

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

CORPORATE PLAN

2014 - 2015

First draft

12 March 2014

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

With 20 councillors in four wards elected every 4 years, the Town Council is the local tier of a complex governance structure for the town which also involves the County Council, Health and blue light services and a District Council.

The Town Council has traditionally played the role of delivering a range of important but relatively non-critical operational services, including the Borough Gardens and Municipal Buildings, Cemeteries, and Sports Pitches, and in recent years has focused on ensuring that the buildings and infrastructure used for these services is of a high quality (the Borough Gardens, Weymouth Avenue Pavilion and Municipal Buildings refurbishments),

It has expanded its infrastructure to support new parts of the community, particularly the needs of young people (the Skatepark) and the needs of Poundbury (play equipment on the Great Field). The Council also directly provides or actively assists the provision of many of the cultural, social and civic events held in the town

The Town Council has steadily begun to recognise that, with the growth of the town, with the pressure on local government funding and with the ability of other tiers of government to focus on local issues diminishing, it needs to take the lead in defining a vision for the long term future of Dorchester.

STRATEGIC AIMS

The Town Council has two strategic aims

- **Representing the views of the people of Dorchester in supporting the development of a coherent vision for the future of the town**, in particular focusing on
 - The need for a strong local economy with its important infrastructure requirements
 - The need to ensure the provision of a housing mix that meets the needs of our residents
 - The need to travel round and within the town by a range of transport methods
 - The need to support and develop the unique character of Dorchester while paying respect to its history and heritage, its environment and culture, and its community spirit

- **Delivering a range of operational services as effectively and economically as possible**, including
 - Parks and open spaces - The Borough Gardens, Maumbury Rings, Salisbury Field, The Walks, plus town infrastructure including statues and memorials
 - Recreation facilities - Sports pitches at King's Road, Sandringham Sports Centre, The Great Field an Weymouth Avenue, the Skatepark, 14 equipped play areas and six allotment sites
 - Meeting Places - The Corn Exchange and Town Hall, and two other facilities
 - Opportunities to come together as a community - a wide range of civic, cultural, twinning and community events
 - Burial services
 - Proper Governance arrangements – Council and Committee arrangements, back office systems

REPRESENTING THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF DORCHESTER IN SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COHERENT VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE TOWN

The Town Council is best placed to capture the future vision for Dorchester, recognising the tensions between, and then balancing the key competing demands in the town: -

- The need for a healthy local economy with its important infrastructure requirements
- The need to ensure the provision of a housing mix to meet the needs of our residents
- The need to travel round and within the town by a range of transport methods
- The need for a vibrant, engaged and inclusive local community that meets the aspirations of all parts of a growing town
- The need to support and develop the unique character of Dorchester by paying respect to its history and heritage, its environment and culture, and its community spirit

The Town Council will consult its residents on its draft vision, using their feedback to help shape a final document that will clearly state that vision and identify the steps we will undertake to seek to achieve it.

The Town Council will work constructively with the statutory authorities to achieve its vision for the town, recognising that they have a role across wider Dorset that occasionally requires them to consider other needs than those of the town, but also requiring those authorities to recognise that the Town Council will focus on the needs of the town.

Ultimately the Town Council has two options available to it to document its vision, either: -

- By agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding with our key Partners
- Through the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan

In due course, taking account of external factors such as the political environment, the changing face of local government, and key events such as the adoption of a Local Plan, the Town Council will decide which of these options it should take to achieve recognition of its vision by other parties.

FUTURE PLANNING FOR THE TOWN OF DORCHESTER

Overview

Dorchester, the county town of Dorset, has a population of around 19,100 (2012 data) in around 9,400 dwellings. The town has grown by around 30% over the last 15 years, and will continue to grow at the same rate for the next decade, taking its population to around 23,000 by 2021.

The town's population is significantly older than the national average, with an over 65 age population of 23% (6% higher than the national average), and with only 28% of residents in the 20 – 44 age range (over 5% below the national average). This age profile will increasingly create major problems for public service delivery over the next 20 years.

