

# **Dorchester Town Council**

## **Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council**

**30 January 2018**

Present: Mayor S. Hosford and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, C. Biggs, R. Biggs, A. Canning, G. Duke, T. Harries, J. Hewitt, G. Jones, S. Jones, T. Jones, R. Potter, M. Rennie and K. Rice.

Apologies: Councillors A. Chisholm, F. Kent- Ledger, A. Lyall, P. Stein and D. Taylor

### **35. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 28 November 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### **36. Communications & Questions**

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor and Members for their support at community and fund-raising events over the Christmas period, in particular the Borough Gardens Carol concert. The Mayor also expressed her thanks to the organisers of the recent Holocaust Memorial Service.

The Mayor highlighted future public events including a presentation by a group who had provided support at the Immigration Centre at The Verne, the Lions Swimathon and the annual Beerex event.

The Council debated the following motion proposed by Councillor G. Duke and seconded by Councillor K. Rice.

With regard to the proposed development of Elizabeth Place Play Area by Magna Housing, that Dorchester Town Council give full recognition to the existence of the restrictive covenant contained in title number DT205766 at item 5 in the Charges Register, which refers to a Transfer dated the 27th May 1993 between West Dorset District Council and West Dorset Housing Association Limited at Schedule B clause 3. and that Dorchester Town Council will not take any action that would enable or require it to be lifted and they will make every effort to ensure both Magna Housing Limited and West Dorset District Council also recognise such restrictive covenant will continue to have effect without amendment or alteration.

Members also took the opportunity to consider recommendation 24b of the Policy Committee at the same time as the motion. They received the views of local residents and users of the Elizabeth Place and Poundbury Crescent playgrounds.

A resident noted that the Audit exercise lacked usage data from evenings and weekends and asked that this be rectified. Residents reiterated points made at the Policy Committee regarding the value of both parks as safe places for their children, due to being overlooked by adjacent properties and the difficulties of parking that already exist in both areas.

Residents also commented on the national pressure to deliver housing and its negative impact on green spaces and infill between residential properties and regarding the disparity between the availability of green space out of the town and within the town. The Mayor reminded a speaker that current affordable housing obligations at Poundbury had been fully met.

Members recognised many of the points that had been made, recognising the need for space for children to play, but also the acute need to identify a solution for delivering Affordable Housing. A Councillor identified a shortfall in affordable house building of around 200 units against the Local Plan target during the past year.

Members debated whether the motion closed the door on any development at all of the Elizabeth Place site and the lack of a timescale in the motion.

Councillors S. Jones and R. Potter confirmed their intention to abstain from the vote to avoid prejudicing their ability to take a full part as Members of the West Dorset DC Development Control Committee.

The motion was voted on and rejected on the casting vote of the Mayor.

### **37. Updates from Partner Authorities**

Councillor R. Biggs of Dorset County Council recognised the continuing financial pressures on both adult and Children's services and some of the initiatives being taken to reduce the cost of agency support and out of area care. He identified that the County Council were likely to set a tax just below the capping limit, at around 5.9%. He noted continued working on Local Government Reorganisation, highlighting the workstream focused on the devolution of services to local councils, consideration of two extended council terms to bring elections into line with Unitary Councils elsewhere, faster Council Tax equalisation and ward boundaries.

At a local level he explained that the No. 5 bus had been safeguarded until September 2018, that the future of Maumbury House remained undecided, that the History Centre was reviewing other storage options following the failure of its lottery application and that funding arrangements were being put in place to resolve broadband issues on Poundbury.

Councillor M. Rennie of West Dorset District Council also highlighted the impact of Local Government Reorganisation and its increasing dominance of that Council's agenda. Council Tax is likely to rise by the capping limit figure. Land Charge and Planning Applications turnaround, while still very slow, is gradually improving.

Planned changes to Universal Credit are likely to cause significant pressure for Benefits staff from April, while the imminent introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act will place new duties on the District Council. A recent major application for houses at Charminster had been rejected.

**38. Planning and Environment Committee – 4 December 2017**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 4 December 2017 be adopted.

**39. Planning and Environment Committee – 8 January 2018**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 8 January 2018 be adopted.

**40. Management Committee – 16 January 2018**

Amended minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting to correct some typographical errors. It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting as tabled be adopted.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 16 January 2018 be adopted.

