AGENDA ITEM No 6

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 1st SEPTEMBER, 2026 at 6.30pm** at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

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

Councillors A Hutton, P Ward.

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk, General Manager, Office and Finance Manager.

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Ms M Ewings.

124. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT subject to the amendment of the reference to Minute No '88' as identified in Minute No 93 to '89', the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 14th July, 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

125. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this point in the Meeting.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

126. BUDGET SCOPING REPORT

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

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

- Uncertainties attaching to Budget development including (but not limited to) regarding:
  - The implications of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon;
  - Non precept related income streams, most especially the continuing market pressures upon commercial income streams;
  - That the Council continued to operate without an available unallocated capital reserve (historically applied as a contingency in support of its extensive asset base);

    - The significance attached to continuing to prepare for LGR and accompanying establishment of a related earmarked reserve to hold any underspend from the LGR and legislation cost centre;
    - Potential gaps in the funding provision for aspects of certain major projects (above item also refers).
- The principles underlying Budget setting for 2027-28 as set out in the Report, together with the current 'in year' Budget;
- Factors potentially affecting the Council Tax Base for the Town, the prudent approach being to develop the Budget (in the absence of revised figures) upon the existing Tax Base;
- Work which was proceeding on the basis of (exceptional/unforeseen factors notwithstanding), an anticipated single figure precept;
- Current and prospective matters regarding provision of external accountancy services to the Council;
- Extent of any compliance of the Guildhall public conveniences with Stoma friendly criteria (the General Manager undertook to investigate).

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council adopt and endorse the content of the Report and, in particular, the approach as set out in paragraph 1.4.

127. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DEVON & RELATED MATTERS

a) LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN DEVON

The Committee considered the Report of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 3).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to:

- Material concerns regarding the composition, viability and anticipated lack of financial resilience and/or geographic cohesion attaching to the proposed new unitary authority for 'rural Devon';
- Consequential/associated anticipated adverse implications for communities such as Tavistock and its hinterland;
- The importance attached to any unitary solution for local government being resilient and sustainable, able to deliver economic, efficient and effective public services to the community;
- The importance attached to public awareness;
- The views of other local authorities in the sector, and the actions being considered by Devon County Council by way of a

prospective Judicial Review, which were supported by the meeting;
- How the Town Council could appropriately represent the long term interests of the community at this point in time.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council write to Devon County Council expressing its support, in principle, for a Judicial review to test the process by which the unitary decision was arrived at and, should the County Council proceed with Judicial Review, more tangibly offer a contribution of £1,000 toward its legal costs.

Noted That
a) The identified contribution was by way of grant only (ie it excluded being joined as a party to any such legal proceedings);
b) Reference was made to the potential for meetings with those parishes that would, in the future, form part of the Tavistock Division;
c) A Meeting between the Mayors of Tavistock and Okehampton was due to be held shortly.

b) ENGAGEMENT WITH WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Committee noted correspondence including the response of West Devon Borough Council to the recent request by the Town Council for early scheduled collaborative working/meetings (on matters including but not limited to LGR) with the larger settlements in West Devon, in the interests of the communities and hinterlands they served (Appendix 4).

Noted that Councillors Mrs A Johnson and J Moody declared a non-prejudicial/pecuniary interest as being also members of West Devon Borough Council.

128. STREET LIGHTING REPLACEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the General Manager in respect of the above (Appendix 5).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to the background to the works required, reason for/suitability of single tender action, experience and scope of the provider within the sector, competitiveness of offer, and how most appropriately/viably to fund the emergency works.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council:

a) Agree to the commissioning of works with Enervo Ltd including the disconnection and reinstatement of supply with

National Grid and the removal and replacement of Category 5 columns as identified within the report dated 21st August 2026 as a proprietary item under single tender action (Para 5.12 Financial Regulations apply).

b) Agree to utilise £25,000 from the Rolling Capital Programme with the residue to be met from the Property Maintenance Budget.

Noted that paragraph 3.1 of the Report be amended to delete 2026-27 and replace it with 2027-28

129. TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES – BOILER REPLACEMENT

The Committee considered the report of the General Manager in connection with the above (Appendix 6).

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council agree the proposal 'in principle' regarding this being approved as short term priority works, Officers would then implement a procurement process with the intention to bring a tender report back to the Budget and Policy Committee on 20th October 2026 for consideration with the aim to commission works, subject to a mobilisation period, for completion by the end of the calendar year.

Noted that in response to questions the current position regarding age, resilience and projected lifespan of the system was outlined.

130. TAVI-RAIL FORUM – APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

An oral update was given as to the position of the Forum, a vacancy that had arisen and the facility for the Council to nominate a Member to attend at future meetings.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council

a) agree on renominating a representative to the Tavi-Rail Forum;
b) consider Councillor S Hipsey as the designated Tavistock Town Council representative for the remainder of the current civic year.

Noted That Councillor Mrs A Johnson had previously served as Council representative on this body.

131. 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.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

132. COMMERCIAL SEATING/TABLES IN THE PANNIER MARKET SURROUND

(**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 7).

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to:

a) correspondence received, both by the Council and by some Councillors;
b) the nature and operation of longstanding arrangements for the provision of licensed areas to eligible businesses under two schemes – one without charge, the other for which a charge was levied – the same for all participants;
c) more recent regularisation across those arrangements by way of documented form but without change to terms/conditions;
d) associated fees and charges (where applicable), and as set annually by the Council as linked to the charging structure for the Pannier Market;
e) good will gestures made by the Council to support a new business, offers made, accepted and declined;
f) the importance attached to regularised and consistent arrangements without exception for the operation of licences which eligible operators could either choose to take up, or not;
g) clarification that licence arrangements provided a high level of flexibility to licensees including (for that scheme subject to a charge), the facility to avoid charges out of season by removing the licensed street furniture of the licensee from the premises should they wish to do so.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council endorse the actions taken to date and agree the recommendations as listed in paragraph 5.1 of the Report.

133. RESIDENTIAL TENANCY MATTER

(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).

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

The Meeting closed at 7.56pm

Signed:
Dated:

CHAIRMAN