

# Dorchester Town Council

## Policy Committee

17 January 2017

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

**Apologies:** Mayor T. Harries and Councillor R. Biggs.

### 20. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee of 22 November 2016, adopted by Council on 29 November 2016, were taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 21. Financial Report 2016-17

The Town Clerk provided an update covering the Council's Month 9 spend in relation to the budget, bank account, the current debt and payments position and also the latest position regarding Business Rates on the Weymouth Avenue Pavilion.

He responded to a question regarding Business Rates at the Weymouth Avenue Pavilion.

#### Resolved

- a) That the Payments list totalling £187,197.35, and the transfer of £1,000,000.00 to the Payden & Rygel Fund are approved
- b) That the Parks & Open Spaces Business Rates budget for is increased by £5,000

### 22. Medium Term Financial Strategy & Revenue Budget 2017/18

The Town Clerk introduced a detailed report regarding the budget and medium term financial strategy, explaining the justification for an increased precept and Council Tax charge. The report identified changes to the Revenue budget, Special items and Reserves, as well as setting out the factors to be taken into account in setting the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Members discussed the report thoroughly. The Town Clerk agreed to produce a report regarding the use of the Newsletter budget and also confirmed that no contribution would be released until Members had fully considered the benefits of new proposals regarding a new CCTV scheme from Dorset Police.

Members considered the implications of local government reorganisation in Dorset and asked the Town Clerk to ensure that discussions with the District Council covered the issue of the District's Capital Reserves. They noted the significant transfer proposed between the General and Corporate Projects Reserves and the potential to expand the Corporate Projects supported by the Town Council by reviewing the Corporate Plan.

### **Recommended to Council**

That Council adopt the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget as laid out in Appendices 1 - 3 of these minutes, to include: -

- a) A Council Tax Band D charge of £183.50, an increase of 1.94%
- b) A precept of £1,296,336, an increase of 3.6%
- c) The transfer of £250,000 from the General Reserve to the Corporate Projects Reserve

### **23. Corporate Plan – Progress against strategic and operational milestones**

The Committee received an update report covering progress on Corporate Plan milestones.

Members noted progress on the possible creation of a Community Land Trust in the town, and also the progress being made by West Dorset District Council to distribute s106 Recreational monies and the associated potential for a loan to Dorset County Museum, as well as the commissioning of work on The Maltings project.

Members noted that the Vice-Chairman and the Town Clerk, with colleagues from Bridport, Lyme Regis and Sherborne, were meeting with West Dorset District Council on 31 January, with the aim of commencing a process to understand the impact on the District Council of either future Government grant reductions or local government reorganisation on its plans for the use of its Capital Reserves, its Capital Assets, and the future management of discretionary services.

The Committee considered the need for how all councillors might engage in a review of the Corporate Plan to take account of the first year's progress, changed circumstances and new influences.

### **Resolved**

- a) That a small Task and Finish Group, to include the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Councillors A. Chisholm and P. Stein is formed to review the role of CLTs in supporting the delivery of Affordable Housing
- b) That the Policy Committee receive a presentation from Maltings Arts at its next meeting
- c) That the Town Clerk arranges for a workshop session for all councillors to review possible changes to the Corporate Plan, to allow for proposed changes to be prepared in time for the March Committee meeting
- d) That, if required, a special meeting of the Committee is convened to develop the Town Council's views regarding the allocation of Section 106 Recreation monies by West Dorset District Council

### **Recommended to Council**

- e) That one non-Policy Committee Councillor is appointed to the Community Land Trust review Task and Finish Group
- f) That, subject to all funding being place to commence works on the Museum refurbishment project, a loan of up to £140,000 is made available to Dorset County Museum, for a period not to exceed 10 years, on terms to be agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, with West Dorset District Council and the Dorset County Museum
- g) That, prior to the March Council meeting, Council receive an informal briefing regarding the impact of budget cuts and local government reorganisation at Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council

#### **24. 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.

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

The Committee considered a report by the Town Clerk, which covered a recent review of pay and grading practices, including proposals to create a new grade of semi-skilled labourer and for the creation of a full time post to oversee work in the Borough Gardens at a future date. The report also identified that the findings of a review by the Outdoor Services Manager to evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of some current operational processes would be presented to the next meeting of the Management Committee, with recommendations that would reduce budgets in the future.

##### **Recommended to Council**

That new pay and grading arrangements are introduced with effect from 1 April 2017, at a cost that may increase the Revenue budget by £11,000 a year in due course, to be offset by efficiencies to be identified by the Outdoor Services Manager

Chairman

<b>REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18</b>	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	Actual	Budget	Budget
	£	£	£
Parks & Open Spaces	538,569	576,572	559,377
Allotments	3,707	5,729	5,324
Municipal Buildings	137,726	134,894	184,272
Cemeteries	53,239	80,815	54,355
Cultural & Twinning Activities	52,724	70,091	54,008
Corporate & Democratic Manage.	194,865	226,392	212,095
Other Services	155,714	82,400	128,903
<b>Operational Budget</b>	<b>1,136,544</b>	<b>1,176,893</b>	<b>1,198,334</b>
Precept	1,209,555	1,251,000	1,296,336
<b>Transfer to/from General</b>	<b>73,011</b>	<b>74,107</b>	<b>98,001</b>
<b>Subjective Analysis of Revenue</b>			
Employees	590,458	678,248	694,034
External Payments	434,109	514,505	509,860
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	274,306	134,600	141,100
Capital Financing Costs	61,651	58,100	48,500
Income	-223,970	-208,560	-195,160
<b>Operational Budget</b>	<b>1,136,554</b>	<b>1,176,893</b>	<b>1,198,334</b>
<b>General Reserve</b>			
Opening Balance at 1 April	608,932	751,931	377,697
Transfer from Ops Budget	73,011	74,107	98,001
Council Tax Support Grant	69,988	46,659	23,330
To Corporate Projects	0	-495,000	-250,000
<b>Closing Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>751,931</b>	<b>377,697</b>	<b>249,028</b>
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>			
Opening Balance at 1 April	407,534	613,584	919,032
Transfer from Revenue Budget	274,306	699,600	391,100
Expenditure from Reserves	68,256	394,152	545,943
<b>Closing Balance 31 March</b>	<b>613,584</b>	<b>919,032</b>	<b>764,189</b>
<b>All Reserves held at year end</b>	<b>1,365,515</b>	<b>1,296,729</b>	<b>1,013,217</b>
Tax Base	6,853	6,950	7,065
Band D Charge	176.50	180.00	183.50
O/s PWLB Debt at 31 March	498,000	264,000	230,000

<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy</b>	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Revenue Budget</b>					
Employees	678	694	708	722	737
External Payments	515	510	520	530	541
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	135	141	144	147	150
Capital Financing Costs	58	49	46	44	42
Income	-209	-195	-199	-203	-207
New/Transferred Services	0	0	30	60	90
<b>Operational Budget</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>1,352</b>
Precept	1,251	1,296	1,322	1,349	1,376
<b>Transfer to/from General Reserves</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>General Reserve</b>					
Opening Balance at 1 April	752	378	249	252	250
Transfer from/to Operational Budget	74	98	73	48	23
Council Tax Support Grant	47	23	0	0	0
Transfer to Corporate Projects Reserve	-495	-250	-70	-50	-30
<b>Closing Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>243</b>
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>					
Opening Balance at 1 April	614	919	764	808	855
Transfer from Revenue Budget	700	391	144	147	150
Expenditure from Reserves	-394	-546	-100	-100	-100
<b>Closing Balance 31 March</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>905</b>
<b>All Reserves held at year end</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>1,148</b>
Corporate Project Unallocated at Year End	75	325	395	445	475
Outstanding Debt at Year End	£k	264	230	196	128
Council Tax	£	180	184	187	195
Tax Base		6,950	7,065	7,065	7,065

## Notes

1. Inflation at 2.00%, Debt repayment per current debt profiles
2. Precept based on Council Tax rise @ 2.00%, no allowance for Tax Base growth
3. Best estimate of new or transferred services, driven by cuts in other tiers
4. Operational surplus transferred to Corporate Projects Reserve, but not reallocated
5. Council Tax Support Grant withdrawn by WDDC by Mar 18
6. Earmarked Reserves expenditure reflects loan repayment in 2016/17 and major projects in 2017/18, but no major allocations from 2018/19 onwards
7. Further savings may be identified in budgets as a result of review processes

## Appendix 3

RESERVES	Cttee	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Reason for holding Reserve
		Mar 16	16/17	16/17	Mar 17	17/18	17/18	Mar 18	
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>									
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Equipment</b>									
Cemeteries	Man	58,208	30,600	0	88,808	12,000	80,000	20,808	Roads and Walls at Poundbury
Municipal Buildings	Man	34,735	20,400	0	55,135	60,000	0	115,135	Exterior works
Borough Gardens	Man	22,500	5,100	12,500	15,100	5,100	20,000	200	Painting Bandstand and Clock
Play Equipment	Man	51,748	0	20,000	31,748	13,000	13,000	31,748	Replace equipment
Walks Resurfacing	Pol	88,882	37,700	100,000	26,582	30,000	0	56,582	Contribution to resurfacing Walks
Vehicles & Equipment	Man	11,367	17,800	14,000	15,167	18,000	0	33,167	Fleet replacement
Trees	Man	3,906	0	0	3,906	0	0	3,906	Bleeding Canker Horse Chestnuts
Energy Efficiency	Pol	38,498	0	38,498	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Cultural</b>									
Arts Festival	Man	6,000	3,000	0	9,000	3,000	0	12,000	Periodic Festival
Christmas Lights	Man	56	0	56	0	0	0	0	-
Town Crier Uniform	Pol	598	0	598	0	0	0	0	-
<b>Miscellaneous Reserves</b>									
Corporate Projects	Pol	80,000	565,000	8,400	636,600	250,000	410,000	476,600	Own or partner capital projects
Loan Repayment	Pol	180,000	20,000	200,000	0	0	0	0	-
Maumbury Rings s106	Man	12,843	0	0	12,843	0	12,843	0	Heritage refurbishment
Dorchester West Rail. St'n	Pol	10,000	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	Access Ramp
Graves In Perpetuity	Man	14,243	0	100	14,143	0	100	14,043	Maint. and/or flowers on 6 graves
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>		<b>613,584</b>	<b>699,600</b>	<b>394,152</b>	<b>919,032</b>	<b>391,100</b>	<b>545,943</b>	<b>764,189</b>	
General Reserve	Pol	751,931	120,766	495,000	377,697	121,331	250,000	249,028	Back Up. Min £200k required
<b>Total Reserves</b>		<b>1,365,515</b>	<b>820,366</b>	<b>889,152</b>	<b>1,296,729</b>	<b>512,431</b>	<b>795,943</b>	<b>1,013,217</b>	