



Dorchester Town Council

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11 November 2015

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Tuesday 17 November 2015** at **7.00pm**.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Public Speaking at the Meeting

The Chairman has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please ask the Chairman before the meeting starts. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as is reasonably possible.

Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate.

A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted.

A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

Membership of the Committee

Mayor R. Potter and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, S. Hosford, G. Jones (Chairman) and T. Jones.

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2015 (adopted by Council on 29 September 2015).

3. Request from Management Committee

A

Finance Report at 31 October 2015

B

4. Reviewing the Corporate Plan

C

5. Risk Register

D

6. Working Together

E

To note the report prepared by Town Clerks and Dorset County Council

Request from Management Committee regarding review of Tennis Courts in the Borough Gardens

1. The September Policy Committee received a detailed report identifying options for the development of the Bowling Green in the Borough Gardens and it was recommended that a sum be set aside to develop a plan to relocate courts from Trinity St to the Bowling Green and replace the tennis court adjacent to the Clock Tower with additional garden space.
2. Concerned about reaction to the removal of the tennis court adjacent to the Clock Tower, particularly the perception that money had been spent in recent years on the court and was therefore wasted, this Committee resolved

That £5,000 is allocated from the General Reserve to undertake preliminary design and costing options for a scheme which would result in the creation of two new courts on the Bowling Green and the loss of two courts in Trinity St.

3. A report to Management Committee on 10 November provided an update from discussions with the LTA and also informal discussions with the Friends of the Borough Gardens. The Friends would still very much welcome a commitment to the conversion of the Clock Tower tennis court as part of the scheme, rather than as a possible add on after the Bowling Green conversion. The Management Committee agreed and resolved

That the Policy Committee be requested to consider agreeing to the project being undertaken in one phase and that the budget previously allocated to also be used to carry out design works for the project as a whole.

4. Subsequent investigations have confirmed that, other than routine cleaning and the introduction of the fob gate, there has been no expenditure on the Clock Tower court for over a decade.
5. The Committee's further instruction is sought.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
Policy Committee – 17 November 2015
Finance Report at 31 October 2015

1. Summary of Current Position

- Revisions to 2015-16 Budget since it was set £30,600 increase (Appendix 2)
- Month 7 underspend v. profile is £45,000 (Appendix 1)
- Key reasons - Cemetery Income (£16k), Offices Supplies (£13k)
- Currently anticipating underspend of £50-70,000 at year end

2. Cash Position at 31 October 2015

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Lloyds Bank (2 accounts) | £753,000 | 0.40% interest |
| • National Savings & Investments | £900,000 | 0.75% interest, £1.0 M limit |
|
Total Cash |
£1,653,000 |
(At 31 August was £1,217,000) |

3. Reserves, Balances and other Non-Budget Expenditure

- £49,000 (recent spending inc the replacement of a Transit Van £11,500) spent from Earmarked Reserves to date
- No current plans for spending Service Growth Reserve which receives £80,000 this year
- General Reserve likely to be £710,000 at year end, £100,000 more than £613,000 identified in 2015/16 MTFs adopted in January 2015, around £510,000 more than required for routine purposes

4. Debtors

- Debts outstanding over 30 days at 31 October is £328 (31 August £2,341, £670 written off at 22 September Committee)

5. Payments List

- A list of payments made between 1 September – 31 October 2015 is enclosed as a separate document. Supporting vouchers are available in the offices for inspection during normal office hours
- The introduction of a new process for online banking, agreed with the Internal Auditor, has reduced the number of cheques raised from 83 in August to 5 in October.
- **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £259,804.41, is approved

6. Treasury

- A preliminary meeting with Arlingclose was held on 13 October, the main outcomes being
 - Arlingclose provided reassurance regarding the security of the level of cash held in the Council's Lloyds Bank accounts
 - They advised that at current cash levels there was no need to invest in the Debt Management Office. Resolution 9 (2) agreed on 22 September will not now be actioned

- Arlingclose provided a list of possible investments that the Council could undertake with a high degree of confidence regarding security
- As a consequence of the meeting the Town Clerk produced a Treasury Strategy (Appendix 3) which permits changes to our approach to current Treasury Management as follows: -
 - Debt – no changes
 - Investments
 - 4 high quality instrument categories added, each with a list of suitable counterparties provided by Arlingclose
 - Decision to invest transferred from the Committee to the Town Clerk, with requirement to update the Committee once instrument purchased
 - Town Clerk required to adhere to the Strategy, which places highest priority on security of asset and requires return to be consistent with security
- In practice no new investment decisions will be made until the new Corporate Plan has been adopted in Jan 2016, which will clarify the likely duration of investments
- **RECOMMENDED** that the Strategy is adopted

7. Internal Audit 2015/16

- Darkin Miller have concluded their first audit for 2015/16 (Appendix 4)
- **RECOMMENDED** that the Audit Report, the actions recommended by the Internal Auditor, and the responses of the officers responsible, are noted

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 October 2015

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	589	344	347	3
Capital Financing	63	48	48	0
Other Payments	538	347	321 -	26
To Specific Reserves	253	253	253	-
Income	- 203 -	109 -	131 -	22
Net Budget	1,240	883	838 -	45

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	- 5	2	2 -	0
Parks & Open Spaces	157	105	98 -	7
Cemeteries	15	24	7 -	17
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	38	21	18 -	3
Cultural & Twinning	53	40	35 -	5
Municipal Buildings	102	74	64 -	11
Other Services	158	168	167 -	1
Office Team	325	199	184 -	15
Outdoor Services	397	249	263	14
Net Budget	1,240	884	839 -	45

Specific Reserves	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	25	25	10	-15
Municipal Buildings	25	25	24	-1
Play Equipment	10	10	2 -	8
Vehicles & Equipment	12	12	12	0
Christmas Lights Replace	5	5	0	-5
Maumbury Rings s106	15	15	1 -	15
Energy & Operational Efficiency	10	10	0 -	10
Net Budget	102	102	49 -	54

KEY BUDGET VARIATIONS

Service	Reason for Budget Variation		Likely Full Year Variation	Committee Minute
Adjustments made to 2015/16 Budget			£	
Employees				
Office Team	Staff not at top of Grade	-	10,500	P 15/2
	Apprentice (Net of WDDC Grant)		3,000	P 14/35
	Special Item: Office Phone System		4,000	P 15/5
Outdoor Services	Head gardener not appointed	-	10,700	P 15/2
	Pensions not claimed	-	2,800	P 15/2
	Apprentice		6,000	P 14/35
Municipal Buildings	Staff rota revised due to Sunday Church	-	7,000	M 15/20
Supplies & Transport				
Municipal Buildings	Utilities revised due to Sunday Church	-	1,400	M 15/20
Parks & Opens Spaces	Special Item: John's Pond		5,600	P 15/2
	Special Item: Bowling Green		5,000	P 15/16
Cemeteries	Grass Cutting	-	2,000	P 15/2
Other Services	CCTV - no proposals rec'd for 2015/16	-	5,000	P 15/2
Other Services	Energy & Operational Efficiency Reserve		40,000	P 15/14
Other Services	Apprenticeship grants to 4 parthers		6,000	P 14/35
Income				
Parks & Opens Spaces	Bowls Club contribution	-	3,000	P 15/2
Municipal Buildings	Sunday Church hire removed		8,400	M 15/20
Other Services	Treasury Income - higher core cash	-	5,000	P 15/12
			30,600	

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**TREASURY STRATEGY 2015/16****1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Dorchester Town Council will, for the foreseeable future, owe money on behalf of its taxpayers (Debt) and will routinely hold monies on behalf of its taxpayers (Investments). This document identifies how the Council and its officers will manage debt and investments to minimise financial risk; it also identifies how it will manage its investments to achieve a financial benefit commensurate with that risk.

