

# **DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

**19th MARCH, 2013**

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 19th March, 2013:

**PRESENT** Councillors V.J. Allan, T.C.N Harries, Trevor Jones (Chairman), P.G. Mann and D.S. Roberts.

In attendance:  
Councillors T. James and M.E. Rennie.

**APOLOGIES** for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor A.J. Canning) and Councillors R.M. Biggs and G.M. Jones.

43. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22nd January, 2013, adopted by Council on 29th January, 2013 were taken as read and were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44. **RESOURCES PANEL – 7th MARCH, 2013**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the Resources Panel held on 7th March, 2013 (for Minutes see Appendix I).

It was

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Resources Panel held on 7th March, 2013 be adopted.

45. **DORCHESTER AREA PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee considered Minute 72 of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 4th March, 2013 recommending the restoration of limited funding to the Dorchester Area Partnership and it was

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That the Minute be approved in respect of the financial years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 only.
- (2) That the restoration of this funding be conditional upon appropriate representatives of the Partnership attending an early meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee to explore opportunities for

improved communication between the Partnership and other stakeholders, including this Council.

46. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 28th February, 2013.

Arising from the consideration of the Accounts it was

**RESOLVED**

That the Management Committee be requested to investigate methods by which the income derived from room hire might be increased.

47. **MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS EXTERNAL STONEMWORK REPAIRS – FINANCING**

The Committee considered the report of the Financial Services Provider on the possibility and consequences of funding the external repairs to the Municipal Buildings from the Council's own resources in view of the anticipated increased year-end surplus revealed by the Management Accounts instead of by way of loan from the Public Works Loan Board as originally proposed.

It was

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the external stonework repairs to the Municipal Buildings referred to at Management Minute 67 and due to commence shortly be financed from within the Council's own resources.
- (2) That the Town Clerk be authorised to relinquish the Consent to Borrow obtained from the Department of Communities and Local Government in accordance with Council Minute 19.

Chairman

**DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES PANEL**

**7th MARCH, 2013**

At a Meeting of the Resources Panel held on 7th March, 2013:

**PRESENT** Councillors T. James, Trevor Jones (Chairman) and P.G. Mann.

In attendance:

Councillors V.J. Allan, G.M. Jones and R.B. Potter.

**APOLOGIES** for absence were received from Councillors T.C.N. Harries and S.C. Hosford.

6. **INTERNAL AUDIT**

(a) **Review of Effectiveness**

The Panel reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit arrangements and it was

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Council expresses its satisfaction as to the effectiveness of its arrangements for internal audit but that consideration be given to the desirability of retaining the services of a different Internal Auditor in 2014-15 and subsequent years.

(b) **Terms of Engagement**

The Panel considered the standard Terms of Engagement of Accounts and Audit Services Limited for the provision of the Council's internal audit service for 2013-14.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Terms of Engagement be approved and that the estimated cost of £1,904.64 for providing the service be noted.

(c) **Programme – 2013-14**

The Panel considered the internal audit programme for 2012-13 proposed by Accounts and Audit Services Limited taking into account the guidance contained in the latest edition of the Practitioners Guide and incorporating additional tests considered appropriate for the Council in view of the level of activity in which it is engaged, including a test of the accuracy of reported performance data as recommended by the Council's external auditor.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

That the proposed internal audit programme for 2013-14 as now submitted be approved.

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

8. **AGED DEBTORS**

The Panel considered a list of aged debtors which set out information on all debts of greater than thirty days in the total sum of £5,576.99. The Panel noted that recovery action was recommended in respect of the largest single debt, one of £2,217.64, and that the second largest debt, one of £979.28, was believed to have arisen as a result of confusion on the part of the regular hirer involved and was expected to be recovered.

Following discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That recovery proceedings be commenced in respect of the debt of £2,217.64.
- (2) That the Town Clerk be requested to report to a future meeting of the Policy Committee, following discussions with the Internal Auditor, on a clear, incontrovertible policy on the approach to be adopted to non-institutional hirers in debt for a specified period to be applied by the staff involved.
- (3) That the Town Clerk be requested to submit a report to the next Meeting of the Management Committee on debts written off by him in accordance with Financial Regulation 5: 3. i).

9. **REVIEW OF SALARIES AND STAFFING LEVELS**

The Panel received and noted a schedule setting out information on current staffing levels and salaries and a second one setting out the position which would apply

from 1st July, 2013 following the retirement of the Town Clerk and the Senior Administrative Assistant.

Arising from the consideration of this matter the Town Clerk explained the background to the possibility of additional increments being awarded to the incoming Town Clerk to acknowledge the obtaining of various specialist qualifications which would need to be discussed during his periodic appraisals.

10. **LIVING WAGE**

In accordance with Policy Minute 32 the Panel considered the report of the Town Clerk on considerations surrounding the possible implementation of the 'Living Wage' within the Council.

Following discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED**

That consideration of this matter be deferred pending the receipt of advice from South West Councils.

11. **LOCAL DISCRETIONARY LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS**

The Panel considered the report of the Town Clerk on the circumstances which required the Council to review its approach to local discretionary leave entitlements and it was

**RECOMMENDED**

That, with effect from the 2013-14 leave year, the additional two days leave after each of ten years' service and fifteen years' service provided for in the Council's local Conditions of Service be awarded to acknowledge total local government service, not only service with this Council.