The town's economy is built around its role as the administrative, health and school hub for the surrounding area, with 56% of the 17,500 jobs in the town working in the public sector. Retail, Food and Accommodation provides around 17% of jobs, with a further 18% of jobs being provided in the professional and other services sectors, consistent with the town's role as a commercial hub. Unemployment levels are very low, around 1% and long term unemployment affects only 19 residents.

Over half of the jobs in the town are carried out by workers who come from outside the town. With a number of major employers not providing enough car parking on site, coupled with the need for patients to visit hospital, visitors coming to town to shop and carry out business, and pupils coming in to one of the largest secondary schools in the country, traffic and parking are already a major issue, with the situation worsening as the town's population grows while its road infrastructure doesn't.

While the town is relatively wealthy there are pockets of deprivation, with 2 of the town's 11 wards among the 10% most deprived in the county. Around 16% of residents receive either or both Housing and Council Tax Benefits. Property prices are very high relative to salaries earned in the town, making it particularly difficult for those on low income or starting out on their careers to live within the town.

There is a vibrant community structure in place in town, using good recreational and social infrastructure, with an improving cultural infrastructure. However not all sectors of the community are fully developed, and there is no clear way for residents to access information about the range of opportunities and support available to them.

And much of the town's economic, community and cultural activity is taking place within the boundaries of a Roman town, while the population continues to grow at some pace, creating tensions for the heritage of the town and the environment that surrounds it, in such a way that preserving and accessing the town's heritage becomes increasingly difficult.

In summary Dorchester's success might at the same time threaten what makes it special. The growth of population and housing, with plans for more, a strong economy with potential for greater retail and tourism growth, and its attractive environment and vibrant community, are all creating needs which the infrastructure of the town is struggling to cope

with. While there are clear visions for parts of the town, for example Poundbury and Brewery Square, there is as yet no clear vision for the whole town to work towards.

Key Statistics

Population 1991: 16,200 2012: 19,100 (up 18%) 2021?: 23,000 (up 20%) 2031:???

Dwellings 1998: 7,328 2013: 9,428 (up 29% in 15 years) c. 2,000 more dwellings approved

Demographic U19: 4,115 (21.5%, -2.6%) 20-44: 5,397 (28.2, -5.4%)
45-64: 5,216 (27.2%, +1.9%) O65: 4,415 (23.1% +6.1%) (+/- % v. UK avge)

OUR VISION FOR DORCHESTER

We want Dorchester to be

- A **more balanced population** – less “old”
- Still with a vibrant community – **supporting all sectors of our community**
- A **more Varied Housing Mix** – more 1 & 2 bed properties for the under 35’s
- An important public sector hub – recognising our traditional role as county town and sub-regional hub
- But a **more diverse economy** – knowledge based small businesses enjoying a high quality of life, a better retail offer, a developed heritage based tourism offer
- **With an infrastructure capable of coping with the demands that economic success brings** – with a good road network and car parking where it needs to be
- **Respecting of but taking advantage of our heritage & environment** – a co-ordinated approach to tourism, and active engagement to ensure that new developments compliment the town’s existing heritage

To achieve the vision we need to focus on the items in **bold**. Our key actions to support the vision are as laid out on the next pages.

Local Economy

Actions to achieve a more diverse Economy

- We will work proactively with the developers of Charles St, Brewery Square and Poundbury to deliver an effective retail environment that is in keeping with the Town Council's vision for our heritage and environment
- We will work actively with business representatives to ensure that Dorchester is marketed to attract knowledge based small businesses to the area, and also to ensure that Dorchester is marketed to attract heritage based tourism to the area

Employment

Sectors Public Service: 9,975 (56%), Distrib., Accom & Food: 2,975 (17%) Other: 4,550 (27%)

Jobs 17,500 – at least 8,000 do not live in the town

Work Practice Full time (56%), Part time (25%), Self Employed (12%)

Skill Mix High (42%), Intermediate (42%), Low (16%)

Unemployment 2012 data: 123 (1.2%) Long term: 19

Econ. Active: 9,619 (50%), Retired: 4,476 (23%), Student/U16 3,750 (20%), Carer/Sick/Other inactive 1,226 (7%)

Housing

Aiming to achieve a more Varied Housing mix

- We accept the need for the further growth of the town over the long term, beyond that already planned for
- We will actively assist the process of identifying and bringing forward sites for new dwellings within the Dorchester bypass boundary
- We are opposed to development outside and adjacent to the bypass, and would expect all other parts of the district covered by the Local Development Plan to take a share of new development
- While there should be a mix, we would like a particular focus on smaller 1 – 2 bed units, including flats, designed to attract those aged under 35 to live in the town
- We expect the District Council to take available steps to reduce the number of dwellings not in use

Traffic & Highways

Our focus is on an infrastructure capable of meeting the demands of residents, workers and visitors to the town

- We will facilitate engagement with the community to deliver a successful balance between the needs of traffic, business and residents in the town centre area (DTEP)
- We will attempt to put pressure on larger employers in the town to ensure they provide adequate parking for their workers, and will encourage Dorset CC and West Dorset DC to provide suitable parking for workers in the town
- We will work with West Dorset DC and the town centre business community to provide for the needs of shoppers and tourists, with a particular focus on the period during which Charles St car park is being redeveloped

Community, Wellbeing, and Cultural

In seeking to support all sectors of our community

- We will support initiatives to record all community groups, and all community infrastructure, available to the residents of Dorchester
- We will use our resources to bring opportunities to engage in the community to the attention of all residents
- We will use our buildings and other facilities to stimulate new community groups to fill gaps in the range of opportunities on offer

Deprivation Multiple Index	Position in Dorset	Percentile Most		Position in Dorset	Percentile
Town Centre	15	6%	Castle Park	152	62%
Fordington East	24	10%	Ford'ton West/Thos Hardye	180	73%
Poundbury South	41	17%	Fordington Fields	183	74%
Victoria Park	68	28%	Monmouth Road	229	93%
Queens Avenue	128	52%	Manor Park	242	98%
Poundbury North	137	55%			Least

Benefit Recipients 2987 15.7% of residents receive CTB/BB

Socio Economic Groups

Wealthy Achievers	14.70%	Moderate Means	14.80%
Urban Prosperity	17.40%	Hard Pressed	14.30%
Comfortably Off	38.40%		

Respecting of, but taking advantage of, our heritage and environment

In seeking to get the balance right between protecting our heritage and promoting it we will

- Start discussions about a shared tourism vision with interested heritage partners and business representatives
- Get involved in discussions to ensure that the Charles Street development is developed to compliment the town's heritage
- Develop an understanding of what communities from outside Dorchester are looking to gain from a visit to the town