2. Debt

- 2.1. The Council's current debt portfolio is attached at Appendix A. The current schedule will result in all debt being repaid by 2027.
- 2.2. The Council may, under certain circumstances take on new debt, but would only borrow long term from the Public Works Loans Board, part of HM Government's Debt Management Office. Any decision to borrow will be taken by the Policy Committee, who will consider the benefits of borrowing versus using the Council's investment cash. The Medium Term Financial Strategy currently shows no plans to borrow.

3. Investments

- 3.1. Any cash held in the Council's bank accounts, held as deposits in other bodies or in managed funds with third parties, advanced as a loan, or used to purchase bonds will be defined as an investment.
- 3.2. On 1 April each year, after adjusting for short term (under 1 year) debtors and creditors, the Council's investments will equal its Earmarked and General Reserves. During the year this figure is supplemented by sums resulting from cash flow on the Revenue Budget, with peaks in April and September when precept income instalments are received ahead of routine payments for staff and supplies. There are thus several reasons for holding investments at any point, being:-
- Sums held in Earmarked Reserves for spending on a planned project, typically within 1 – 5 years
 - An element of the General Reserve held for emergency purposes, calculated annually as part of the budget process, which needs to be available at 3 month's notice
 - The remainder of the General Reserve, awaiting allocation to projects or transfer to the Earmarked Reserve – this might be invested for up to 5 years depending on how quickly the Council wishes to review its plans
 - Sums arising from routine cash flow in year – these need to be available when the cash flow profile requires, no longer than 6 months
- 3.3. The investment profile for sums held at 30 September 2015 is included at Appendix B and is based on known and anticipated uses of Reserves.

- 3.4. Security of the principal sum is the highest priority when making a decision to invest. The Council takes advice from Arlingclose, an independent advisor to the local government sector. Arlingclose provides a list of financial investment instruments that it considers suitable to meet the needs of our investment timeframe. Arlingclose will review this list regularly and a summary of the most recent list will be appended to the Treasury Strategy. The current list is included at Appendix C.
- 3.5. The Town Clerk is authorised to use the investment instruments contained in Appendix C and must report any purchase or sale of instruments to the next meeting of the Policy Committee following the transaction taking place.
- 3.6. The requirement of the Council to have funds available to discharge its revenue responsibilities is also a priority when determining the period of an investment. Investments must take account of the Council's cash flow requirements.
- 3.7. Achieving a return on the investment is the third priority. Any investment return must, however, be fully consistent with the need to preserve security of the principal sum.

4. Budgets

- 4.1. The Treasury budgets for the current financial year, 2015/16, are: -

	£
• Principal Debt Repaid	34,000
• Interest on Outstanding Debt	28,700
• Total Debt Charges	62,700
• Interest earned on Investments, after deduction of Treasury Advice	-7,000

5. Policy

- 5.1. This Policy is to be reviewed each May by the Policy Committee as part of the financial year end process.

Adrian Stuart
1 November 2015

Outstanding Debts with the PWLB

PWLB	Maturity	Interest	01-Apr-15	30-Sep-15	31-Mar-16	Interest H1	Interest H2	Total Interest	Principal
Ref	Mth/Yr	%	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
479825	08/2022	7.125	150,000	140,000	130,000	5,344	4,988	10,331	20,000
487126	09/2027	4.625	182,000	175,000	168,000	4,209	4,047	8,256	14,000
492777	01/2017	5.050	200,000	200,000	200,000	5,050	5,050	10,100	-
			532,000		498,000				
							Budget	28,687	34,000

Investment Profile of £1,800k for investment at 30 September 2015

	Mar 2016 (6mth) £000	Mar 2017 (18mth) £000	Mar 2018 (3 yr) £000	Mar 2019 (4 yr) £000	Beyond 2019 (5yr) £000	Total £000
Earmarked	-120	210	-40	-40	390	400
General Emergency	200	0	0	0	0	200
General Unallocated	0	0	100	200	200	500
Cashflow	700	0	0	0	0	700
Total	780	210	60	160	590	1,800

Investment Instruments recommended by Arlingclose

	Max. Period Yrs/Mths	Max. Amount £000	Likely return %	Comment
Lloyds Bank Account	Call	2,000	0.40	AA rated. Considered secure for all short term investments
National Savings & Investments	Call	1,000	0.75	Backed by Govt. Wholly secure
Money Market Funds e.g. Aberdeen AM Liquidity Fund CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	Call	1,000	0.40	Risk spread across many very short term (normally under 1 year) A rated securities. Return varies. Max. 2 funds in operation at one time
Medium Term Bond Fund e.g. Investec Short Dated Bond Fund Payden & Rygel Sterling Reserve	0/3	1,000	0.70 - 1.00	Risk spread across many short-medium term (normally 1 – 2 year) “A” rated securities. Return varies
Covered Bonds e.g. Yorkshire BS Coventry BS	3/6	500	0.50 - 1.20	Individual bonds covered by specific assets owned by the bond-paying institution, e.g. property, mortgages. Rate guaranteed to maturity. Typically “AAA”
Corporate Bonds e.g. Places for People Capital Markets Network Rail Infrastructure Fin. Daimler AG	3/6	250	1.00 - 1.90	Individual bonds, dependent on credit ratings to assess risk (therefore min. “A” rating required)

DARKIN MILLER ~ CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Accountancy ~ Internal Audit ~ Payroll



FINAL

Internal audit report 2015/16

Visit 1 of 4

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Date: 28th September 2015

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Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Dorchester Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on 14th, 15th and 17th September 2015.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide'.

At the request of the Council, I also reviewed the Council's compliance with the new Transparency Code 2015.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

Audit Opinion

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage. The report issued after the final visit for 2015/16 (which will be in May or June 2016) will contain the audit opinion and a summary of all findings and recommendations made during the 2015/16 audit year.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Proper book-keeping
2. Payments
3. Petty Cash
4. Payroll
5. Bank Reconciliation

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report. Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	2
Medium	7
Low	7
TOTAL	16

I would like to thank Adrian Stuart – Town Clerk, and Nigel Hayes – Financial Controller for their assistance during this audit.

