

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

18TH MARCH 2014

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 18th March 2014:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor E.S. Jones) and Councillors V.J. Allan, R.M. Biggs, T.C.N. Harries, G.M. Jones and Trevor Jones (Chairman).

In attendance:

Councillors R.B. Potter and M.E. Rennie.

APOLOGIES Councillors P.G. Mann and D.S. Roberts.

33. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21st January 2014, adopted by Council on 28th January 2014, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

34. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee noted the likelihood of a neutral position or small saving against budgets at the year end, based on the Council's Management Accounts for the period 1st April to 28th February 2014, and also noted the cash and Reserves positions.

The Town Clerk responded to a question in relation to third party payments.

35. **DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN – 2014-15**

The Committee considered the first draft of the Corporate Plan. In supporting the submission of the plan to Council for further consideration it was

RESOLVED

That statements should be added to the draft Plan with regard to: -

- Developing a night time economy in the town centre
- Recognising the importance of parks and green spaces as an important part of the town's environment
- Improving the sustainability of the town
- Recognising the role Education providers play delivering recreational services

36. **RESOURCES PANEL MINUTES**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the Resources Panel held on 14th February 2014 (Appendix 1) and it was

RESOLVED

That the Minutes be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

37. **ADOPTION OF THE TOWN WALKS**

The Committee discussed the Town Clerk's report, recognising the need to bring the Walks up to a good standard, and that this was likely to create an opportunity to transfer the management of both, or either of, the footpaths and associated green spaces to Dorset County Council. It was

RESOLVED

- a) That Dorset County Council's Highways Improvement Team be commissioned to undertake a survey, within a budget set by the Committee, to identify the works that would be needed to upgrade the Walks to an adoptable standard.
- b) That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the outcome of the survey and a way forward.

38. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Committee noted the report of the Internal Auditor and the Town Council's response.

39. **ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Committee noted the recommendation of the Boundary Commission. The Committee also noted that the introduction of change would necessitate a review of the Council's own electoral arrangements before May 2015. It was

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk write to the Boundary Commission informing it of this Council's support for its recommendation.

40. **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

It was

RESOLVED

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matter the public and representatives of the press be

excluded from this meeting during its discussion.

41. **STAFFING ISSUE**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk and it was

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Town Clerk with regard to managing existing and future Time Off In Lieu be accepted, with a cost to the Council as outlined in the report.

Chairman

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES PANEL

14TH FEBRUARY 2014

PRESENT Councillors R.M. Biggs, Trevor Jones (Chairman) and R.B. Potter.

In Attendance: Councillor M.E.Rennie.

APOLOGIES The Mayor (Cllr E.S. Jones) and Councillor S.C. Hosford

12. **INTERNAL AUDIT PROVISION**

The Panel received feedback from Cllr M.E. Rennie on behalf of those councillors taking part in the appointment process, regarding interviews conducted with 3 potential suppliers of internal audit services.

The Panel endorsed the recommendation of the two Councillors that Darkin Miller be appointed as the Council's internal auditor, and noted that the Town Clerk would now act on an authorisation given by the Policy Committee of 21 January 2014, to appoint Darkin Miller.

13. **FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVISION**

The Panel considered the Town Clerk's report providing feedback from Dorset County Council that they felt unable to provide a letter of comfort with regard to future Financial Services provision. The Panel recognised the County Council's concerns.

The Town Clerk highlighted discussions taking place with other Town Councils regarding reciprocal cover arrangements, and the Panel also noted the potential for some of the internal audit candidates to supply services. It was

RECOMMENDED

- a) That the requirement to obtain a letter of comfort from Dorset County Council prior to the appointment of a Financial Controller be removed, and the appointment process for a Financial Controller be expedited
- b) That cover arrangements for all Financial Services be clearly documented in the Council's Business Continuity Plan within six months

9. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

The Panel considered and noted the Town Clerk's intention to transfer up to £500,000 from the Council's Bank Account to its deposit account with the HM

Treasury backed National Savings and Investments, in order to secure a higher rate of interest consistent with the need to ensure the Council's monies are secure.

The Town Clerk highlighted the need to consider the need for a longer term strategy, consistent with the higher levels of deposits now being held by the Town Council. It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Town Clerk proposes an updated Treasury Management Strategy to the Policy Committee within nine months

10. **DORSET COUNTY PENSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Council considered an offer to make a one off payment to the Pension Fund of £51,100, representing a reduction of £3,900 against the next 3 year's catch up contributions paid annually. Taking account of the security of the Fund, the financial gain to the Council compared to its other investment options, and the Council's ability to cover payment from its Reserves over the period of the contribution, it was

RECOMMENDED

That the Council makes a one off payment to the Dorset County Pension Fund of £51,100