Currently the expansion of Okehampton continues in what is currently the Hamlets area to the East of the Town.

The new Town Boundary offers the scope for various projects and in many ways blue sky thinking, the neighbourhood plan will assist in this process, looking at all the aspects of planning and regeneration to help make Okehampton become the thriving Town it used to be with community at its heart.

Okehampton Town Council resolved to develop a plan for the neighbourhood area at a council meeting on 2nd June 2025.

The community agreed that a neighbourhood plan should be developed several years ago, unfortunately this plan did not pass the required standard, and therefore a new Neighbourhood plan is required.

The current plan is to submit this application to West Devon Borough Council. Should this plan be approved by West Devon Borough Council, a steering group will be created by the Town Council to take the Neighbourhood plan forward.

Okehampton Town Council is the relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act being the parish council for the entire area applied.

10.5 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – To consider a response to the proposals

Dear Okehampton Town Council and Okehampton Hamlets,

I am writing to let you know the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was adopted by West Devon Borough Council HUB committee on 10 June. You can access the full LCWIP report using the following link: <https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/communities/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-lcwip>

The LCWIP report contains a very large number of possible ‘interventions’ that would improve conditions for walking, wheeling and cycling across West Devon (and South Hams), however these are very costly and the majority would involve highway works and so would need DCC approval to progress them. West Devon Borough Council currently holds a small amount of funding allocated for active travel projects, and so we are now looking to identify a couple of locally supported projects (across all of West Devon) that DCC could support to deliver. I do need to empathise that, in relation to the cost of highway infrastructure costs, there is only a small amount of active travel funding available to progress one or two smaller scale intervention projects. The delivery of other active travel infrastructure projects would only follow when further funding is secured, e.g. by S106 when the LCWIP is embedded within a revised Local Plan.

The attached spreadsheet shows the prioritised routes identified in the LCWIP in West Devon and contains two tabs: ‘Quick Wins’ and ‘Longer term’, and illustrates the ranked priority routes and the interventions suggested along these, in column J and K on the different tabs. Please note that there are often multiple interventions listed in one cell, which are defined by a unique reference number such as ‘WD-3-L2’. You might wish to identify the locations of the interventions on the CommonPlace platform that was used for the [public consultation here](#). I have filtered the spreadsheet so it should only show routes that relate to: **OKEHAMPTON**

Please can you review the interventions listed in column J and K ‘Summary of Design Recommendations’ in both the Quick Win and Longer Term tabs and highlight any that the town council or hamlets could not support. Please can you also state if any projects align with the town council/hamlets priorities, and identify a ranking to these?

