

AGENDA ITEM No 2

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 10th February, 2026 at 6.30pm** at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs A Johnson **Chairman & Deputy Mayor (ex-officio)**
Councillor J Moody **Vice Chairman**

Councillor S Hipsey **Mayor (ex-officio)**
Councillor P Ward **Immediate past Mayor (ex-officio)**

Councillors Ms M Ewings, R Poppe, B Smith

Ward Member(s): Councillor A Hutton.

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk, General Manager, Office and Finance Manager, Administration and Democratic Support Officer.

290. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor S Hipsey.

291.CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 13th January, 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

292.DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

293.ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – ASSERTION 10 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) POLICY

The Committee received and considered the Report of the Office and Finance Manager in connection with the above (Appendix 2).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to the status of the draft Policy, applying as it did to all identified user groups. Training would be provided to staff and it was anticipated the Devon Association of Local Councils would add the topic to its Member training package. More generally associated training for Councillors would be scheduled on election/appointment, and thereafter at two yearly intervals.

In response to a question, it was noted that whilst training (on this or other topics) for Councillors could be designated as 'mandatory' by the organisation, because of Councillors status, they could not be required to undertake training, nor be formally sanctioned for failing to do so.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse and adopt the Draft Information Technology Policy, prepared in conformity with the SAPPP template, as a basis for discharge of the relevant part of the Obligation as set out in Assertion 10

294. INDICATIVE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2026-27

The Committee considered an indicative Calendar of Meetings 2026-2027 (Appendix 3). It was agreed that, to assist with clarity, the use of darker colours would be reviewed.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse, in principle (and subject to formal consideration in due course), the appended indicative Calendar of Meetings.

Noted That:

- a) formal consideration and determination of the Calendar of Meetings would take place, as required by Standing Orders, in the normal way at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2026;
- b) notification of Meeting invite/dates to Members would be undertaken in the same way as the current Civic Year, after the Calendar of Meetings had been formally adopted.

295. UK TOWN OF CULTURE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 4) regarding a request for representation on a Group constituted in connection with the above.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made, in particular, to:-

- a) the allocation of Town Council capacity/resources to extant projects (such as Abbey Remains and Tavi-Skate Park);
- b) a view that, at the current stage, the Borough Council would not be in a position to formally support any one application under the scheme, reflecting the importance attached to even handedness to all applications. However, should one of the applications in the Borough move forward to the next stage, then this could be revisited;
- c) all Councillors should have the opportunity to put themselves forward as representatives;

- d) in the short term, as there was understood to be a meeting of the Group imminent, the consensus was that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee represent the Council at any meetings between now and the formal determination of Council representatives.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council nominate up to two Members to act as liaison with the Steering Group

296. ABBEY REMAINS PROJECT

The Committee received and considered the report of the General Manager (Appendix 5) in connection with the above, including project governance arrangements and related information.

A further oral update was provided regarding governance structure and cashflow. A review of Archaeological impacts was being undertaken which could lead to the need to revisit the timing for aspects of delivery. More generally NLHF funds were now available for drawdown as the project progressed.

In response to a question the Committee was advised two skills days were scheduled for inclusion and school events, talks and Tavistock Youth Café involvement in some activities.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) receive, review and endorse/adopt the Project governance documents and associated approach, including timetable for action, procurement and decision making arrangements associated with the above initiative;
- b) authorise the General Manager to undertake the day to day aspects of the operation and management of the project on behalf of the Council.

Noted that:

- a) Councillor Ms M Ewings declared interest in the above item by virtue of being Deputy Chair of Tavistock Youth Café;
- b) Council staff and partners were commended for the project and their work in securing funding to enable it to proceed.

297. INTERNAL AUDIT/AUDITOR

The Committee received, considered and noted the Interim Internal Audit Report (Appendix 7) as provided by the Council's Internal Auditor.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

298. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DEVON

Since the publication of the Agenda the Government had announced a consultation upon five proposals for the reorganisation of local Government in Devon. In summary representing proposals from Devon County Council, two from Groups of Districts, Torbay and Plymouth/Exeter respectively which were available online.

The Council would have opportunity to respond on whichever aspects it considered appropriate, but in particular that might meaningfully include factors with material impact on place/locality, such as:

- neighbourhood governance arrangements – areas covered/configuration, responsibilities and membership (in particular the role of Town/Parish Councils as leaders of place and people);
- service configuration, the desirability or otherwise of differing models and the extent to which they demonstrated centralised or dispersed delivery;
- asset and service transfer arrangements to/with the Local Council sector, and the extent to which they were (or not) articulated and, if so, whether they provided a meaningful and equitable framework for working together in the interests of the community.

A meeting of the Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Working Group would be convened to review the position prior to the Committee and Council determining if/how to respond in the next round of Meetings. It was noted that at such time those Members who occupied positions of management or control, or equivalent, on the Borough Council might consider it appropriate, as previously agreed, to withdraw from deliberations on any favoured proposal in view of their commitment through the Borough Council to its agreed approach(es). It was a matter of disappointment that Town and Parish Councils were not named as consultees by Government, they could however still respond.

Noted That: a Member undertook to circulate a link to a presentation in connection with prior reorganisation elsewhere in the Country.

URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

299. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT IN TAVISTOCK

In response to a question the Committee noted that, following representations by the Town Council to the Local Planning Authority, a presentation was scheduled to be made to Town Councillors shortly to

address the issues/concerns it had raised previously. Most particularly (but not exclusively) with a focus upon major developments, the 5 year land supply, infrastructure and the interpretation of various local and other planning policies.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

300. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was:-

RESOLVED THAT the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

301. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council).

The Committee received and considered the Report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 8) in connection with the above.

RECOMMENDED THAT in acknowledgement of the breadth, depth and value of the contribution made by the applicant organisation, both to its membership and the wider community, Tavistock Town Council agree to award an unconditional grant toward the purposes identified on the basis of the maximum amount, as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the Report.

Noted that:

- a) it was reported by a Member that West Devon Borough Council would reconsider its position in view of the foregoing;
- b) Councillor Ms M Ewings requested it be recorded she abstained from voting on this item.

The Meeting closed at 7.54pm

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN