**AGENDA ITEM No 6**

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 14th July, 2026 at 6.30pm** at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

**PRESENT**

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

Councillors Ms M Ewings, P Ward.

Ward Member(s) Councillor G Parker.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Town Clerk, General Manager and Administrative Democratic Support Officer

**73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillors S Hipsey and Ms S Wood.

**74. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 26th May, 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

**75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received

**ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**76. CIVIC BALL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 2).

In the discussion arising reference was made to various issues and options, alongside the longstanding history of the event including its origins and continuing role as an occasion for community celebration/appreciation, cohesion and civic renewal. More specifically matters such as changes in cost base, pricing structures, format, budget allocations, relevance, societal, demographic and cultural shifts, together with event evolution over recent decades.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council:

i) acknowledge the shortfall of £1,251 in relation to the Civic Ball in 2026 and to address same endorse £862.20 of the shortfall being transferred from Civic Ceremonial Expenses to Civic Ball Income (1033) the remaining £388.80 being classified as an overspend;
ii) retain the current format for the next Civic Ball (2027); and
iii) instruct Officers to undertake a preliminary review of key issues and options associated with the event to provide a basis for future consideration in due course.

**77. MINIMUM OPERATIONAL BALANCE REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Office and Finance Manager in connection with the above (Appendix 3).

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council

a) agree the temporary increase of the Minimum Operating Balance from £300,000 to £500,000 until December 2026.
b) review the position again by the end of the current (2026-27) financial year to consider if a reduction/reinstatement were appropriate and, if so, to what level.

**78. TAVISTOCK BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (BID)– RENEWAL**

A link to a copy of the renewal prospectus/business plan had previously been circulated and, in view of the timing of the ballot, the views of Members sought previously on an informal basis.

The Town Council had a longstanding policy commitment to both supporting/promoting the benefits of Tavistock BID Ltd, and collaborating with it to benefit and promote both business and wider community interests in the Town. Accordingly it was:

RECOMMENDED THAT the casting of the Town Council's ballot(s) in favour of a renewed term for the Tavistock Business Improvement District Ltd be endorsed.

**79. USE OF COUNCIL PREMISES**

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

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council

a) agree to the use of Unit 5 East End stores as Council office space in lieu of commercial letting for a period of 12 months starting in

August 26, with a review of arrangements being brought back to Council within a 6-9 month period; together with

b) measures being introduced by the Market Team to seek to secure, where possible, additional income from the Pannier Market to offset, insofar as possible, the consequential loss of commercial income.

**80. DISPOSAL OF VEHICLE**

The Committee had been scheduled to receive a report seeking authority for disposal of a vehicle listed on the Fixed Asset Register (a Iveco Daily 50C15). However, it had been identified that authority had previously been granted by Council for same (December 2025) and, accordingly, the item was to be treated as withdrawn

**81. OVERNIGHT VISITOR LEVY**

The Committee considered the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) survey regarding a prospective Overnight Visitor Levy Bill (Appendix 5). In the discussion arising reference was made to the difficulties of coming to an informed view in circumstances where there was considered to be insufficient information. For example regarding how/where levy income might be used, extant pressures on the sector, Tavistock specific factors and potential demand inhibition.

It was also noted that such levies were often more suited to larger urban than rural destinations.

RECOMMENDED THAT NALC be advised the Council was not in a position to comment on the basis of the limited information included in/scope of the survey.

**82. DALC CONFERENCE 2026**

The Committee considered arrangements for attendance at the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) Conference 2026. Copies of the DALC Newsletter had been forwarded to Members with details and the event cost was £50 (or £60 depending on time of booking) +VAT per person. Members were reminded that failure of a bookee to attend would result in them becoming liable for the ticket cost.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council

a) agree Councillor J. Moody to attend the Conference;
b) further afford the opportunity to all Members of Council at its meeting on 28th July, 2026.

Noted That in view of the cost Councillors who confirmed attendance and subsequently withdrew were liable for the cost of the ticket.

**ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**83. TAVISTOCK MUSEUM GRANT APPLICATION**

The Committee received an oral update from the General Manager, in particular that a recent grant application to support restoration and repair work to the Museum had been unsuccessful. However, the necessary surveys had now been completed, placing the Council in a stronger position for any future funding applications. In the interim, consideration would be given to improvements that could be undertaken within the Museum using available resources.

**84. ABBEY REMAINS PROJECT**

The Committee received an oral update from the General Manager regarding progress of the Abbey Remains Project and timelines for the same. Scaffolding was now erected and the main contractor had made positive early progress. An Evaluation Consultant was also in situ.

**85. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DEVON**

No new update was available at this time, subject to the impact of changes in Government an announcement was expected imminently.

**URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN**

86. **UK TOWN OF CULTURE**

In view of a recent announcement by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport the Chairman agreed to take the following item as a matter of urgency. The Committee noted, with disappointment, that the Town bid to be shortlisted for the UK Town of Culture 2028 had been unsuccessful.

**87. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**
**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.

**88. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**
**PROPERTY MATTERS – REQUEST FROM A COUNCIL TENANT**

(**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 Assistant to the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 6).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to various of the factors listed in the report including the weight which might, or might not, be attached to them, the role of the Council as a 'commercial' as opposed to 'public' body in the management of properties, correspondence received, support given and related matters. The further views of the Surveyor to the Council regarding normal commercial practice in such circumstances were reported.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council approve recommendation 4.1 as listed in the report to take effect on the last day of the quarter
contained within the report, subject to:

a) meeting the obligations as set out in para 2.2 of the report in advance of that day; and
b) agreeing to enter into a further agreement of the type referred to during the Meeting.

**89. COMMUNICATIONS WITH WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL**
**(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).
As the Committee would no longer be quorate following the withdrawal of 'twin hatted' Members (Minute No 20 'Commercial Conflicts of Interest' being engaged) the report (Appendix 7) was not considered and it was further:

RECOMMENDED THAT the item be referred to the meeting of Full Council on 28th July 2026 for consideration and decision, without recommendation.

Noted That the Clerk provided a short precis of certain aspects of a meeting held earlier in the day.

**90. TENANCY MATTER - MEADOWLANDS**
**(CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council)
As the Committee would no longer be quorate following the withdrawal of 'twin hatted' Members (Minute No 20 'Commercial Conflicts of Interest' being engaged) the report (Appendix 8) was not considered and it was further:

RECOMMENDED THAT the item be referred to the meeting of Full Council on 28th July 2026 for consideration and decision, without recommendation.

**91. TOWN HALL, GUILDHALL & MARKET STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS**
**(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 General Manager (Appendix 9) in connection with the above.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council approve the recommendations contained within the report (items F(a)-(c) refer) subject to review as set out.

**92. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**
**TENANCY MATTER – LAND AT SANDY PARK**
**(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 an oral update from the Town Clerk in connection with the above. When current matters had concluded a site visit would be arranged for Members of Council.

**93. GOOSE FAIR 2026 AND BEYOND**
**(CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council)
It was noted that an update had, in part, already been provided at Minute No 88 above.

**94. 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 received an oral update from the Town Clerk in connection with the above, with particular reference to matters associated with recruitment, key worker risk, resilience and related issues.

The Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed:
Dated:
CHAIRMAN