

# Dorchester Town Council

## Policy Committee

22 November 2016

**Present:** Mayor T. Harries and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, S. Hosford, G. Jones (Chairman), T. Jones and P. Stein.

**Also present:** Councillors G. Duke and J. Hewitt.

### **Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr R. Biggs declared an interest in item 15 as a trustee of Dorchester Youth and Community Centre. Cllr T. Jones declared an interest in item 15 as the owner of a property adjacent to a planned housing development mentioned in the report.

### 13. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Committee of 20 September 2016, adopted by Council on 27 September 2016, were taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 14. **Financial Report 2016-17**

The Town Clerk provided an update covering the Council's Month 7 spend in relation to the budget, changes to the rate of interest on the Council's bank account, the current debt and payments position and recent audit reports. He also explained the potential implications of the April 2017 Business Rate revaluation.

#### **Recommended to Council**

That the Annual Return for 2015-16, including the certificate of BDO, is approved

#### **Resolved**

- a) That a Money Market Fund account is opened to manage short term deposits
- b) That the Payments list totalling £468,250.06 is approved
- c) That the Internal Audit report and the Town Council's response is noted

### 15. **Corporate Plan – Six Monthly Review of progress against strategic and operational milestones**

The Committee received a report covering progress on Corporate Plan milestones. In noting progress a member invited the Town Clerk to implement a simple form of performance management indicators for the Summary Milestones report.

Members noted the need for discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding a strategy to support the development of Heritage Tourism in the town.

Members discussed the delays in finalising the consultant's report in relation to the development of the Traffic and Parking Strategy by Dorset County Council and West Dorset

District Council, noting that the number of complaints received from residents due to parking problems continued to grow, without a clear plan to deal with them.

The Committee considered options for the use of £70,000 budget for paving in South Street, and also the budget savings that would arise as a result of the transfer of responsibility for cleaning and maintaining The Walks.

### **Resolved**

That the items described as Remedial works and Focal Point works are included in the programme of works to commence from April 2017, the detail to be developed with DCC's Highways Team.

### **Recommended to Council**

That up to £60,000 of savings arising from transferred responsibilities associated with maintaining and cleaning The Walks are used to improve the public realm on The Walks and in South Street, with an audit of public realm that requires improvement to be submitted to a future meeting.

The Committee discussed the positive progress being made on the allocation of section 106 Recreational monies and asked the Town Clerk to ensure that the Council is updated on the key issues in time to respond to consultation from the District Council in Spring 2017.

The Town Clerk explained the latest position regarding the commissioning of the architectural survey and other surveys for The Maltings Project. A member asked that further details regarding Maltings Arts be made available.

### **Resolved**

That, subject to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Deputy Chairman, undertaking a review of the process that led to the selection of the team commissioned to carry out the Architectural Feasibility Study, Dorchester Town Council engages the Architect and sub-contractors to carry out the works

The Committee noted the discussions taking place between Town Councils and West Dorset District Council regarding the review of Local Government in Dorset, and confirmed that the Vice Chairman would represent the Council in preliminary discussions.

## **16. National Park for Dorchester**

The Town Clerk explained the background to the proposal to create a National Park for Dorset and East Devon and the request that the Town Council considers whether it wishes to propose that the town be included within the National Park boundary.

The Committee received representations from two members of the team promoting the National Park and then debated the merits and disadvantages of the proposal, both for Dorset and for Dorchester.

### **Recommended to Council**

That the Town Council does not wish to advocate that Dorchester should be included within the National Park boundary at this time, but that the progress of the proposal should be monitored

#### **17. Risk Register**

The Town Clerk introduced a report regarding the annual review of the Council's Risk Register. At the Committee's request amendments were made to the process of Risk Planning and the scoring of Unexpected events of large magnitude and consequence.

Recognising the emerging risk of the reshaping of Local Government in Dorset the Committee invited the Town Clerk to prepare a briefing on the issues involved, to allow them to develop a strategy to respond to those risks.

### **Recommended to Council**

- a) That the assessed high level strategic and operational risks, as amended, be noted and approved
- b) That the strategic, operational and opportunity risk registers, as a whole, be approved.

#### **18. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

### **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 matters, the public and press representatives be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

#### **19. Staff Pay and Work Practices**

The Committee considered a report by the Town Clerk, which covered the background to current pay and grading practices, including the Living Wage. The report also identified a review by the Outdoor Services Manager to evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of some current operational processes, and the potential to develop a role that allowed outdoor staff to demonstrate a higher degree of responsibility.

### **Resolved**

That the Town Clerk, with the Deputy Town Clerk and Outdoor Services Manager, undertakes a review of existing pay, grading and work practices and makes recommendations to the next meeting of the Committee.

Chairman