Rec. No.	Detail	P	Management Response	By	Due Date
2.1 – review and update of SOs and FRs	The Council last reviewed and updated its standing orders and financial regulations in March 2011. NALC have since issued a revised set of model standing orders (October 2013) and financial regulations (March 2014), the latter of which includes significant amendments relating to the use of electronic banking. It is recommended that the Council review and update its standing orders and financial regulations in order to ensure that they remain appropriate.	L	Agreed. Existing regulations are still fit for purpose, so adopting new regs is a low priority	AS	Mar 2016
2.2 – detail of payments being approved	Lists of payments made by officers (using cheques, debit cards, direct debits and credit cards) are presented to members for their retrospective approval. At present the agenda papers and minutes refer to the payments list being presented for approval, and being approved respectively, but no detail is included to identify which payments are being approved. It is recommended that the covering report in the agenda papers and related minute include a note of the cheque numbers, dates covered by direct debit payments and related values in order to improve the audit trail.	M	Agreed, will be in place for November Policy.	NH	Nov 2015
2.4 – Invoices to support credit card expenditure	The Council has recently introduced a credit card for use on small value items which would otherwise require petty cash, or which the council would be unable to purchase, such as payments for goods bought on internet auction sites or online discount stores. Receipts are kept to support the expenditure, and the credit card bill is cleared each month by direct debit. One of the receipts attached to one of the statements was a PayPal receipt which only noted the total paid and the supplier. During the audit staff found the original invoice which evidenced that the goods were for genuine council business, and which also showed that VAT had been charged (and could, therefore, be recovered). It is recommended that the original invoices are attached to credit card statements in order to improve the audit trail and to ensure that all recoverable VAT is claimed.	M	Agreed.	NH	October 2015
2.5 – recovery of VAT	It is further recommended that the VAT (£6.19) be recovered as part of the next VAT return.	L	Done	NH	Sept 2015
2.6 – transparency code compliance	The transparency code 2015 requires all authorities to publish certain data. Details of expenditure over £500 and contracts over £5k must be published quarterly. Details of land and buildings held or operated by the authority, grants given, staff pay and organisation charts (amongst others) must be published annually. Details of existing waste contracts must be published once. The Council currently publishes detailed expenditure lists for all of its spend, but needs to include some additional information on the reasons for expenditure and the merchant category (e.g. computers, software, etc). It has started to collate information required to publish data relating to contracts over £5k, but needs to carry out some additional work. At present it is not meeting the requirements of the transparency code with respect to the annual or once-off publications, but officers have identified what work is required, and anticipate publishing the first set of information in relation to the year ended 31 March 2015 soon.	H	Agreed, FC to work through requirements.	NH	Sept / Oct 2015
2.7 – procurement	It is recommended that officers publish the outstanding data required by the transparency code as soon as possible. A review of the Council's expenditure by nominal code and supplier indicates that several of the larger types of expenditure (e.g. heat and light, grass cutting and insurance) have been subject to a competitive process in accordance	M	Accepted. Short term priority on	AS	Sept 2015

		with the Council's Standing Orders. It also shows that the largest suppliers provide a significant amount of statutory or non-procurable services which cannot be tendered. However, the review indicates that there are some types of procurable supplies and services (e.g. repairs and maintenance for buildings, vehicles and equipment; horticultural and IT) which have not been subject to a competitive process recently. There is a risk that the Council is not receiving best value for money. The Clerk has said that he intends to carry out a review of supplies and create a procurement plan which will see quotes or tenders obtained for those services which have not recently been subject to a competitive process. It is recommended that this is carried out at the earliest opportunity.		challenging need for service, rather than most effective way of procuring it. Procurement will be prioritised longer term once we have evaluated which services are actually needed.	
2.8 – VAT on debit card payments	VAT has not been reclaimed in relation to Microsoft exchange invoices (on which VAT has been applied at 23% by the company based in Ireland), or in relation to a mobile phone top-up. VAT on EU invoices can be recovered but a separate claim has to be submitted. There is some debate as to whether or not there is a VAT charge included within mobile phone top-ups, with some providers providing VAT receipts which enable a claim to be made. It is recommended that officers consider whether it is worth spending the additional administrative time to recover the 23% input VAT on the 4Microsoft invoices. It is further recommended that officers request a VAT receipt in relation to on-line mobile phone top-ups.	L	Agreed, will be investigated.	NH	Oct 2015
2.9 – VAT on mobile phone topups		L	Receipt requested but unlikely to get one.	NH	Sept 2015
6.1 – details of monies held in Petty Cash tin	I tested petty cash and found that the new system appears to be working well. The expenditure sampled was supported by receipts and VAT was reclaimed where appropriate. Those samples from July were shown on the report due to go to the Policy Committee in September 2015. At the time of the audit there was no petty cash held in the petty cash tin. However, the tin contained 2p in loose change, along with £3.60 and £9.00 in two separate money bags (which I am given to understand related to fund-raising in the Borough Gardens during Love Parks week). The money bags did not contain a note of what the money was for, who the money belonged to, or the amount that was supposed to be contained therein. This could allow minor fraud or error to occur. It is recommended that a note is included with monies held in the petty cash tin pending banking, to identify who the money belongs to, what the funds are for and how much is held.	M	Agreed	NH	Sept 2015
7.1 – pension contribution rates	The pension contribution rates for two of the members of staff are not consistent with the rates for other employees on the same salary. It is recommended that the employees and employers rates for that officer are checked with the Dorset County Pension Fund staff in order to ensure that the correct rates are being applied.	L	Checked and rates are correct.	NH	Sept 2015
7.2 – guidance for completion	Timesheets are submitted to support claims for overtime. Two of the claims submitted by one employee contained bank holidays for which the employee is eligible to be paid at normal time. In addition to the holiday pay, the employee worked six hours on each bank holiday. Due to differences in the way the employee completed the form, overtime was paid in relation to one set of hours claimed, but not in relation to the other.	M	Agreed and in place.	NH	Sept 2015