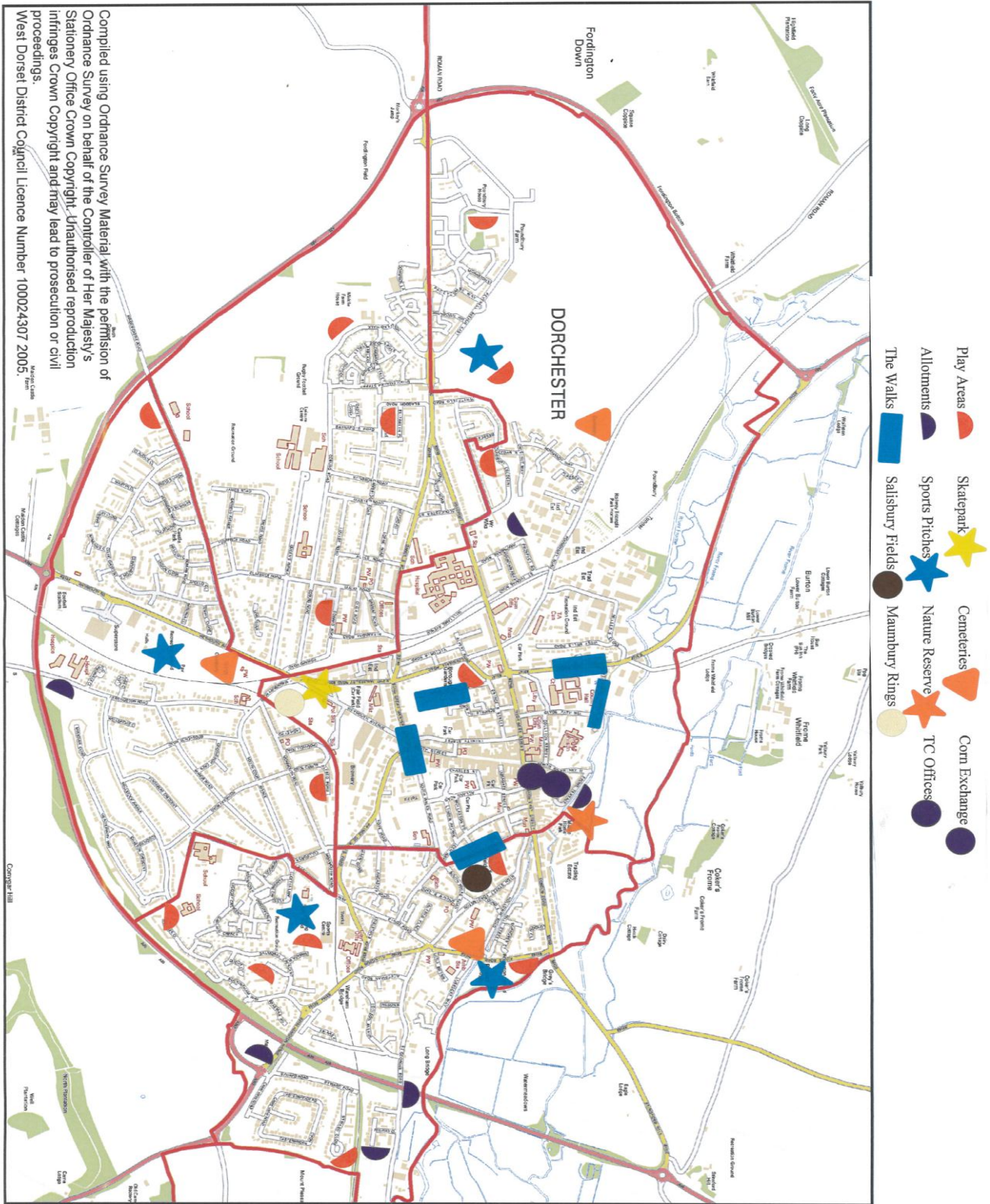
SUMMARY OF OUR AIMS FOR FUTURE PLANNING OF DORCHESTER

Field	Short Term Next 2 years	Medium Term 3 – 5 years	Long Term 6 – 20 years
Local Economy			
Housing			
Traffic & Highways			
Community, Wellbeing, and Cultural			
Environmental & Heritage			
Other Strategic Priority			

KEY DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Field	Project	Milestone	Anticipated Outcome
Local Economy			
Housing			
Traffic & Highways			
Community, Wellbeing, and Cultural			
Environmental & Heritage			
Other Strategic Priority			

WHAT DO WE PROVIDE AND WHERE?



OUR CURRENT SERVICES

HOW WE WILL IMPROVE OR ADAPT OUR CURRENT SERVICES OVER TIME

Service	Short Term Next 2 years	Medium Term 3 – 5 years	Long Term 6 – 20 years
Allotments	Review fees	Review need for additional sites	Develop Allotment Associations
Parks & Open Spaces	Borough Gardens - rejuvenate Bowling Green Area Improve Skate Park fencing Support the District Council to carry out a Sports Pitch audit	Borough Gardens - review Nursery operations Great Field – new Sports Pavilion Act on the Sports Pitch Audit to create a Sports strategy	Play Equipment – review future use of each site
Cemeteries	Review fees Poundbury – review digging process Full Memorials testing	Database – develop Burials database Complete internal road ways at Poundbury	Poundbury boundary wall
Municipal Buildings	Review charges & develop marketing strategy Investigate further repairs	Carry out repair works Consider options for future use in context of Arts provision	
Culture & Twinning	Co-ordinate the town's WW1 Commemorations		
Debt, CCTV & Markets	-	-	Fairfield market - review contract and site (DMJP)
Democracy, Governance & Administration	Facilitate Speedwatch in residential areas Prepare for new Council in 2015 Continue to develop role of Youth Council	Develop Corporate Plan into a full vision for Dorchester	

WHAT STEPS WILL WE TAKE OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Service	Project	Milestone	Anticipated Outcome
Allotments	Review fees	Complete Sep 14	New fee structure
Parks & Open Spaces	Borough Gardens - rejuvenate Bowling Green Area	List of ideas Apr 14 Develop preferred option for consultation Sep 14	New use for Bowling Green area
	Improve Skate Park fencing	Contract let Sep 14 Completion Dec 14	Safe fencing, new access points
	Support District Council to carry out Sports Pitch audit	Agreed approach Dec 14	Data to support new strategy
Cemeteries	Review fees	Complete Sep 14	New fee structure
	Poundbury – review digging process	Complete Nov 14	Equip suitable for purpose/efficient dig
	Full Memorials testing	Contract let Sep 14	Safe memorials
Municipal Buildings	Review fees & develop marketing strategy	New fees Sep 14 Strategy Mar 14	Better use, higher income
	Investigate further repairs	Contract let Nov 14	Better data re condition of parts of building
Culture & Twinning	WW1 Commemorations	Programme of events Jun 14	Better access to events
Debt, CCTV & Markets	-	-	-
Democracy, Governance & Administration	Facilitate Speedwatch in residential areas	Discuss need with Police Jun 14	Better access to equip for residents
	Prepare for new Council in 2015	Develop induction plan Feb 15	Well trained and supported members
	Continue to develop the role of the Youth Council	?	?

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE DELIVERING GOOD QUALITY SERVICES?

KEY SERVICE INDICATORS

Service	Indicator	Target Performance	Historic Performance	
Allotments	No. on waiting list	50	2011	272
			2013	102
Parks & Open Spaces	Achieve Green Flag & Heritage Award?	Yes	2012	Yes
			2013	Yes
	Damaged play equipt in use in <1 week	100%	2012	100%
Cemeteries	-			
Municipal Buildings	No. sessions used %	35%	2012	33%
			2013	32%
Culture & Twinning	-			
Democracy, Governance & Administration	Budget Management – 2 indicators that show financial health and compliance with budget	To be designed		

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDICATORS

Service	Indicator	Target Performance	Performance 2012
Allotments	% satisfied with service	80%	72%
Parks & Open Spaces	% satisfied - play areas	85%	86%
	% satisfied – pitches	85%	81%
	% satisfied – green space	80%	76%
	% satisfied - skatepark	90%	91%
Cemeteries	% satisfied with service	80%	70%
Municipal Buildings	% satisfied with service	80%	74%
Culture & Twinning	% satisfied - Remembrance Day	90%	92%
	% satisfied with events	To be developed	-
Democracy, Governance & Administration	% satisfied - Informed	80%	82%
	% satisfied – Value for Money	75%	67%

N.B. Indicators are likely to move from % to net positive (Satisfied minus Dissatisfied) approach soon

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

REVENUE BUDGET	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Budget
	£	£	£	£
Parks & Open Spaces	522,780	526,268	586,186	581,052
Allotments	5,784	7,196	13,570	12,997
Municipal Buildings	110,206	129,934	137,306	142,898
Cemeteries	64,758	84,138	102,930	88,838
Cultural & Twinning Activities	48,852	65,717	59,964	54,023
Corporate & Democratic Management	195,948	197,270	218,395	210,598
Other Services	136,301	39,567	54,627	57,450
New Special Items	0	0	0	18,000
Operational Budget	1,084,628	1,050,091	1,172,977	1,165,856
Precept	1,130,081	1,182,469	1,110,439	1,162,423
Council Tax Support Grant	0	0	111,752	93,317
	1,130,081	1,182,469	1,222,191	1,255,740
Transfer to/(from) General Reserve	45,453	132,378	49,214	89,883
General Reserve				
Opening Balance at 1 April	224,717	270,170	402,548	381,762
Transfer to/(from) Revenue Budget	45,453	132,378	49,214	89,883
One off use of Reserves	0	0	-70,000	0
Closing Balance at 31 March	270,170	402,548	381,762	471,645
Earmarked Reserves				
Opening Balance at 1 April	80,000	203,116	219,478	285,814
Transfer from Revenue Budget	123,116	75,062	113,313	113,500
Expenditure from Reserves	0	-58,700	-46,977	-55,100
Closing Balance 31 March	203,116	219,478	285,814	344,214
All Reserves held at year end	473,286	622,026	667,576	815,859
Tax Base	7,129	7,207	6,539	6,715
Band D Charge	159	164	170	173
Precept	1,130,081	1,182,469	1,110,439	1,162,423
SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS				
Employees	563,160	554,784	605,697	601,726
External Payments	561,006	531,594	566,823	567,110
Transfers to Specific Reserves	87,792	75,062	113,313	114,500
Capital Financing Costs	90,805	88,729	91,862	88,700
Income	-218,135	-200,078	-204,718	-206,180
Net Expenditure	1,084,628	1,050,091	1,172,977	1,165,856