West Devon Interventions - Quick Wins

Town	Alignment	Summary of Design Recommendations
Okehampton	Town Hall - George Street - Station Road	<p>[OK-5-L1] Station Road: Explore upgrading treatment of footways on both sides to provide even surface and 2m wide footways on both sides. Explore provision of cycle track on one side of carriageway, and/or Traffic Regulation Order to remove parking from one side. / [OK-5-L2] Station Road: Upgrade footways so that they are at least 2.0m wide and provide appropriate crossing where footway terminates on one side. Explore provision of cycle track on one side of carriageway, and/or Traffic Regulation Order to remove parking from one side. / [OK-5-L3] Station Approach Road: Widen footway on approach to station. Road is currently quite wide and could be narrower. / [OK-5-P1] Station Road / Tors Road Junction: Reconfigure junction to decrease junction radii to reduce vehicle speeds for benefit of cyclists using carriageway and reduce crossing distances for pedestrians. Provide suitable pedestrian crossings across all arms. / [OK-5-P2] Station Road / Station Approach Junction: Provide pedestrian crossing from footway on southern side of carriageway to station approach road. Upgrade junction to reduce radii and reduce vehicle speeds for benefit of cyclists using the carriageway. / [OK-5-P3] Okehampton Train Station: Provide additional secure cycle parking facilities. Should be covered. Could be suitable location for bike hire.</p>
Okehampton	Crediton Road - Nexus Way	<p>[OK-3-L1] Crediton Road: Provide footways alongside road. / [OK-3-L1] Crediton Road: Investigate options to upgrade footways to at least 2m wide throughout. Upgrade side road junctions to ensure suitable pedestrian crossings are provided. Increase number of crossings across Crediton Road. Explore opportunities to reduce vehicle speeds for benefit of cyclists sharing carriageway (inc. 20mph speed limit) or separate cyclists from motor traffic.</p>
Okehampton	Leashole Way - The Heathers - Balmoral Crescent - Exeter Road - High Stockley Mead	<p>[OK-4-A1] Okemoor Park: Consider low-traffic interventions such as modal filters to reduce or prevent through traffic through Okemoor Park area. / [OK-4-L1] Exeter Road: Consider options to separate cyclists from motor traffic. / [OK-4-L1] The Heathers: Remove bollards to de-restrict cyclists. / [OK-4-P1] Beardown Road Junction: Upgrade junction to reduce junction radii, and shorten crossing distance for pedestrians, and install appropriate uncontrolled crossing infrastructure. / [OK-4-P2] Fatherford Lane / Exeter Road Junction: Consider options to separate cyclists from motor traffic. Could include formal crossing, reducing carriageway width (and remove right turn lane) or providing suitable road marking to give cyclists space on the road. Improve signage for cyclists making this turn. / [OK-4-P3] Leaholes Avenue / Limehayes Road Junction: Upgrade junction to provide pedestrian crossing facilities on all arms.</p>

West Devon Interventions - Long Term

Town	Alignment	Summary of Design Recommendations
Okehampton	Town Hall - Market Street - Lodge Hill - Upcott Hill - Badgers Holt - Glendale Road	<p>[OK-1-L1] Market Street: Upgrade footways to at least 2.0m wide on both sides. Improve treatment of pedestrian crossings across taxi rank. / [OK-1-L2] Upcott Hill: Upgrade footways to be at least 2.0m wide on each side. Explore options to separate cyclists from motor traffic. / [OK-1-P1] Lodge Hill / School Way / Market Street Roundabout: Consider opportunities to upgrade the junction by separating cycle and motor vehicle movements. To include all arms of junction and appropriate crossing facilities. / [OK-1-P2] Oaklands Drive: Dropped kerbs and tactile paving. / [OK-1-P3] Upcott Hill / Vicarage Road Junction: Provide controlled pedestrian crossing at Vicarage Road to connect to passage through to Oaklands Park.</p>
Okehampton	St James Street - Castle Road - Castle Lane	<p>[OK-6-L1] St James Street: Upgrade footways to be at least 2.0m wide and upgrade crossing at Kempley Road and Park Road and . Provide cycle parking for benefit of retail units. / [OK-6-L2] Castle Road - Castle Lane: Upgrade footways, at least 2.0m wide where possible on both side. Explore parking controls or formalisation to prevent pavement parking and remove bollards from footway. / [OK-6-P1] St James Church: Re-design modal filter and kerbing to improve accessibility for cyclists between Fore Street and St James Street. / [OK-6-P2] Station Road / Mill Road Junction: Explore options to provide cycle crossing to serve NCN27 alignment between St James Street and Station Road. / [OK-6-P3] Castle Road Bridge: Provide suitable uncontrolled pedestrian crossing to south of bridge.</p>

Okehampton Town Hall - Fore Street - Crediton Road - Link Road - North Road

[OK-2-L1] Link Road: Provide continuous footways on both sides of carriageway, or provide controlled crossing where footway terminates. Explore options to separate cyclists from motor traffic. / [OK-2-L2] North Road: Explore opportunities to separate cyclists from motor traffic. Upgrade treatment of side road junctions for benefit of pedestrians and more protection from HGV turning movements for cyclists. / [OK-2-L3] Crediton Road: Consider provision of contra-flow cycling. Upgrade footways to be 2.0m wide and provide a pedestrian crossing at Victoria Street and Wonnacotts Road. / [OK-2-L4] Fore Street: Upgrade footways to be at least 2.0m wide at the existing pinch points. Improve pedestrian environment by increasing number of crossings or alternatives to de-prioritise motor traffic through the town centre. Increase cycle parking provision across town centre. / [OK-2-P1] Mill Road / East Street Junction: Upgrade signals to accommodate separate cycle movements. / [OK-2-P2] Crediton Road / Link Road Junction: Upgrade junction to improve pedestrian crossings and reduce crossing distance. / [OK-2-P3] Link Road / North Road Junction: Upgrade junction to reduce crossing distance and provide suitable crossing facilities. Also provide a crossing across North Road. / [OK-2-P4] Barton Road / Crediton Road Crossroads: Explore opportunities to upgrade and simplify the junction for the benefit of cyclists and improve pedestrian crossing provision across all arms. Remove excessive guard railing. / [OK-2-P5] West Street / Market Street / Fore Street / George Street: Upgrade junction to provide phase for pedestrians to cross, and reduce width of pedestrian crossings (currently refuge islands on Fore Street arms), which deviate from desire lines. Upgrade junction layout to give space and accommodate cyclist movements separate from motor traffic.

Okehampton Okehampton - South Zeal

[WD-1-L1] Sticklepath: Consider speed calming through village by way of 20mph speed limit, reduce carriageway width and remove centre-line road markings. / [WD-1-L2] Sticklepath - South Zeal: Implement quiet lane style improvements to reduce vehicle speeds and enforce cyclist priority. / [WD-1-L3] Belstone - Sticklepath: Implement quiet lane style improvements to reduce vehicle speeds and enforce cyclist priority. Consider a wayfinding strategy to create a coherent route through junctions. / [WD-1-L4] Belstone Bridleway 8: Bridleway has good hard well-drained surface that can easily be brought up to and maintained to a forest road standard. Minor annual maintenance - leaf and mud scrape, any drainage and pothole repair. Regrade and reroll every 5 years. / [WD-1-L5] Rural lanes to north of A30: Investigate virtual road closure of access-only treatment to stop satnavs from signposting this lane as a rat run (no physical work proposed). / [WD-1-L6] Exeter Road : Consider speed calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds, or explore options to separate cyclists from motor traffic. Upgrade side road junction to provide suitable pedestrian crossing provision. / [WD-1-L7] East Street: Explore opportunities to ensure footways are at least 2.0m wide on each side. / [WD-1-P1] B3260 Sticklepath Junction: Consider speed calming on major arm to reduce vehicle speeds on approach and through junction. / [WD-1-P2] Balmoral Crescent / Exeter Road Junction: Upgrade junction to shorten pedestrian crossing distance and provide suitable uncontrolled crossing facilities. Improve environment for cyclists by reducing vehicle speeds on Exeter Road, and providing safer space for right turn manoeuvres. / [WD-1-P3] East Street / Barton Road Junction: Reduce size of junction to shorten crossing distances/times for pedestrians and cyclists. Consider upgrading signals to accommodate cycle movements separately, and provide a pedestrian crossing on eastern arm.

10.6 North Devon Health Initiative – To note the [survey](#) which can be completed by councillors as individuals

Health Service Survey to discover current and potential usage of Okehampton hospital.



Okehampton Community Hospital still hosts over 40 clinics and specialisms, even though its wards and GP practice were closed in 2016. **But not enough people know that this facility is there for us.** At a time of great pressure on the NHS, we believe that Okehampton and its surrounding area should use this facility more.

This short survey will help us find out whether residents are

- Aware of the hospital.
- Use the hospital when applicable.
- Would use the hospital as an alternative to RDE/ Derriford, if possible.

The Community Hospital was built in 2004, (with £250,000 locally raised funds) and serves around 42,000 people who live within 15 miles of the town. Initially the Community Hospital had a state-of-the-art Maternity Unit with a Birthing Pool, a Physiotherapy Department, X Ray Unit, a Dialysis Unit, Podiatry, several other clinics including 24/7 MIU and over 30 inpatient beds in 2 wards. Over the years we have lost the wards and several of the services.

We want to improve health service provision in Okehampton and the surrounding area, which is getting less than its fair share of NHS Devon's resources. Therefore, we need to give hard evidence to the NHS of what is needed. So please answer the questions overleaf with the : QR Code



Or this Online survey: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/Ybk1mtqZy9>

Or if on the paper form, circle the chosen answer please

Completed forms to the box at Donald's Menswear (Thanks Mark!) Fore St. Okehampton

Thank you!

For the North Dartmoor Health Initiative

Jan Goffey, George Dexter, Richard Colman,

This survey is by North Dartmoor Health Initiative which is a community pressure group which has the sole purpose of campaigning for better health provision in Okehampton and the surrounding area.

11. **Letters of Recognition** – To consider a proposal from the Mayor in accordance with the circulated report

Report Title: Mayor's Proposal – Letters of Recognition for Emergency Services Personnel

Purpose of Report:

To seek Council's approval for the Mayor to introduce a new initiative recognising members of the emergency services including Dartmoor Search and Rescue who have either:

- completed **10 years or more of service**,
- demonstrated **exceptional bravery or heroism**, or
- given service **posthumously**.

Background:

- The Mayor has expressed a wish to acknowledge the commitment and sacrifice of emergency services personnel, including Dartmoor Search & Rescue, in serving the people of Okehampton.
- Recognition would take the form of a formal Letter of Recognition from the Mayor, issued on behalf of the Town Council on headed paper.
- This is intended to be separate from the Mayoral Awards, which remain focused on exceptional community or voluntary service.

Proposal:

- That the Mayor in conjunction with the Town Clerk be authorised to write letters of recognition to qualifying emergency service personnel.
- Emergency service organisations (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Dartmoor Search & Rescue) will be invited to submit nominations using a standard form (Appendix A).
- Nominations will require confirmation from the organisation that the individual consents to their details being shared with the Council, or that in the case of posthumous recognition, the family has been consulted.
- Minimal personal data will be collected in line with GDPR.

Criteria:

1. Minimum of 10 years' service in the emergency services, including Dartmoor Search & Rescue; or
2. Demonstrated exceptional bravery or heroism in the line of duty; or
3. Posthumous recognition where service or sacrifice warrants acknowledgement.
4. Nominations may only be submitted by the relevant emergency service organisation.
5. Recognition will take the form of a personal letter, not a public award ceremony, and is separate from the Mayoral Awards.

Nomination Form (Appendix A)

Okehampton Town Council – Mayoral Letter of Recognition (Emergency Services)

Nominee Details

- Full Name: _____
- Emergency Service: _____
- Role/Rank: _____
- Years of Service: _____ (if applicable)
- Basis of Recognition (please tick):
 - ☐ 10 years or more service
 - ☐ Exceptional bravery/heroism
 - ☐ Posthumous recognition
- Brief description of service or act of bravery (max 300 words):

Nominating Organisation

- Organisation: _____
- Contact Person (Name & Role): _____
- Contact Email/Phone: _____

Consent Confirmation (must be ticked)

☐ I confirm that the nominee (or their family, in the case of posthumous recognition) has given consent for their personal details to be shared with Okehampton Town Council for the purpose of this recognition.

Signature (on behalf of the organisation): _____

Date: _____

Data Protection Statement:

Personal data provided on this form will be used solely for the purpose of administering the Mayoral Letters of Recognition for emergency services personnel. Data will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and will not be retained longer than necessary.

Draft Letter Template – Emergency Services



Okehampton Town Council

[Date]

[Recipient's Name]

[Address]

Dear [Recipient's Name],

As Mayor of Okehampton, I write to you with sincere respect and gratitude for your dedicated service as a member of the [Service/Organisation name].

Your [10 years of service / act of exceptional bravery / commitment given posthumously] stands as a testament to your courage, professionalism, and selflessness. Through your actions, you have not only supported your colleagues but also protected and safeguarded the people of our town and beyond.

It is an honour, on behalf of the Town Council and the community of Okehampton, to acknowledge the role you have played in serving others. Your [dedication / bravery / sacrifice] will always be remembered and valued.

Please accept this letter as a small but heartfelt expression of thanks from the people of Okehampton.

With deepest respect,

Cllr [Mayor's Name]
Mayor of Okehampton

12. Finance and Governance –

12.2 2024/25 External Audit - To note the Auditors Report and Certificate which does not raise any concerns or actions

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Okehampton Town Council – DV0277**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature



Date

03/08/2025

12.3 Notice of Conclusion of Audit - To resolve that the notice, published on 5th August 2025, remain in situ until 30th September 2025.

3

Okehampton Town Council

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

<p>1. The audit of accounts for Okehampton Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published.</p> <p>2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of Okehampton Town Council on application to:</p> <p>(a) <u>Mrs Emma James, Clerk & RFO</u> <u>Town Hall</u> <u>Fore Street</u> <u>Okehampton EX20 1AA</u></p> <p>(b) <u>Monday - Thursday 9.30am - 4pm</u> <u>By appointment</u></p> <p>3. Copies will be provided to any local government elector of the area on payment of £ <u>—</u> (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.</p> <p>Announcement made by: (d) <u>Emma James, Clerk/RFO</u></p> <p>Date of announcement: (e) <u>5 August 2025</u></p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website. The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for; the AGAR and external auditor report must be publicly available for 5 years.</p> <p>(a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR</p> <p>(b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised</p> <p>(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs</p> <p>(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice</p> <p>(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice</p>
--	--

14. **Okehampton Foundation** – To note that Okehampton United Charities is now the operating name of Okehampton Foundation, a charitable incorporated organisation and registered charity in England and Wales (charity number 1210636).

OTC nominated Trustees are: Mr J Simmons
Cllr M Ireland

Cllrs Colman, Tolley and Marsh are Trustees as individuals, not nominated by OTC.

15.2 Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Choosing May 2026 – To consider recommendations and agree arrangements for May 2026

Okehampton Town Council

Town Council Working Group Meeting 27th May 2025, 3pm

Minutes

Present: Cllr Colman (Mayor), Cllr Bird (Deputy Mayor), Cllrs Marsh and Yelland (part of the previous review group), Town Clerk, Assistant Clerk

Apologies: None

Absent: None

Review of Mayor Choosing:

It was felt that the Chamber is more suited for this formal event. Holding it in the Charter Hall only resulted in approx. 15 additional spaces due to the seating arrangements. More could be provide if seating was in rows.

Comments from attendees include that it was more like a coffee morning, chair noise was distracting and the location diminished the importance and gravitas of the event.

Microphones for next years event and use at council meetings are a priority.

Recommendations:

To reinstate the meeting in the Council Chamber and the councillors to be seated around the table as per a normal council meeting with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Mace Bearers seated on the bench behind. Other Councillors may be seated here if necessary.

The meeting to start at 6pm with the awards ceremony followed by Mayor Choosing/Annual Meeting.

Refreshments to follow in the Charter Hall

Livestream as normal and shown in the Charter Hall for those not in the Council Chamber

Nomination of the Mayor to be undertaken by a Councillor who is willing rather than the newest councillor who often has not been to a Mayor Choosing before.

The introduction of the committees to be done by a member of staff e.g. Park Keeper introduces the Parks Committee etc. This is to ensure that information is purely factual.

Speeches for nomination of Mayor etc to be pre read by the person nominated to confirm they are happy with what is being said.

Chamber invites: Mayor Elect, Town Cllrs, DCC Chair, WDBC Mayor, Ward Councillors, Award Winners, Hamlets Chair, Past Mayors, Cadet, Launceston, Chagford Hatherleigh North Tawton and Tavistock Mayors/Chairs, Youth Cllrs, Mace Bearers

Plus 1 guests are limited to Mayor Elect, Cadets (income and outgoing) who will need an appropriate adult present and the youth councils award recipient.

Space to be left for 4 members of the public.

Any other attendees, unless there are spare seats, can watch from the Charter Hall and partake in the refreshments.

The meeting closed at 3:40pm