n of timesheets	It is recommended that guidance is issued to employees using timesheets in order to ensure that they complete the timesheets correctly so that the employee is paid the right amount of money.				
7.3 – correction of pay	It is further recommended that the employee's pay is corrected as soon as possible.	L	Agreed and in place for next pay date.	NH	Oct 2015
7.4 – timesheet approval	One of the timesheets in the sample month was signed by the employee but had not been counter-signed by the line manager to evidence approval. The timesheet was only for one hour. It is recommended that staff are reminded that timesheets need to be counter-signed to evidence that they have been checked and approved.	L	Agreed and done.	NH	Sept 2015
7.5 – update staff contracts	Contracts are in place for 28 of the 38 contractual arrangements reflected on the payroll. Of the remainder, a contract is not relevant for one payment (for an annuity related to the Market) and four are additional duties related to wedding attendance performed by four of the staff (for which a form is completed and signed-off by the Deputy Town Clerk). Two contractual arrangements are for additional work carried out by members of staff on other contracts. Contracts are not in place for three members of staff. One of the staff acts as relief Town Hall Keeper. Two others have earlier contracts in relation to a different post or a temporary post which have been superseded by changes to the postholder's position. Of the contracts that are in place, there are differences between the contract scale point and the scale point against which payment has been made for nine contracts, and differences between the contract hours and the hours used for payment for nine contracts. Two of the nine contracts have differences on both scale points and hours. It is recommended that a review of contracts is carried out to ensure that up-to-date contracts are in place to cover all work carried out by Council employees.	H	Agreed and Completed	SN	Sept 2015
7.6 – salary review dates	Council have approved the majority of salaries paid to staff. The majority of office staff salaries were reviewed and approved in the run-up to the retirement of the previous Town Clerk in 2012 and 2013. The majority of parks & gardens salaries were reviewed and approved following the Council's decision to pay the 'living wage' in 2013. There remain two posts for which no review date is held. One is vacant, so any move to recruit would be following approval by Council. It is recommended that a note is made of the date when the remaining post was last reviewed, in order to ensure that the audit trail is maintained.	M	Post included in living wage review. Concluded no change required. Therefore reviewed summer 2013.	SN	Sept 2015
9.1 – bank reconciliation	The council's two main bank accounts (General and Payments) are reconciled at least once, and more usually twice a month. I tested the August month end bank reconciliation and found that, whilst the reconciliation itself added up and agreed back to the bank statements from the Council's banker, the value per the cashbook for the payment account was £1,444.54 less than the value on the trial balance at the month end. The Financial Controller identified the difference the day after the audit. The difference occurred when direct debit payments which were paid in September were entered onto the accounting system using the invoice date (which was in August). It is recommended that all future direct debits are posted using the bank payment date, and that the Financial Controller considers using the month end process to prevent entries being dated to previous months.	M	Agreed	NH	Sept 2015

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**Policy Committee – 22 September 2015****Review of the Corporate Plan**

1. Two Theme Groups have met since September 2015, with 12 councillors taking part. Notes of the meetings are attached at Appendix 1. An early indication of whether the views expressed in the notes would be supported by the Committee is requested.
2. One of the key aims of the review is to identify how to allocate capital funds of £500,000 and ongoing revenue funds of £80,000 per annum. From discussions at Committees this year, and from the Theme Group meetings, a number of options have emerged. A list of possible projects is provided at Appendix 2. An early indication of whether these options would be supported by the Committee is requested.
3. The Town Clerk will revise the Corporate Plan in line with the views expressed in the Groups and bring a refreshed plan to Policy Committee in January, with clear annotations to identify where change is proposed. Where possible data will be updated. New milestones for proposed tasks will be drafted for consideration and the new Budget Summary and Medium Term Financial Strategy added.
4. The January report will also propose a process of consultation between January and May, to allow partners and the public to express their views. The Plan will be updated and formally adopted in May 2015.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

CORPORATE PLAN THEME GROUP 1: MEETING NOTES

Present: Cllrs B. Armstrong Marshall, A. Canning, A. Chisholm, J. Hewitt, S. Hosford. G. Jones (Chair), S. Jones, T. Loakes, R. Potter and K. Rice.

Overview

- GJ gave general overview to the process
- Town Clerk introduced Plan review as per the document circulated
- BAM emphasised need to present a cohesive plan to spend our surplus Reserves and current capacity for growth, otherwise it is difficult to justify current Council Tax level and reserves
- SH identified request from WDDC for Dorchester to put a town strategy together. We also need to consider our approach to a Neighbourhood Plan
- SJ also identified conversation with WDDC re need to think about how town responds to Local Plan expectation for new housing in the area – agreed to pick this up in the next session

Local Economy Theme

- Progress against our tasks was reviewed
 - Need to recognise South St as an area that we will talk proactively with now that Charles St is stalled
 - Recognised that local business community was stronger at operational level than at it was at strategic overview level – struggling to create the promotional material to emphasise Dorchester’s appeal to those seeking to relocate their knowledge based economy business to the area – suggested we talk to Duchy of Cornwall
- Need to get a clear position statement together on Charles St to feed into the District Council’s considerations – this is urgent and our ongoing interest in Charles St should also be emphasised by introducing a new task
- Is a wider Retail plan/strategy for the town required? – suggested that we make contact with some of the larger retailers directly to understand their view of the Dorchester retail environment, and gather some background info from BID, Chamber, Chaplains etc
- The role of the Market(s) in sustaining economic activity was discussed. Proposed that a task to reinvigorate the market should be given higher prominence in our Corporate Plan

Heritage & Environment Theme

- Considered that both Built and Natural environment need to be included in the title
- Progress against our tasks was reviewed
 - Opportunities to grow Heritage/Tourism sector strengthening. Need to work on long term potential and recognise the short term disruption. LEP EOI useful, but the work needs to be done irrespective of an unsuccessful fund request
 - Task for Charles St superseded by events – see Local economy
 - Difficult to engage with villages – Community Planning changes may provide alternative opportunity
 - Sustainable approach to town not developed, but still desirable
- New tasks relate to

- Development at Dorchester Prison
- New focus on encouraging partners to enhance the presentation of the built and natural environment, particularly in town centre and gateway locations
- Need to review what we are trying to achieve from our own events and also prepare for next major national event

Traffic & Parking Theme

- Suggested that Transport needed to be added to the title
- Progress against our tasks was reviewed
 - Suggested that 2nd task (employer parking) should be retitled to focus on a Parking Strategy for the town
 - Need to understand future of Damers School site and DCH
 - Need to understand role of park and ride
 - Need to introduce a task related to understanding public transport and the pressures being faced at DCC
 - The element of the task relating to the redevelopment of Charles St can be removed for the present

CORPORATE PLAN THEME GROUP 2: MEETING NOTES

Present: Cllrs B. Armstrong Marshall, R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, S. Hosford. G. Jones (Chair), S. Jones, R. Potter and K. Rice.

