



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall
Fore Street
Okehampton
Devon
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

www.okehampton.gov.uk

**Minutes of a Okehampton Town Council Planning Committee Meeting
held on 26th January 2026 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

Members Present:

Councillor T Leech (Chairman)

Councillor M Ireland (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor T Cummings

Councillor M Richards

Councillor J Yelland

Councillor L Bird (Chairman, Property)

Councillor B Tolley (Chairman, Parks)

In Attendance:

Mrs E James (Clerk)

1 Member of the Public

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council's Facebook page.

526. Apologies for Absence

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Colman (illness).

527. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Leech declared an interest in Minute Reference 531 being a Member of WDBC's Development Management Committee.

528. Public Participation

A member of the public addressed the Committee raising concerns about planning application 2354/25/FUL.

529. Members' Questions

None.

530. Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 1st December 2025 and 12th January 2026.

531. Planning Applications

2354/25/FUL READVERTISEMENT (additional supporting information provided)

Construction of food store (Class E A) with associated parking, landscaping, drainage & servicing. Land at SX 612 953

A proposal by Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Tolley (2 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention) that a neutral response be submitted was not carried.

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Ireland (4 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention), it was **RESOLVED** to OBJECT to the application on the following grounds:

Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034:

- DEV29 – Specific provisions relating to transport. Development will be required to contribute positively to the achievement of a high quality, effective and safe transport system in the Plan Area.
- DEV25 – Nationally protected landscapes. The highest degree of protection will be given to landscape of the South Devon AONB, Tamar Valley AONB and Dartmoor National Park.
- DEV20 – Place shaping and the quality of the built environment. Development proposals will be required to meet good standards of design, contributing positively to both townscape and landscape, and protect and improve the quality of the built environment.
- TTV14 – East of Okehampton. Land to the east of Okehampton is allocated for residential development.
- TTV15 – Land at Stockley. Land at Stockley is allocated for employment/employment-led mixed use.
- TTV26 – Development in the Countryside. Protection of the special characteristics and role of the countryside, in particular that isolated development in the countryside will be avoided and only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

In addition to the above the economic impact sequential assessment has not been thoroughly explored, particularly with regards to the existing site in School Way which will be reused and will not resolve the traffic issues in the town centre.

0043/26/FUL Retrospective change of use of existing first floor Class C3 (flat) to Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and ground floor Class Sui Generis to Class E (Commercial). 4 Church Court, St James Street, Okehampton

Cllr Cummings declared a personal interest.

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to support the application.

532. Planning Authority Decisions

The Committee reviewed the list of decisions made by WDBC and noted that it was useful to be able to compare them with the comments submitted. It was observed that the Committee's comments were in line with the decisions made by WDBC.

533. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Cllr Leech reported on proposed changes by the government to the NPPF which were being reviewed by WDBC. The changes, if approved, would be significant and mean that policies would be national rather than local. There would not be an opportunity for members of the public, or town and parish councils to comment on the majority of applications.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland (1 against) it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak.

A member of the public commented on what may happen should WDBC's submission in relation to the Local Government Reorganisation was accepted.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

534. Historic Windows

A query about the removal of a leaded window from above the old Air Ambulance Shop in Fore Street, which was within the conservation area, was considered. It was commented that changes were partly dependant upon use of the property in accordance with permitted development rights. WDBC were investigating.

535. Policies

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the Tree Policy to the Policy & Resources Committee with the inclusion of the JLP DEV28 policy wording and an explanatory note as to the meaning of self-setting trees.

536. Payment of Invoices

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of invoices as listed on the schedule, BACS payments totalling £8,006.85 exclusive of VAT.

537. Urgent Item

Cllr Leech commented about parking proposals in the vicinity of the Interchange Railway Station and had been in contact with Cllr Grainger, DCC.

538. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items

538.1 Dartmoor Railway Association (DRA)

Cllr Ireland reported on the potential impact the rerouting of the 118 bus service may have on the existing station facilities. The DRA shop was doing well and working in conjunction with the café.

538.2 OkeRail Forum

Cllr Ireland reported the next meeting was on 9th February when there would be a discussion about refocusing the forum on other transport matters. The Rail Forum, a division of OkeRail, would focus on matters relating to other areas, including Tavistock, Launceston and Bude and may be expanded to includes bus transportation.

The local press would be covering recent disruptions to the Dawlish rail service caused by storms. It was noted that this further emphasised the need for the Okehampton, Tavistock, Plymouth rail link, particularly in the context of climate change and defence of the realm. Although the Viaduct is often cited as a concern, it was believed that it could be strengthened, and alternative routes had already been mapped. It was suggested that the three-phased approach be reconsidered so that the reopening of the Okehampton to Tavistock line becomes the second phase, thereby strengthening the case for reinstating the full link to Plymouth.

538.3 Citizens Advice

Cllr Leech was waiting for a response from the Chief Executive.

538.4 Ockment Centre

It was becoming harder to find funding, an official opening of the platform over the leat would take place in the summer. The Foodbank was continuing to operate from the centre on Thursday mornings.

538.5 Okehampton & Area Health & Wellbeing Alliance (CVS)

Cllrs Leech and Richards reported that they had been unable to attend the recent meeting, however the notes had been circulated.

538.6 Okehampton & District Community Transport Group

A Coffee Morning was being held on 28th March. The biggest current issue was the road works as they were having to charge more for some journeys. A log of these journeys was being kept in case a claim could be made.

538.7 Rural Market Town Group

There were no matters to report. The Rural Services Network was good at lobbying the government about rural issues but were not having any success.

(The member of the public left)

PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

539. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded 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.

540. Enforcement Issues

The most recent list of enforcement cases received from WDBC and action taken was noted.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Richards the meeting moved back into Part 1 and was closed at 8.30pm.

Cllr Leech, Committee Chairman