

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

22nd JANUARY, 2013

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 22nd January, 2013:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor A.J. Canning) and Councillors V.J. Allan, R.M. Biggs, T.C.N. Harries, Trevor Jones (Chairman), P.G. Mann and D.S. Roberts.

APOLOGY for absence was received from Councillor G.M. Jones.

32. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20th November, 2012, adopted by Council on 27th November, 2012, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

In proposing the adoption of the Minutes the Chairman made the following statement which he requested should be reproduced in the Minutes of this Meeting:

“Members will perhaps have noticed Minute 27 of the last Policy Committee and have instinctive sympathy with the idea of a “living wage”. This is a campaign which started in London in 2001 and seems to be gathering momentum.

However, before we can do anything much about it we need to give it some careful consideration: a report will therefore be presented to the Resources Panel at a meeting to be arranged in February.

The report will be as comprehensive as we can make it, dealing amongst other things with:

- affordability;
- pay differentials;
- what other public sector employers in the area are doing about it.

Whatever comes out of the Resources Panel’s consideration will be progressed through this Committee to full Council in March.”

33. **MINUTES OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the under-mentioned Minutes of the Management Committee held on 15th January, 2013:

Minute 51 – Estimates 2013-14

Minute 66 – Maintenance of Cemeteries

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That Minute 51 be further considered at Minute 41 below.
- (2) That Minute 66 be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

34. **INTERNAL AUDIT**

The Committee considered the most recent report of the Council's Internal Auditor which drew attention to a number of outstanding debts and the Town Clerk reported on progress made in their recovery.

It was

RESOLVED

That the Committee expresses its concern about the position reported and that appropriate officers and the Financial Services Provider be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Resources Panel on their age, the circumstances in which they were allowed to arise, progress on their recovery and measures introduced to prevent a recurrence.

35. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 31st December, 2012.

36. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a draft updated Medium Term Financial Strategy. In response to comments from Members concerning the different treatment of some reserves between the MTFS and the summary shown in the Estimates papers they agreed to prepare a revised version reconciling these differences and to circulate it to Members.

At the request of a Member they had prepared an alternative Strategy to illustrate the likely effects of a 2% increase in the Council's Band D Council Tax as an alternative to the 3.5% previously accepted as likely; this was tabled.

37. **CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE**

Further to Minute 7 the Committee considered the level of budget provision to be made in respect of the Council's support of the Dorchester CCTV system in the light of a letter dated 7th January, 2013 from the Community Protection Manager to Weymouth & Portland Borough Council indicating that a consultant had been employed to advise on the potential for achieving savings on their CCTV operation.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Council agrees to budget to enable its historic financial contribution to be continued in 2013-14 but that Weymouth & Portland Borough Council be informed that the Council requires the consultant's review to be completed during 2013, that this Council has a clear expectation that savings will be achieved as a consequence of his work and that the Council expects the standard of reporting of the effectiveness of CCTV and its outcomes to be improved significantly.
- (2) That the invitation for Members to visit the CCTV Control Room be accepted and that the Town Clerk be requested to make the necessary arrangements.

38. **PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF DAMERS SCHOOL**

The Committee noted that Dorset County Council had arranged a Stakeholder Group to consider the proposed replacement of Damers School and considered expressions of interest received from Members in being selected as one of the two representatives which this Council has been invited to appoint to serve on it.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That Councillors S.C. Hosford and R.B. Potter be appointed as this Council's representatives on the Group.

39. **WAR MEMORIAL**

The Committee noted that arrangements were being made for the addition to the War Memorial of the name of George Quinton, the son of Mr. H. and Mrs. E. Quinton of 42 Tilley's Buildings, Dorchester, who had died in action on 17th September, 1917.

The Committee also considered a request for the addition of the name of Charles William Cutt who had died in action on 13th April, 1917. Mr. Cutt was related to the Parsons family of Dorchester but, so far as it was possible to ascertain, had never himself lived in Dorchester, originating from Upwey, and, again so far as it was possible to ascertain, was not commemorated on any other war memorial in this country.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the request for the addition of the name of Charles William Cutt be acceded to.
- (2) That all such future requests, including those received in respect of people with a strong Dorchester connection, be referred to this Committee for consideration.

40. **GENERAL FUND BALANCE – 2013-14**

The Committee considered the report of the Financial Services Provider on an appropriate level of General Reserve which it would be prudent for the Council to maintain.

It was

RESOLVED

That the recommendations set out in the report be approved and that the Council maintain a minimum General Reserve in 2013-14 of £292,791.

41. **DRAFT BUDGET AND ESTIMATES – 2013-14**

(a) **Planning and Environment Committee**

The Committee considered the draft Estimates for the Planning and Environment Committee and it was

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Estimates for the Planning and Environment Committee be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

(b) **Management Committee**

The Committee considered the draft Estimates for the Management Committee as approved by that Committee at Minute 51.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Estimates of the Management Committee be approved so far as this Committee is concerned subject to additional contributions to the Play Equipment Reserves of £10,000 in each of 2012-13 and 2013-14.

(c) Policy Committee

The Committee considered its draft Estimates for 2013-14.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the draft Estimates for 2013-14 as now submitted be approved.
- (2) That a report be considered by this Committee during the Autumn on whether it would be possible to achieve savings on postage by using a distributor other than Royal Mail.

(d) Budget for 2013-14

The Committee considered the Budget for 2013-14 and the precept required.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Revised Estimates for 2012-13 and the Estimates for 2013-14 be approved.
- (2) That a precept in the sum of £1,094,352 be levied on the West Dorset District Council in respect of the financial year 2013-14 requesting that payment be made in two equal instalments on 1st April and 1st October, 2013.

42. **FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVIDER**

The Town Clerk reported that West Dorset District Council had given notice of termination of their provision of financial services to the Council but, instead of enforcing the three months' notice which they were permitted to give under the contract, had agreed to continue to provide a full service until 31st March, 2013 and to provide a limited service after that date in respect of the Final Accounts for 2012-13, including their preparation, completion of the Annual Return, dealing with any queries raised by the External Auditor and ensuring a smooth handover to their successors.

It was necessary for alternative arrangements to be put in place to take effect from 1st April, 2013 and the Town Clerk reported that Dorset County Council had agreed to undertake the work on the same basis as West Dorset District Council (for an initial three year term and then from year to year) but with the minimum period of notice of termination extended to six months.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Committee records its opinion for the purposes of Standing Order 49 (15) a) iii) that by reason of the specialist nature of the work there would be no genuine competition and that the offer of Dorset County Council to become this Council's Financial Services Provider on the terms set out above be accepted.

Chairman