Overview

- GJ gave brief overview
- AS highlighted our challenge – we have resource capacity to develop our services but do not yet know what services DCC & WDDC are seeking to reduce. Our plan will inevitably reflect this

Housing Theme

- Progress against past statements and tasks was reviewed
 - The adopted Local Plan Inspector expects the Dorchester Area to accommodate more new housing, with a decision on where required within 5 years, albeit that development does not need to start until late 2020's
 - An audit of possible sites in the Town Council ownership that might be suitable for affordable housing development has been conducted informally, and informal contact made with potential development partners. Town Council continues to advocate housing on the Prison site
 - WDDC had identified their approach to reduce the number of empty dwellings in the town
- The Group reviewed the previous statement regarding opposition to development outside and adjacent to the bypass. It was agreed that this wording needed to be reconsidered, that any development should still reflect the underlying need for additional transport infrastructure, but that the town should still not face the burden of all new development required of the West Dorset area.
- The Group re-emphasised the statement that the Town Council wishes to respond proactively to the need to consider further growth in the town. They wished for a clear explanation from WDDC regarding the numbers of new housing required for local plan purposes
- The Group reiterated support for the need to identify opportunities for affordable housing in the town, but asked that "young families" be added to the under 35's who should receive a particular focus for affordable housing. The Group wished the Town Clerk to present his audit of developable sites to an informal meeting of the Town Council and recognised that there would always be difficulties with the development of land used for recreational purposes. They also asked that work is done to understand the potential market for any new affordable housing
- Noting WDDC's actions it was recognised that there was no mechanism for identifying the non-use of housing unless the owner had previously declared it empty
- The Group considered how it could professionally challenge any suggestion that the Prison site was not viable for affordable housing. The Town Clerk indicated his intention to report on this subject to a future Planning Committee meeting, not just because of the developer's position re the Prison but because of the precedence that the site might set for other developments in town

Supporting the Community Theme

- The Town Clerk reported the difficulty in progressing initiatives to create a central database of community activity in the town, due to staff time, the turnover of information, the significant scale of the offer available in town and the lack of a common interest from partners in setting up such a database
- Councillors discussed the choice of one versus many websites, how groups and individuals might be encouraged to work together on areas of common interest, how to use young people to promote relevant services and regarding the impact of WDDC's consultation re reduced contributions to community planning. The Town Clerk identified that he would propose additional staff resource to be considered as a Corporate Plan option.
- The Group considered the current DCC community conversation regarding the future of youth services, recognising the risk this presented for the local centre. The Group asked that consideration be given to a statement in our plan that focuses on facilitating a wide range of opportunities for our young people to be active in our community
- The Group were mindful of the plight of migrants within Europe and wanted to ensure that the Council was positioning itself to provide aid when it was allowed to do so

Cultural & Sports Theme

- This is a new theme, so the Town Clerk went into greater detail regarding the issues, which include: -
 - The Town Council's existing good quality provision of outdoor services and the Municipal Buildings
 - The equally impressive range of infrastructure available from other parties inc. 2 Leisure Centres, school and other pitches, an extensive range of small public meeting spaces and the many important pieces of heritage infrastructure in community control
 - The enormous diversity of Clubs, Societies and Social Groups, both operating independently through their own premises or as facility users, and providing a wide range of community events each year
 - The wide-ranging plans of many groups for change at the present time including 3G at DTFC, County Museum and the Shire Hall, DA & The Maltings, the Church and a second hall for Poundbury, plus many smaller projects
 - The £1.6M s106 money available, with whatever restrictions exist within the DoC agreement
 - Probable funding cuts of Community Cultural and Sports services by WDDC
- It was recognised that support for activities reliant on active retired residents was generally stronger than those that relied on support for other social groups, and that the growing pressure on upper tier public services would result in some groups becoming more disenfranchised or isolated.
- A vision needed to be phrased for this strand of the plan, for example "To support the development of excellent Sports and Cultural infrastructure to be used by well-supported organisations for the benefit of the town"
- It was recognised that this theme had similar issues to those for Community and Heritage with regard to a lack of cohesion for promoting opportunities available to residents and that the Council could play a role in recording and promoting opportunity. Ideas included greater use of social media and considering an electronic billboard in the town

- The Town Clerk raised the issue of the Council's historic over-support for some groups, which were now receiving a disproportionate benefit which had in turn made them more reliant on the Council. The Group agreed that the Council should consider promoting a greater level of independence among such users

APPENDIX 2

Possible Major Projects and Service Increases for inclusion in the Corporate Plan

Major Infrastructure Projects

Borough Gardens Tennis Courts and new Garden adjacent to the Gardens Clock
High St/South St Environmental Improvements
Grant aid to major Museums, Arts and Sports infrastructure projects

Significant One-Off Expenditure on Revenue Services

Professional advice related to the Local Plan expectation of new housing provision in the Dorchester area
Development of a Heritage Tourism Strategy for Dorchester
Work with an Affordable Housing partner to develop schemes to be delivered

Possible Ongoing Increase in the Revenue Budget to respond to growth in Service levels or cuts in other tiers of government

Additional service provision at Poundbury, following transfer from the Duchy of Cornwall
Community Development officer for Dorchester, either full or part time
Response to potential cuts to Youth Services provided within the town
Response to potential cuts to Grant Support for Community and Voluntary organisations by West Dorset DC
Response to potential cuts to Tourist Information and Public Conveniences services provided by West Dorset DC
Response to potential cuts to Highways budgets, particularly affecting verge and other maintenance affecting the town's appearance
Response to cuts to Dorset Police levels in the town

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015****STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTERS – ANNUAL REPORT**

1. At its last meeting the Council agreed that that Committees should make appropriate arrangements for discharging the duties of any discontinued Panels.
2. One of those discontinued Panels is the Risk & Resources Panel which is to be replaced by an Annual Review report direct to this Committee, supplemented by regular monitoring reports of key risks by the Committee.
3. The Council's adopted Risk Management Policy is attached at Appendix 1. This policy gives detail regarding the methodology used to assess the risks being faced by the Council.
4. The Council's Risk Registers currently hold eighty nine risks assessed in accordance with the adopted Risk Policy. Eight of those risks are classified as high, forty six are medium and thirty five are low.
5. Appendix 1 to this report identifies, for review, the eight highest strategic and operational risks being faced by the Council. Any Member wishing to see the whole register is welcome to do so prior to the meeting by contacting me.
6. As well as reviewing the highest risks the Committee is asked to consider and score any new risks it feels should be included within the Registers.
7. The flip side to risk is opportunity and the register has historically held a section on this which mainly identified how savings could be made, these have now all been acted upon. At present the Council has an opportunity to decide how it wishes to target its resources and this is being considered through the working groups informing the emerging Corporate Plan which will, in turn, inform the Opportunity Register.

Steve Newman
Deputy Town Clerk

1. INTRODUCTION

Risk can be defined as the 'uncertainty of an outcome', whether a positive opportunity or a negative threat to business plans or activities. The effective management of risk is a key issue for the success of any organisation or activity, for in many cases it is only by taking risks that progress is made. The importance is to understand the risks that are inherent in a decision. A structured approach to risk management can achieve this by enabling the decision to be made against a background of better information about the potential outcome of a particular course of action. The Town Council has decided to adopt a structured approach to Risk Management.

2. AUDIENCE

This Policy is intended as the primary guidance to the Council and senior management but it will be made available to all employees.

3. STAKEHOLDERS

It is important to involve stakeholders in the risk management process as this will give access to the widest possible range of views about the potential threats and opportunities affecting the Council and its services. A stakeholder in this context is an organisation or individual who can affect, or is affected by decisions of the Council. Stakeholders will change depending on whether the risk is project-related or more general, but Councillors and senior management will always be involved.