**41. Policy Committee – 23 January 2018**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

The Chairman introduced and commended the budget to Council, identifying the key focus of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was to prepare to take on services at risk of being cut at West Dorset DC and Dorset CC. A Member opposed the increase in Council Tax.

The Chairman also identified recommendations to Council relating to a draft Outdoor Recreation Strategy and a Task and Finish Group to review a draft Community Plan.

Council had already discussed the recommendation regarding consultation on the possible reuse of recreation sites for affordable housing at Minute 36.

**Resolved**

- a) That That the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget are adopted as laid out in Appendices 1-3 of the Minutes of the Policy Committee, to include
  - i) A Council Tax Band D charge of £189.00, an increase of £5.50 (3.00%)
  - ii) A precept of £1,388,243, an increase of 7.09%
- b) That the draft Outdoor Recreation strategy is made available for consultation with key partner organisations
- c) That the Town Council work with Magna to engage the public regarding both the positive benefits and drawbacks arising from the development of each of the following individual sites:
  - i) Elizabeth Place (owned by Magna)
  - ii) Sandringham Annexe
  - iii) Fortress Green Open Space
  - iv) Mellstock Avenue Play Area
  - v) Poundbury Crescent Play Area
- d) That a Task and Finish Group comprising Councillors G. Jones and B. Armstrong- Marshall of Policy Committee and Councillors J. Hewitt and M. Rennie of the Management Committee is set up to review the draft Community Plan prior to its adoption at the March Council meeting
- e) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 23 January 2018 be adopted

**42. Town Centre Retail**

Council considered a report by the Town Clerk regarding the informal discussions that had resulted from West Dorset DC's proposals to develop the Charles Street and Fairfield sites for retail.

A question was asked regarding the status of the Retail Study commissioned as part of the Local Plan Review; the report is still in draft. A Councillor asked that a monitoring process be put in place to ensure that progress on key parts of the Position Statement were reviewed regularly by the Policy Committee.

**Resolved**

That the Council's position regarding the development of town centre retail in Dorchester is as follows:

- That, to ensure that the current town centre, focused on South Street, remains vibrant, it is essential that a deliverable strategy should be developed to ensure this area remains relevant to the future needs of the town

- That safeguarding Dorchester's historic role as a market town is essential and that a deliverable strategy should be developed to work with market operators to retain and develop the town's markets
- That in principle the Town Council supports the building of a retail store plus improved parking on the Charles Street site
- That more information is required on the risks of losing major retailers to the town, and how the development of Fairfield would reduce this risk, before the Town Council can come to a view on the development of the Fairfield site
- That additionally more information regarding the visual, traffic and parking implications of any development of Fairfield is required before the Town Council can come to a view on the development of the Fairfield site
- That any future retail development in Dorchester should be guided by evidence collected as part of the Retail Study commissioned as part of the Local Plan Review

43. **Calendar of Meetings 2018-19**

The Council consider the draft calendar.

**Resolved**

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2018-19 is adopted.

The Council rose at 8.40pm.

Mayor

There were no public questions after the meeting.

### CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2018-19

	2018								2019				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
COUNCIL, MAYOR MAKING AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING	21 MM 22		24		25		27		29		26 +ATM		20 MM 21
POLICY & MAYORAL SELECTION	15		17		18		20		22		19 MS@ 1830		
MANAGEMENT & SITE VISITS	8		10	SV 21 1700	11		13		15	SV 26 1700	12		SV 28 0930
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		4	2	6	3	1	5	3	7	4	4	1, 29	
MARKETS JOINT PANEL		20							23* 14.15				
CIVIC EVENTS		<i>Hardy Sat 2</i>	<i>Armed F. Sat 7</i>				<i>Remem. Sun 11</i>						
<i>BANK HOLIDAYS</i>	<i>7,28</i>			<i>27</i>				<i>25,26</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>19,22</i>	<i>6,27</i>

MM Mayor Making      ATM Annual Town Meeting      MS Mayoral Selection Committee

SV Management Committee Site Visit, but open to all councillors

Meetings will ordinarily take place at 19.00 in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings.

The meeting marked \* takes place at West Dorset DC offices at South Walks House