Medium Term Financial Strategy	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees	606	602	614	626	639
External Payments	567	567	578	590	602
Transfers to Specific Reserves	113	115	117	120	122
Capital Financing Costs	92	89	67	60	53
Income	(205)	(206)	(210)	(214)	(219)
Operational Budget	1,173	1,167	1,167	1,182	1,197
Precept	1,110	1,162	1,185	1,209	1,233
Council Tax Support Grant	112	93	0	0	0
Transfer to/(from) General Reserve	(21)	88	19	27	36
General Reserve					
Opening Balance at 1 April	403	382	470	489	516
Transfer to/(from) Revenue Budget	(21)	88	19	27	36
Closing Balance at 31 March	382	470	489	516	552
Specified Reserves					
Opening Balance at 1 April	219	285	345	462	582
Transfer from Revenue Budget	113	115	117	120	122
Expenditure from Reserves	(47)	(55)	0	0	0
Closing Balance 31 March	285	345	462	582	704
All Reserves held at year end	667	815	951	1,098	1,256

Key assumptions

- All salaries are allowed for at the top of grade, 1.0% pay award in 2014/15, 2.0% pay award allowed for from 2015/16 onwards
- 2.0% Inflation, 2.00% increase to Fees and Charges
- Special Items to the value of £18,000 per annum will be delivered
- Transfers to Specific Reserves increased by 2.0% annually. Once Depot loan repaid transfers to other Reserves will increase
- No new debt planned. Debt charges reducing significantly over life of the plan
- No increase in surplus from Dorchester Markets. No return to higher interest rates
- Fees and Charges budgets do not take account of any review of charging structure
- 2.0% increase in precept, meaning 2.0% increase in Council Tax. No growth in tax base – growth will be set aside for new responsibilities
- WDDC decided to retain part of the CTSG that central government says it is making available. In line with District Council advice no income is assumed beyond 2014/15
- No planned use of Specific Reserves. A plan is to be developed

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Most of our work can only be achieved by working closely with a range of public service, private sector and community partners. The table below identifies our main partners by area.

Policy Area/Service	Partner	Why do we work with them?
STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR DORCHESTER		
Local Economy	Dorchester BID, Dorchester Chamber Dorset CC, West Dorset DC	Representatives of Business community Strategic responsibility
Housing	West Dorset DC Duchy of Cornwall, Brewery Square Limited Magna Housing Association	Statutory Housing Authority Major developers Major provider
Traffic, Roads, Transport & Parking	Dorset CC West Dorset DC	Highways Authority Landowner of major car parks
Community, Wellbeing and Cultural	CCG, NHS, Dorset CC Dorchester Arts Centre Wide range of Community organisations	Key health providers Key provider Key providers
Environment & Heritage	Dorchester County Museum Dorset CC, West Dorset DC Dorchester Civic Society	Key provider Strategic responsibility and common interest Key advocate
OPERATIONAL SERVICES		
Allotments	6 Allotments reps	Client representatives
Parks & Open Spaces	West Dorset DC	Sport provider/enabler Planning Authority
Cemeteries	4 Funeral Directors	Client representatives
Municipal Buildings	-	-
Culture & Twinning	Bayeux, Lubbecke, & Holbaek Societies Veterans representatives	Lead Twinning deliverers Remembrance event organisers
Markets	West Dorset DC	Market enabler
Democracy & Administration	-	-