4. AIMS & BENEFITS

The aim of this policy is to develop an awareness of the benefits of risk management within the Council. It also encourages everyone involved to adopt an open and structured approach to risk management. The Council hopes that effective risk management will help to deliver -

- Increased certainty and fewer surprises.
- Better management of threats to cost, time and performance, leading to improved service delivery.
- Better grasping of opportunities to improve our services.
- More effective management of change.
- Better management at all levels through improved decision making.
- Clear ownership and accountability for risk and its management.
- Better value for money for the Council Taxpayer.
- Easier achievement of Key Performance Indicators by enabling effort to be targeted.

5. PROCESS

The overall process for the management of risk is set out at Annex A.

6. OWNERSHIP

The Risk Policy is owned by the Council and implemented through the offices of the Town Clerk.

7. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Each risk will be assessed in terms of its probability of occurrence and the potential impact on the Council. The following are the criteria by which each risk will be assessed:

Probability of Occurrence:

Category	Probability	Possible Indicators
Almost Certain (4)	>90% ¹	Frequent Occurrence
Likely (3)	>60%	Regular Occurrence
Possible (2)	>10%	Occasional Occurrence
Unlikely (1)	<10%	Has Never Occurred

¹Any risk assessed as greater than 90% is almost certain to happen and should be addressed as an issue.

Evaluation of Impact:

Impact on Performance	Risk Threat
Major (4)	Financial Impact >£25,000 Fatality / disabling injuries to public or staff / Adverse national media attention / external intervention / total service disruption / extensive legal action against the Council
Serious (3)	Financial Impact >£15,000 Adverse local media attention / extensive public complaints / adverse comments by regulators or auditors / significant service disruption / failure to meet key performance targets / service disruptions / injuries to public or staff / legal action against the Council
Significant (2)	Financial Impact >£5,000 Adverse service user complaints / service disruption / minor injuries and near misses to staff and public
Minor (1)	Financial impact less than £5,000 / isolated complaints / minor service disruption

Priority Ranking:

The ranking of an individual risk is calculated by a simple combination of its probability and impact.

Risk Matrix:

The risk, using the above impact and likelihood ratings, can then be plotted onto the risk matrix and its classification identified:

8 – 16 = High Risk 3-6 = Medium Risk 1-2 = Low Risk

	4	4	8	12	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
Probability		1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			

7(a). ASSESSMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

Each opportunity will be assessed in terms of its likelihood of occurrence and the potential positive impact on the Council. The following are the criteria by which each opportunity will be assessed:

Likelihood:

Category	Probability	Possible Indicators
Very High (4)	>90%	A clear opportunity is already apparent which can easily be achieved
High (3)	>60%	An opportunity that maybe achievable but which will require further work
Possible (2)	>10%	An opportunity that could happen but would need full investigation and a considerable amount of further work
Unlikely (1)	<10%	Opportunity is unlikely to happen and would require excessive work to achieve

Evaluation of Positive Impact:

Impact on Performance	Risk Threat
Exceptional (4)	Income/Savings >£25,000 Exceptional improvement to service and or environment / extensive positive press coverage

Major (3)	Income/Savings >£15,000 Major improvement to service and or environment / positive press coverage
Moderate (2)	Income/Savings >£5,000 Moderate improvement to service and or environment / some positive press coverage
Minor (1)	Income/Savings less than £5,000 / Minor improvement to service and or environment / minor positive press coverage

Priority Ranking:

The ranking of an opportunity is calculated by a simple combination of its probability and impact.

Opportunity Matrix:

The risk, using the above impact and likelihood ratings, can then be plotted onto the risk matrix and its classification identified:

8-16 = High Opportunity, 3-6 = Medium Opportunity, 1-2 = Low Opportunity

	4	4	8	12	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
Probability		1	2	3	4
				Impact	

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Risk management is only considered to be truly embedded when it functions as part of the Councils day to day operations. In order for this to be achieved it is vital that clarity exists to determine the various roles and responsibilities of individuals involved throughout the Council in the risk management process.

To ensure that this level of clarity exists, the Council has established a structure that depicts how Members, Officers and the various Committees, Panels and individuals contribute to the overall risk management process.

Organisational Structure and Summary of Key Roles

Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor annual report on risk management activity (via Policy Committee) • Certification of the Council’s annual Statement on Internal Control
Policy Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve risk management policy and strategy and related documents • Approve content of risk registers and proposed risk mitigation plans and monitor implementation via regular monitoring reports • Monitor annual report on risk management activity
Risk Management Panel (from November 2015 – direct to Policy Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General oversight of the Councils risk management process • Receiving regular reports to review/scrutinise/challenge current and proposed risk management procedures and processes • Give initial consideration to the annual report on the Councils risk management activity • To recommend a risk management framework, strategy and process • Identify, analyse and prioritise risks • Determine responsibilities and actions to control risks • Monitor progress on managing risks against action plans • Review implementation of the of the risk management framework, strategy and process
Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Members and external stakeholders on the framework, strategy and process • Provide advice and support on risk management matters • Maintain the risk management policy, strategy and framework • Produce an annual report on overall risk management activity • Identifying, analysing and prioritising risks • Determining risk management action plans and delegating responsibility for control • Monitoring progress on the management of risks
Staff and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining awareness of risks, their impact and costs and feeding these into the formal risk management process • Controlling risks in their every day work • Monitoring progress in managing job related risks

9. RISK REGISTERS

The Council will maintain computer based Strategic and Operational Risk Registers which will be developed further so as to link in with the Council’s other corporate documents such as the Performance and Policy Plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

RISK IDENTIFICATION

Risks and opportunities may be identified at any stage and should be included in the Risk Register. Nevertheless, in order to capture as many of the risks and opportunities facing an activity or project methods used for identification could include:

- Brainstorming sessions with individuals, committees or panels and various levels of management. It will be important to include as many stakeholders as possible in these sessions.
- Check lists.
- Questionnaires.
- Learning from other projects, councils and auditors.

As risks are identified they will be recorded in the Risk Register. Each risk must be described in terms of the source of the risk, the consequences if it happens and the effect it would have on the Council's activities or project as the case may be.

RISK OWNERSHIP

Once a risk has been identified, it will be given an owner who is the person best able to manage the risk. The owner will be responsible for all aspects of the management of the risk or opportunity.

RISK EVALUATION

Each risk will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation rules laid down within this Plan. This information will be entered in the Risk Register and will enable prioritisation of the risks within a certain area.

RISK PLANNING

Once each risk has been identified and evaluated actions for dealing with it will be developed. These are known as risk responses and fall into one of four areas:

- Terminate: An action that allows the risk to be avoided.
- Treat: An action that will reduce the impact and/or the probability of a risk.
- Transfer: Is there a stakeholder or another organisation better able to manage the risk?
- Tolerate: Accept the consequences if the risk occurs.

The Risk Register will identify the option selected to deal with each risk together with any actions that might be required.

