

AGENDA ITEM No 6

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY 16th March, 2026 at 6.40pm** at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

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

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

Noted That immediately prior to the commencement of the Meeting Members of the Committee received an informal presentation in connection with progress (Minute No 338 refers) from Members of the Steering Group and provided suggestions and feedback on the emerging draft.

335. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor J Moody.

336. 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).

337. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made, beyond acknowledgement that 4 Members of the Committee served on the Town of Culture Steering Group (two by virtue of appointment by the Town Council).

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

338. UK TOWN OF CULTURE

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 2), regarding a request that it support the preliminary stages of an application for Tavistock through agreeing to act as 'lead applicant'.

In the discussion arising reference was made, in particular, to:-

- a) the value attached to the initiative, both for the merits of the competition itself, and for the drawing together of a range of community interests;
- b) recognition that, should the application proceed beyond the initial rounds, other stakeholders would be best placed for roles such as 'accountable body' and 'delivery body' in view of the lack of size, capacity and relevant skills within the Town Council for an initiative of such type and scale;
- c) communications from a Member not in attendance – it was the consensus that they might wish to bring their views to the attention of Council in due course;
- d) the welcome breadth and depth of the offer that Tavistock could bring to the competition.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- i) agree to act as 'Lead Applicant' in connection with a bid under the UK Town of Culture Scheme on the basis outlined in the report;
- ii) note the restricted resource/capacity base to provide other than periodic baseline administrative support for the Expression of Interest (EOI) process;
- iii) recommend acceptance of the Draft EOI as a basis for the submission to be made subject to consideration of any more detailed document (subject to availability) at the Meeting of Council itself.

339. DEVOLUTION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered the notes of the Meeting of the Devolution/Local Government Steering Group held on Tuesday 10th March, 2026 (Appendix 3).

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse the approaches as set out respectively in:

- a) Note 5 actions (i)-(vii) (Local Government Reorganisation in Devon);
- b) Note 6 – final paragraph (Community Asset Transfer Policy).

340. COUNCIL FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Committee considered the report of the Office and Finance Manager in connection with the above (Appendix 4).

RECOMMENDED THAT Subject to the amendments as annotated in the note below, the recommendations as identified in the report be endorsed and adopted as set out:- agreed amendments being:

- a) Para 2.2(b) the deletion of 'Towls' and 'Stannary Brewery' due to discontinuance of trading;
- b) Para 2.5 – inclusion of the applicable HMRC threshold rates for electric car use.

Noted That in the discussion arising reference was made to a range of sector and organisational financial practices and associated arrangements.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

341.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

342.STAFFING

(**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 considered the report of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 5). In the discussion arising reference was made, in particular, to:

- past and current recruitment arrangements;
- issues and options, next steps;
- staffing levels within the office and other departments;
- current capacity.

RECOMMENDED THAT

- a) the report be received and the actions outlined therein noted;
- b) the option as set out in para 2.9 of the report be adopted.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

343. TENANCY, CONTRACT &/OR STAFFING MATTERS

(**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 oral updates in connection with:

a) Wayleave

A request had been received from National Grid in connection with a site on Whitchurch Down which was being progressed subject to legal advice – cost to be met by the applicant.

b) Transfer of Premises

The views of the Council's Solicitor were reported regarding associated restrictions and covenants. In all the circumstances it was the consensus view that the agreement, previously negotiated in good faith, be adhered to.

c) Employment Matter

An update was provided in connection with an outstanding matter previously reported and the timetable received for next steps.

The Meeting closed at 7.45pm

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN