

Dorchester Town Council

Policy Committee

16 May 2022

Present: The Mayor (Councillor G. Jones) and Councillors R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, J.Hewitt, F. Hogwood and S. Hosford (Chairman).

Apologies: Councillor B. Armstrong-Marshall.

In Attendance

Councillors S. Jones and D. Leaper.

27. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 March 2022, adopted by Council on 28 March 2022, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28. **Finance Update**

Members considered a report by the Town Clerk which:-

- Updated the Committee on the 2021-22 financial year end position.
- Presented the final Internal Audit report.
- Presented the 2021-22 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements.
- Advised on the payments list for the period 1 March to 30 April 2022 and debts over 30 days.

The Deputy Town Clerk responded to Members detailed questions on the report.

Recommended

That the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021-22, as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes, be adopted.

Resolved

- (1) That the final Internal Audit report and Officer response to it, for 2021-22 be noted.
- (2) That the payments list, totalling £503,814.95, be approved.

29. **Dorset Council Allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Receipts**

The Committee had before it a report by the Town Clerk on the allocation of CIL reserves held by Dorset Council.

Town and Parish Councils had been invited to contribute to the discussion regarding schemes they wished to see considered for funding. It was noted that there was £282,000 available for cultural, leisure and community facilities.

The Council's views would need to be submitted to Dorset Council by 10 June 2022. Dorset Council would make allocations based on need, ideally evidenced through some form of strategic assessment or plan and Members considered those projects that were based on the Council's adopted Corporate Plan. Members felt that two projects should be promoted;-

- The Municipal Buildings front of house reconfiguration so as to open up the building for users and event visitors and a relocation of the toilets to a less visible space.
- Kings Road and Lubbecke Way riverside walk – linking the two green spaces together with a footbridge and improved accessibility of the riverside walk and make family friendly (not to include a bid for funds toward a small car park).

The Vice Chairman reported that a number of buildings in High West and East Streets could do with some improvement. It was noted that West Dorset District Council used to operate a financial contribution scheme to help towards minor improvements to Listed buildings/properties within the conservation area. Members felt that it would be beneficial if such a scheme could be re-established.

Resolved

(1) That the two projects set out above be forwarded to Dorset Council to be considered for funding from the cultural, leisure and community facilities CIL reserves.

(2) That Town Councillors who were also Dorset Council Councillors be advised of the Committee's views.

(Councillor T. Harries declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Dorchester Ballet and Dance.)

30. **Governance Issues**

The Committee had before it a report by the Town Clerk on a new first draft Communications Policy for the Council and appointments to Committees and Joint and Outside Bodies following receipt of Councillor preferences.

Members agreed to review the draft Communications Policy and let the Deputy Town Clerk have comments by 20 May 2022.

The Committee discussed the various appointments to Committees and outside bodies a report on which would be presented to the next full Council meeting. It was noted that the Council did not appoint representatives to the Civic Society or service organisations and it was felt that outside bodies list should be reviewed later in the year.

Resolved

(1) That the Communications Policy be reviewed and brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

(2) That the appointments to Committees, Joint and Outside Bodies report be noted.

31. 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.

32. Freedom of the Town

Members considered a report by the Deputy Town Clerk on a request from the Dorset Army Cadet Force asking whether on the occasion of the Force's 162nd anniversary, and the 80th anniversary of its reconstruction during World War Two, that the Council would be willing to grant it the Freedom of the Town.

Recommended

That the Freedom of the Town be awarded to the Dorset Army Cadet Force at a special meeting of the Council, the Deputy Town Clerk to make the necessary arrangements later in the year.

Chairman.....

Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

Dorchester Town Council

<https://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/> AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2022, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2021/22 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements			✓
M. The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2020/21 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

26/10/2021 19/01/2022 8/04/2022
27/10/2021 26/01/2022

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

08/04/2022

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Dorchester Town Council AIAR 2021/22

Internal Auditor note on test L:

As the Council has an annual turnover in excess of £200k, it should as best practice comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. The requirement to test compliance with the various Transparency Codes is only compulsory for Councils under £25k. The inclusion of Councils over £25k was introduced just before the year-end testing, and is at the discretion of internal auditors. Consequently, I have assessed the test as 'not covered', and will test compliance with the Code in the 2022/23 audit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R Darkin-Miller', written over a horizontal line.

R Darkin-Miller LLB (Hons) BFP FCA 08/04/22

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

Dorchester Town Council
ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022, that:

	Agreed		*Yes* means that this authority:	
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
			✓	

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

Dorchester Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance	
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £		
1. Balances brought forward	766,038	1,149,038	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.	
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,503,515	1,516,277	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.	
3. (+) Total other receipts	408,712	624,957	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.	
4. (-) Staff costs	682,914	717,804	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.	
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	41,188	39,116	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).	
6. (-) All other payments	805,125	1,763,768	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).	
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,149,038	769,584	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).	
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,234,603	820,252	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.	
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,106,785	8,315,261	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.	
10. Total borrowings	128,000	94,000	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).	
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	N/A	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED