



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

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**Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Policy & Resources Committee Meeting
held on 8th December 2025 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Cllr J Yelland (Chairman)
Cllr B Tolley (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr F Hart
Cllr C Marsh

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)
Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)

In Attendance:

Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
Cllr T Cummings

442. Apologies for Absence

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Bird (personal), Cllr Fisher (personal) and Cllr Weekes (work).

443. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Marsh declared a personal interest in Minute References 447.1 b) and c).

444. Public Participation

None.

445. Members' Questions

None.

(Cllr Cummings arrived)

446. Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 3rd November and 1st December 2025 for signing by Cllr Yelland.

447. Town Council Grants

447.1 Feedback

Feedback received from the following grant recipients as listed on the agenda was noted:

- a) **Okehampton District Community Transport Group** for the grant of £1,500 awarded in July 2025
- b) **Okement Rivers Improvement Group (ORIG)** for the grant of £700 awarded in November 2025
- c) **Okehampton Memories** for the grant of £500 awarded in November 2025

In addition, feedback had been received from **All Saints Church Hall, Okehampton** for the £300 grant awarded in November 2025.

447.2 Remaining Grant Budget

The Committee noted there was £3,509.40 remaining in the grant budget and the Clerk reported that a late application for a small grant had been received.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Hart (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to reopen the scheme for applications of small grants up to £300. Applications to be received by 31st January 2026 for consideration at a meeting of the Committee on 2nd March 2026.

447.3 Town Centre Business Grant Initiative

a) An application received from Prestige Developments Ltd was considered. On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £500 towards the repainting of front elevation windows of 33 Fore Street, Okehampton.

b) Due to the timescales involved it was noted that the scheme had closed for this financial year. The effectiveness of the scheme in the last financial year when 3 applications had been awarded totalling £3,386.52, and the single application this financial year was reviewed.

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Hart it was **RESOLVED** to run the initiative in 2026/27 if funding was available.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** the remainder of the funding, £1,500, be added to the Charter Hall improvements budget in accordance with the scope of the grant received from WDBC.

448. Okehampton Town Youth Council

The Youth Council had assisted with decorating the council premises for Christmas and had a tree in St James' Chapel as part of the Christmas Tree Festival. They had attended Edwardian Evening and would next be meeting in 2026.

449. Policies and Documents

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies and documents to Full Council:

- a) Asbestos Policy
- b) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- c) Privacy Notice
- d) Reserves (Financial) Policy
- e) Subject Access Request Policy
- f) Youth Council – Code of Conduct
- g) Youth Council – Constitution
- h) Youth Council – Data Protection
- i) Youth Council – Equal Opportunities
- j) Youth Council - Safeguarding

450. Finance and Audits

450.1 Councillor Audits

Cllr Marsh would be completing the November audit on 10th December.

450.2 Management Accounts

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to agree the management accounts (as circulated) for month ended 31st October (month 7) 2025.

450.3 Investments

Financial investments including interest rates and Tamar Energy Community Shares were reviewed and receipt of £250 interest from the shares was noted.

450.4 Bank Accounts and Management

The Clerk reported ongoing difficulties closing the Nationwide Account and advised that the FSCS limit in the UK had increased from £85,000 to £120,000 from 1st December 2025.

A report from the Finance Officer was considered and on the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following to Full Council:

- a) Closure of both NatWest Accounts following termination of the Nationwide Account and successful transfer of the funds to the CCLA.
- b) The CCLA account be maintained to hold 60% of the Council's total funds, the calculation being based on the balance as at the commencement of each financial year.
- c) Three months operational funds to be maintained in the Lloyds account calculated as 25% (3 months) of the total anticipated expenditure for the financial year, as at the commencement of the financial year.
- d) Two Unity Bank Accounts be opened as follows:
 - i) Easy Access Business Deposit Account, maintained with a balance of one months anticipated expenditure, calculated annually at the commencement of each financial year. This will ensure instant access to funds enabling salaries and invoices to be paid promptly should there be an issue with the Lloyds account.
 - ii) Unity Trust 30 Day Notice Account to be used to hold any funds over the 60% held in the CCLA Account
 - iii) Signatories and online banking arrangements be as existing for the Lloyds Accounts

450.5 Earmarked and General Reserves

Earmarked and general reserves as of 31st October were reviewed, the General Reserve figure was £485,684.16. No changes were made. EMRs would continue to be reviewed alongside the budget setting process for 2026/27, and the Committee agreed the general reserve would be further considered following the year end closedown.

450.6 Payment Schedule

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment schedule, the BACS payments totalling £2,747.90 exclusive of VAT.

450.7 2026/27 Budget and Precept

It was noted that a confidential item of business may impact the budget and consideration was deferred until later in the meeting.

451. Livestreaming and Sound

A recording of an Owl demonstration was viewed. Sound and livestreaming quotations would be considered within Part 2.

452. Emergency Plan

Cllr Cummings reported on a meeting with representatives from Devon Communities Together (DCT) and the Clerk. DCT had suggested that a Community Emergency Plan be drawn up with input from the community. DCT would be willing to attend a meeting in January and the Annual Town Assembly in March when community engagement could commence if agreed.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to invite DCT to make a presentation to Full Council in January.

453. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

453.1 DALC, Larger Councils Sub-Committee

No meeting had been held since the last report.

453.2 Fairtrade

Cllr Hart reported that during Edwardian Evening Room 13 had provided approximately 80 free Fairtrade hot chocolates and the Fairtrade Group had provided them with two raffle prizes. There was a meeting about Fairtrade Fortnight later in the month and they had given Fairtrade tea boxes to some local businesses.

453.3 Police council Advocate Scheme

Information had been circulated by the Clerk.

453.4 West Devon Matters

The Police were increasing their frontline visibility and encouraging people to report speeding locations, including street names, times and dates so they could target the areas with use of a speed gun.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL

454. On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Tolley 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.

455. Outstanding Balances

The Clerk reported that concerns raised at the last meeting had been resolved and those accounts were now up to date. The outstanding balances were noted.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Hart.

456. Livestreaming and Sound

Options and quotations for sound and livestreaming of council and other meetings as previously reviewed by the Committee were considered, and it was noted that costings may have increased since the original report.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to purchase an Owl 4+ at approx. £1,899, a tripod and, if a bundle or worthwhile discount could be obtained, an additional microphone extension.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Colman it was **RESOLVED** to purchase a direct replacement sound management unit at approximately £310.

457. Staffing Matters

The Clerk reported on ongoing absences and welfare.

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Marsh (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the creation of an Events Assistant role on a zero-hour contract to Full Council in accordance with a resolution of the Personnel Sub-Committee with a budget for 2026/27 of up to £4,500. Role to be reviewed in Autumn 2026.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Hart (2 abstentions) it was **RESOLVED** that the provision of an additional full-time member of staff who would undertake

maintenance and other tasks across the remit of the whole council be considered in connection to the Local Government Review and the upcoming Boundary Change in 2027.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions made therein.

458. 2026/27 Budget and Precept

V3 of the draft budget was considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Colman (1 against, 1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** the potential additional staff cost, as at Minute Reference 457, be met from general reserves.

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Tolley it was **RESOLVED** to recommend V3 of the draft budget to Full Council with no amendments.

The meeting was closed at 9pm.

Councillor Yelland, Chairman