Once the risk responses have been developed the risk owner must then decide which option to adopt. In reaching decisions as to which response should be used, a cost/benefit comparison should be made. For mitigation activities attracting significant cost (> £5,000) results will need to be recorded. It may be that external help is required to help decide the appropriate course of action, in which case the risk owner should record the date by which a decision must be made and the potential consequences if the decision is not taken by that date.

Following the decision to adopt a particular risk response, the owner must ensure that:

- The secondary risks associated with implementing the risk response are assessed and recorded.
- Where one exists the project plan is updated to include the activities associated with the risk response.
- Entries are made in the fields on the risk register detailing the predicted probability and impact evaluation, once the response activities are completed.
- A fallback/contingency plan is developed to address the consequences of the risk happening despite the response activities.

Risk owners must monitor the progress and success of their chosen response to risk on a regular basis. They should review all their risks and provide an evaluation of probability and impact on a regular basis.

REVIEW

The highest priority risks are to be reviewed by the Policy Committee. Risk monitoring will be regularly reported to the Policy Committee.

The effectiveness of the process will be reviewed by the Policy Committee periodically

STRATEGIC RISKS SCORED 'HIGH'

Appendix 2

Risk	Risk No	Responsible Officer	Impact and Effect of Deliverables	Probability	Impact	Total	Controls in Place	Risk response	Impact Category	Notes
Significant increase in pension fund deficit.	S030	RFO	Significant demand on resources, Council Tax increase, resources have to be diverted away from services resulting in objectives not met when anticipated.	2	4	8	Actuarial valuations allow for pension fund contributions to be planned for. Central Government review of pensions situation.	Treat/ Monitor	Economic	Ensure appropriate level of General Reserve and considered every year as part of budget process. Review risk level again after next Actuary valuation in 2014.
Pressure to fund 'top-ups'	S037	TC	Services provided by OLA's reduced resulting in pressure on this Council to top up the service resulting in significant resource and political implications.	4	3	12	Member decision to decide whether or not to top-up.	Tolerate	Political	

OPERATIONAL RISKS SCORED 'HIGH'

Bonfires

Risk	No	Officer	Impact and Effect of Deliverables	Prob	Impact	Total	Controls in Place	Impact Category	Notes
Health and Safety	BON001	TC	Risk of injury resulting in claims against the Council and investigation by Health and Safety Executive.	3	3	9	No organised bonfires	Treat	Monitor and review each year
Personal injury	BON002	TC	Injuries to staff or public resulting in claims against the Council, legal proceedings, loss of reputation.	3	3	9	Any materials placed to be removed if considered dangerous - liaise with Police and Fire Services	Treat	Monitor and review each year
Fire	BON004	TC	Uncontrolled resulting in damage to property and injury.	3	3	9	Liaison with Fire Authority	Treat	
Fireworks	BON005	TC	Uncontrolled resulting in damage to property and injury.	4	4	16	No organised event	Treat	Monitor and review

Municipal Buildings

Increased competition	MB009	TC	Reduced bookings resulting in reduced income.	3	3	9	Charges set for different types of organisation. Charges reviewed yearly to ensure they are competitive. Facilities updated to ensure we provide what the customer wants/needs.	Treat	Charge structure reviewed 2014/15, simpler structure introduced plus exclusive wedding hire days
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Recreational Activity

Football being kicked over the fence at Weymouth Avenue Rec	REC014	TC	Possibility of RTA, injury to passers by. Claim for compensation. Council criticised for insufficient precautions. Reputational damage.	4	3	12	Football teams required to have their own PLI. Tree screen once trees grow.	Treat/ Monit or	Management Committee have been informed of risk score and agreed not to install a higher fence at present.
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Other

Serious incident at Council run outside event	OTH010	TC	Loss of life/injury to public/staff. External criticism. Negative local and national press coverage. Increased insurance premiums.	2	4	8	PLI. Risk assess prior to event. Take note of 'purple book guidance'.	Treat/ Monit or	
Failure to insure or secure (where appropriate) public art/civic assets	OTH011	TC	Loss or damage. Significant unexpected expenditure. Criticism for lack of care/civic pride. Loss of irreplaceable public art.	2	4	8	Assets identified and those in the ownership of the Council to be insured or the Council self insures - Council decision. Additional security measures to some assets.	Treat/ Monit or	

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Committee – 22 September 2015

“Working Together” – A report by Dorset Town Clerks in discussion with Dorset County Council

1. A group of Town Clerks have spent some months in discussion with Dorset County Council regarding how to improve relationships between the two tiers.
2. DAPTC have endorsed the report and are inviting all third tier Councils to endorse the recommendations made by the working group.
3. Dorset County Council have responded positively to the recommendations at senior officer level and are considering how best to integrate key recommendations into their formal processes.
4. I am not aware of any formal discussion with the District tier to date.
5. The report inevitably focuses on those initiatives that are most important to the group that put the report together. Nonetheless it is a positive first step in gaining better recognition for the role and potential of the third tier in local government locally at a time when the top two tiers are struggling to maintain service provision at their historic levels.
6. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the report is supported.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Working Together

A Pilot Project for Locality Working in Dorset

Cynthia Starkey, Chief Executive DAPTC
Bob Gillis, Town Clerk Bridport Town Council
Karen Wright, Town Clerk Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council
Trevor Savage, Town Clerk Sherborne Town Council
Martin Ayres, Town Clerk Swanage Town Council

“We will work alongside all of our key partners to fully understand what services are important to our communities and then deliver them using our assets in an appropriate manner through reviewing our services and sharing our accommodation wherever possible.”

*Debbie Ward – Chief Executive, Dorset County Council -
Dorset County Council Asset Management Plan 2015-
2018*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the findings of a pilot project across four localities, Bridport, Lytchett Minster & Upton, Sherborne and Swanage, to create a picture of public sector service delivery in those towns and to identify which organisations are doing what. The scope included identifying services and properties in need of rationalisation and how that would be achieved. The project also sought to ascertain if the public sector partnership working achieved by the One Ilfracombe model in Devon could be achieved in localities within Dorset, but without the additional bureaucracy built into that particular model.

The research undertaken found that assets within towns appeared to be utilised efficiently with little immediate scope for further rationalisation. A number of assets have transferred from district to town council ownership but this has not happened in all areas studied.

Service delivery has begun to be rationalised but it became clear that there were further opportunities yet to be exploited.

There was some appetite among town councils to purchase support services from either the county or district councils. The county council is keen to use their economies of scale to allow other public bodies to buy-in support services. The county council is developing a website that will allow town and parish councils to buy services off-the-shelf, as and when required.

Communication from the county and district councils to the town councils is variable. The town councils pass information to the county and district councils but feel that this is not always reciprocated. There is a need to spread best practice as a matter of urgency as the current situation presents a reputational risk to all parties and leads to the public's perception that the 'left hand doesn't know what the right hand's doing'.

