Okehampton Town Council

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Devon
EX20 1AA

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Minutes of an Okehampton Town Council Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 6th July 2026 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton

Members Present:
Cllr J Yelland (Chairman)
Cllr L Bird (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr A Fisher
Cllr M Richards
Cllr B Tolley
Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)

In Attendance:
Mrs E James (Town Clerk)
2 members of the public

The meeting was livestreamed through the Council Facebook page.

92. Apologies for Absence
On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Colman (prior commitment).

Absent: Cllr Weekes

93. Declarations of Interest
Cllr Fisher declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 102.2
Cllr Tolley declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 97 in relation to Allotments
Cllr Yelland declared a personal interest in Minute Reference 97 in relation to Allotments

94. Public Participation
Members of the public representing the Museum of Dartmoor Life addressed the committee in relation to the award of grants, thanked the council for their many years of financial support and apologised for not sending a representative to the meeting at which grant applications were considered.
An outline of future plans was requested by Councillors.

(members of the public left)

95. Members' Questions
None

96. Minutes
On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 18th May and 8th June 2026 for signing by Cllr Yelland.

97. Policies and Documents

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the following policies to Full Council with amendments as noted:

a) Allotment Policy and Application Form – clause regarding breach of residential conditions to clarify wording in relation to those who move out of the town boundary
b) Business Continuity Plan
c) Data Protection Complaints Policy – to include wording confirming that the council cannot deal with anonymous complaints
d) Expenses Policy
e) Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
f) Press (Media) Policy
g) Safeguarding Policy
h) Simmons Park Hire Policy (recommended by the Parks Committee) – clause referring to bylaws and a copy of the bylaws to be added
i) Social Media, IT and Phone Use Policy for Employees
j) Volunteer Policy and Agreement
k) Whistleblowing Policy

98. Finance and Audits

98.1 Councillor Audits

An email had been received from Cllr Marsh reporting that an audit had been carried out, and everything was in order. This being an audit of the bank reconciliations, online payments and Lloyds Debit Card transactions.

98.2 Management Accounts

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to agree and adopt the management accounts (as circulated) for months ended 30th April (month 1) and 31st May (month 2) 2026.

98.3 Investments

Financial investments including interest rates and Tamar Energy Community Shares were noted.

98.4 Payment Schedule

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment schedule totalling £3,816.04 excluding VAT.

98.5 HMRC Mileage Rate Increase

On the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the future payment of staff and councillor mileage at the new rate of 55p p/mile and that, as appropriate, mileage expenses be backdated to 1st April 2026.

98.6 Virements

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to approve virements in accordance with the attached report, most of which had been agreed during the budget setting process for the current year.

98.7 Grant Budget

The committee considered increasing the grant budget for the current year which, following award of grants in June, stood at £270.45 as requested by Cllr Colman. On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to vire the unspent funds from the 2025/26 Grant Budget, £1,541, from General Reserves to the current Grant Budget.

98.8 Banking Provision
The Clerk reported that the Unity Bank Accounts, as previously approved, were in the process of being opened. The Easy Access Account would be maintained with a balance of one months anticipated expenditure, calculated annually at the commencement of each financial year. The total anticipated expenditure for the 2026/27 year, excluding EMRs. On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** that the one month's expenditure figure for 2026/27, £55,079, be transferred once the account was available for use.

The Committee noted that the 30-Day Notice Account would hold funds over the 60% held in the CCLA Account, if required.

98.9 Devon Pension Fund
The Committee noted that from April 2026 the employer contribution rate had decreased from 21.8% to 18.1% for a 3 year period following which there would be a further review undertaken by the fund managers.

99. <u>Town Council Grants</u>
a) Okehampton Fairtrade Group
On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £100 towards the cost of hall rental, speaker transportation and fee, and refreshments.

b) Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of All Saints Church Okehampton
On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Leech (1 abstention) it was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £400 towards the resurfacing of the hall carpark. The grant would be released once confirmation was received that full funding had been achieved, and providing the work would be completed within this financial year. Other potential sources of grants to be suggested including WDBC and Devon Communities Together.

c) Okehampton Argyle Youth Football Club
On the proposition of Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Fisher, it was **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the application to next meeting so that additional information could be provided.

100. <u>Mayoral Chain of Office</u>
The format of engraving on the new Mayoral Chain of Office was considered.

A proposition by Cllr Bird, seconded by Cllr Leech that the dates be in the format 2025/26 and MBE or similar be included if held at the time of holding the Office of Mayor was not carried.

A proposition by Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Fisher (2 in favour, 1 abstention, 3 against) that the date be the first year of Office only and inclusion of MBE or similar if held at the time of holding the Office of Mayor was not carried.

On the proposition of Cllr Tolley, seconded by Cllr Bird (4 in favour, 2 against), it was **RESOLVED** that the format of the dates be 2025 & 2026 and MBE or similar to be included if held at the time of holding the Office of Mayor.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** that any decision relating to engraving should an individual hold a further term of Office as Mayor be considered at the relevant time.

101. St Georges Day
Item deferred in the absence of Cllr Colman.

102. Members' Reports and Requests for Agenda Items
102.1 DALC, Larger Councils Sub-Committee
The AGM and Conference was in October.

102.2 Fairtrade
Cllr Fisher advised the group would be at Okehampton Show and Fairtrade Fortnight was being held over the last 2 weeks of September.

102.3 Police council Advocate Scheme
Cllr Fisher had been unable to attend a meeting held the previous week and was due to attend a meeting later in July about facial recognition.

102.4 West Devon Matters
Cllr Yelland had attended the last meeting. There had been an 18% decrease over 12 months in reports of antisocial behaviour, fortnightly tactical internal meetings were being held to enable adjustment in relation requirements. Antisocial behaviour needed to be reported to inform the meetings. A drugs safety presentation had been given at Okehampton College. The A386 had been defined as a high-risk route, and the police were working with Highways on a 40mph speed limit along this road. The A30 was usually patrolled by Highways England but due to a lack of resources local police officers would be patrolling the route in the summer holidays. There would be an additional PSCO in Okehampton.

Cllr Leech had not attended as the meetings generally clashed with other commitments, instead he had met with the Inspector.

PART 2 CONFIDENTIAL
On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Leech 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.

104. Outstanding Balances
Details of the single outstanding balance was noted, and the Finance Officer was thanked for her work.

105. Civic Regalia
Consideration was given to a quotation for the placement of the Mayoresses Chain on black velvet and provision of a suitable case. The item was deferred to the next meeting when the Clerk would bring the Chain of Office to assist with decision making. The Repair Café may be able to assist with suggestions.

106. Staffing Matters
The report was noted and considered.

On the proposition of Cllr Fisher, seconded by Cllr Richards, it was **RESOLVED** to approve payment of holiday accrued during sick leave, either in one lump sum or over a period of time as preferred and permitted by legislation, in accordance with the report.

An update regarding Caretaker recruitment was provided by the Clerk. Following new employment legislation on the proposition of Cllr Richards, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was

RESOLVED to reduce the probationary period for the current Caretaker and any future vacancies to 4 months with an option to extend for one month. Recruitment Policy to be reviewed.

On the proposition of Cllr Leech, seconded by Cllr Tolley, it was **RESOLVED** to approve additional paid hours for the successful applicant for the Caretaker vacancy for training purposes as set out in the report.

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

The meeting was closed at 8.34pm

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Councillor Yelland, Chairman