At a day-to-day level the Town Clerks felt that contacting the correct person within the county council (and district councils) was a chore as the official route is a phone call to Dorset Direct who then route to the correct person. If we are to view each other as partners there is an argument that town, parish and district councils should have access to the county council's telephone directory and vice versa.

Town councils are the 'shop front' of the three tiers of local authority, providing the public with a convenient channel for all of their queries. Town Councils spend time and resources working on behalf of the county and district councils and receive little or no acknowledgement for the role they play.

The following recommendations and suggestions for action resulted from the research:

Recommendations	Actions to achieve recommendation
1. That town, parish, district, county council and other public bodies establish forums for regular information sharing, encouraging joint-working and directing actions to address problems of common concern, based around district council	DCC welcomes this approach. DCC will actively involve Town and Parish Councils early in any consultation process. DCC will make use of existing mechanisms to share information through DAPTC including the area based arrangements.

Recommendations	Actions to achieve recommendation
<p>boundaries and modelled on 'Team North Dorset'.</p>	<p>DAPTC will cascade information through the network of Town and Parish Councils to ensure information from DCC reaches members in a timely manner.</p> <p>Joint explorations about how information can be discussed in locality based forums will be undertaken.</p>
<p>2. That DCC makes it mandatory for officers to engage towns and parishes in any review processes at the earliest possible stage to help find solutions to the problems that are being addressed when services are being reviewed. This could be done via the engagement strategy or the 'engaging Members protocol'.</p>	<p>DCC and DAPTC will work together to produce guidance on how officers of the County Council can engage with Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>This information will be co-produced quickly and will need to be practicable and workable. DAPTC will explore the opportunities for access to training for County Council officers. Parish Clerks and Councillors will be invited to present to the Dorset Mangers Group.</p>
<p>3. That DCC recognises the importance of providing funding to town and parish councils wherever services are devolved e.g. where agreements have been entered into with town councils to carry out verge cutting, funding has been provided in the first instance and it would be important for this to continue in the longer term.</p>	<p>The County Council commits to supporting parish and towns by reducing bureaucracy and red tape. We recognise the ambition to support alternative ways of working but need to be aware of the context of 25%-40% savings to County Council budget.</p> <p>We will work together to secure investment into town and parishes.</p>
<p>4. That DCC work with towns and parishes to find workable solutions where the scope of services is being reduced e.g. minor highway maintenance issues are addressed.</p>	<p>DCC is committed to consultation with Town and Parish Councils. We will always use the most effective methods to achieve this. DAPTC will cascade information when appropriate and where consultation is required across the network of Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>DCC welcomes Parish and Town Council's ideas and innovations and commits to where feasible to jointly implement.</p>
<p>5. That when the commercial version of Dorset Nexus goes live it must be promoted to town and parish councils and the teams delivering services should be adequately resourced to ensure an excellent customer experience for town and parish councils.</p>	<p>We will make access to our service accessible through our web based tools.</p>

Recommendations	Actions to achieve recommendation
6. That the district and county council offer service contracts, e.g. for grass cutting, where appropriate, to towns and parishes.	We will follow the appropriate procurement rules. We will ensure that Town and Parish councils are aware of the opportunities when they arise. We need to find ways in which all the councils of Dorset work together for the benefit of Dorset Residents.
7. That the district and county council consider transferring land to town and parish councils to rationalise land ownership and devolve management to the local level e.g. Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council could restart talks with PDC if they still wish to take over some of the PDC land.	DCC is reviewing the whole estate with a view to reducing volume and the cost of maintenance. DCC will provide information through DAPTC of planned asset disposal, subject to commercial confidentiality. This information will be updated. In addition to assets DCC will consult early on service changes that are being considered.
8. That the county and district councils look to resurrect the 'A-Z of council services' booklet that was produced in the past by the county council's communications team. It could be tailored to each locality so that it is clear which services are delivered by the town/parish tier in each town and produced electronically to minimise on-going costs. (Subject to the agreement of DCC's Customer Services Manager).	DCC supports the development of this as an online information and will find ways of making this happen. Discussions will take place with district and borough councils.
9. That character assessments be drawn up for each town to inform decisions on future service delivery, based on town profile data held on D4U (https://www.dorsetforyou.com/statistics/town-factsheets). This could provide info on a key set of indicators e.g. how good are public transport links, the age and employment profile of the town, the number of dependent villages within their hinterland etc.	Resources to undertake this work have been reduced. There is a range of additional documents that build on the town factsheets such as https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/403331/ACORN-Profiles-2010 Other documents can be found at https://www.dorsetforyou.com/statistics/area-profiles Additional request for bespoke data can be made to the county council and dependent on the particular requirement and size we will do our best to provide any available data which arises from reasonable requests.
10. That district, county council and other public bodies, when looking to dispose of assets, will work with towns and parishes to explore other potential community uses and consider community asset transfer prior to their disposal on the open market.	Dorset County Council is committed to the principles of localism contained in the Localism Act, including community asset transfer.

CONCLUSION

From the information gathered in this report, it is apparent that both the county council and district councils have already taken steps to rationalise services and remove 'silo mentality'. The Team North Dorset forum provides a model that could be rolled out across the rest of Dorset. This should improve communication and coordination between the tiers of local government and if other agencies get involved, Police, NHS, Fire Service for example, would provide fully joined-up public services for an area.

The Team North Dorset model may need to be modified slightly as meetings based on district boundaries would lead to some areas like West Dorset covering a disproportionately large area compared to Purbeck or North Dorset, which may make it harder to focus on particular localities. Nonetheless, this model should be supported and replicated in order to achieve all of the benefits this report has highlighted and forms the key recommendation to be considered.

The reason for creating a set of services that are bespoke to a town seems clear. Although the four towns in the pilot are of similar size in terms of population, the demographic data has shown that the composition of each town is unique and by extension, the priorities for each locality will be unique. It is therefore important to examine each locality to derive a 'sense of place' and decide on a way forward that will deliver services in the best way possible for each community. If this philosophy is applied across Dorset, everyone from the service users, elected members, council employees and third sector organisations should realise the benefits of greater partnership working and continue this on-going journey to improved service delivery.

Working Together Principles

Dorset County Council and Town and Parish Councils will work together in partnership, respecting each other roles to deliver their statutory duties and responsibilities to:

- Promote and protect social, economic and environmental well-being for the benefit of our local communities, to ensure vibrancy and future sustainability;
- Strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote an active democracy to ensure all members of every Dorset community is able to have a say in the future and feel able to help to develop a shared vision, identity and sense of belonging;
- Welcome all feedback and aim to act quickly and efficiently to address issues within their respective power;
- Mutually respect and promote the role of elected members, parish councillors and clerks including those co-opted, as representatives of their communities through positive communication, leadership and engagement, all undertaken to high ethical standards;
- Give importance and recognition to issues and ideas raised at each level of local government; and
- Ensure efficient, effective partnerships create value for money.