

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Corporate Plan



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Introduction

The Council has previously been subjected to a statutory duty of best value. This regime ceased on 1st April, 2008 but the Council will continue to put into place arrangements that will secure continuous improvement in the way we deliver our services in order to make life better for people and for business in Dorchester.

The Council will continue to consult with you. We have an excellent track record of listening to your views, for example, in connection with the refurbishment of the Borough Gardens, the design of sports pavilions or improvements to facilities. The Council has again, via a questionnaire in the Council newsletter, undertaken a town wide consultation on all of the Council's major activities.

This Plan sets out the Town Council's objectives, the services we provide to achieve them, the cost of these services, and our long term intentions on a variety of major issues.

Your views are very important to us as we strive to achieve our objectives. Please help us to help you by sending any comments or suggestions you may have to the Town Clerk or by speaking to your local Town Councillor.

It is important for us to receive your comments, queries and complaints on the services provided by the Town Council so that we can endeavour to serve you well. The Council has started a new feature in its regular newsletter asking for your help to highlight any problems around the town – whether the responsibility of this Council or not – let us know what the problem is and if it's our responsibility we will endeavour to sort it out and if it's not we will contact the appropriate authority on your behalf.

Thank you for your time in receiving and reading this Plan and we would accordingly welcome any response.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tess James". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Town Mayor

November 2011

Consultation and Feedback

This Plan is available on request to any resident.

If you have any views on the contents of this Plan or have any comments, queries or complaints regarding the services provided by the Town Council please send them to:-

Dennis Holmes,
Town Clerk,
Dorchester Town Council,
19 North Square,
Dorchester,
Dorset. DT1 1JF

For specific help or advice on matters concerning the Town Council you can:

Telephone: 01305 266861
Fax: 01305 266085
e-mail: admin@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Alternatively, contact one of your local Town Councillors - you will find their names and addresses in Section 15 towards the end of this document.

There is also lots of useful information about the Town Council on the website at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk

1 - Mission Statement

The Town Council will provide high-quality cost-effective services to meet the needs of residents and others. It will also promote and defend the best interests of the Town for the ultimate benefit of everyone.

1.1 Our Strategic Aims are -

- (a) To enable residents to enjoy high-quality social, recreational, and cultural facilities within the town and to seek the continual improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.
- (b) To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town.
- (c) To preserve the unique identity of Dorchester and promote its heritage.
- (d) To consult with and take due regard of all comments received from other statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and individuals to ensure an improving standard of services to meet local needs.
- (e) To represent the views and wishes of the citizens of Dorchester.
- (f) To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, gender, culture, sexual orientation, income, race or religion, and which seeks to develop their well being, knowledge, understanding, and mutual co-operation.
- (g) To contribute to and support, wherever possible, those key issues and actions identified within the Community Strategy for Dorset, the West Dorset Partnership Community Plan, the Dorchester Area Partnership Local Action Plan and any other legitimate organisations such as ‘Decorate Dorchester’ and the Dorchester Business Improvement District.

All of our services contribute to one or more of these strategic aims. Details of how can be found in Section 3 – Town Council Services.

1.2 Our Key Objectives are -

- (a) To ensure that services continue to be provided as economically, effectively and efficiently as possible and in accordance with the principles of best value.
- (b) To ensure that the Council considers the impact of all its functions and decisions on crime and disorder in accordance with its obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- (c) To ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- (d) To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople:-

- (i) by the continued maintenance, improvement and extension of the Council's sports grounds, pleasure grounds, allotments and children's play areas, including the provision of appropriate safety surfacing and, in particular, to continue to pursue the creation of new sports facilities at Poundbury and the improvement of the Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground and the Borough Gardens;
- (ii) by the continued maintenance of the Municipal Buildings to the high standard set on refurbishment and taking all opportunities to increase the level of usage of the Buildings;
- (iii) by promoting appropriate events;
- (iv) to ensure that maximum advantage is taken of sources of financial assistance to improve the facilities which the Council provides and to reduce wherever possible the costs of projects falling to be met by the Council Tax payers of Dorchester;
- (v) to endeavour to ensure the sensitive future development of the town by commenting constructively on proposals both for works to existing buildings and for new development on whatever scale;
- (vi) to ensure that the resources at the Council's disposal are used to the most effective degree possible and to the greatest possible benefit of the town and its people subject to maximising the value for money obtained, if appropriate by employing outside consultants;
- (vii) to adequately consult the public at large, or representatives of appropriate sections of the community, before implementing significant developments or changes to the services provided;
- (viii) to ensure that the Council's activities are undertaken consistent with the principles of sustainable development and in the least damaging way to the environment by ensuring, wherever possible, that full advantage is taken of re-cycling facilities and re-cycled products, that energy is used as efficiently as possible and that any chemicals or pesticides used are environmentally friendly;
- (ix) to have discussions with representatives of other councils at all levels in an effort to ensure that Dorchester's best interests are served;
- (x) to actively support the preparation of a community strategy for Dorchester and the surrounding area;
- (xi) to ensure that all enquiries and complaints received from members of the public are dealt with courteously and expeditiously and that, in cases where reference to a Committee or the Council is required, the position and reasons for any delay are made known to the member of the public concerned.

2 - The Town Council - an overview

- 2.1 Dorchester Town Council is the parish authority for the town of Dorchester. The Town Council was created in 1974 as the successor to the former Dorchester Borough Council. There has been a history of local government in Dorchester dating back to Anglo Saxon times and Dorchester has been the County Town since 1305. It has elected a Mayor since 1629.
- 2.2 With a population of approximately 17,500 it is the largest parish in the West Dorset District. The Town Council supplements the provision of local government services in Dorchester and provides a wide range of social and recreational facilities, while promoting the town in its representations to other bodies. The Town Council works in partnership with Dorset County Council, which covers the whole of Dorset except Bournemouth and Poole and whose main responsibilities include education, social services, highways, strategic planning and libraries and West Dorset District Council, whose main responsibilities include local plans and development control, environmental health, refuse collection, economic development, tourist information and major recreational facilities such as the Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre.
- 2.3 The Town Council has 20 Members, elected for a term of four years. The next Town Council elections are in May 2015. The Mayor, who also acts as Chairman of the Council, and the Deputy Mayor are elected annually by the Council in May.
- 2.4 The Town Council operates a committee structure. Each committee has specific functions, meets regularly and submits reports and recommendations to Council. Agendas are available to the public three clear days before the meeting date at the Council Offices. Meetings are usually held in the Council Chamber (upstairs in the Corn Exchange building) and the public are encouraged to attend and may put questions or make statements on any matter in a public period at the end of every full Council meeting.
- 2.5 County, district and unitary councils have been required to introduce revised decision making structures. Town and parish councils were not subject to this requirement but the Council has adopted the underlying principles which are to separate strategic issues from the consideration of routine management matters and has revised its committee structure accordingly. The main committees now are:
- Management
Planning and Environment
Policy
- 2.6 In addition the Council appoints a number of Panels and Working Groups which meet as and when required to discuss particular issues. Members of the press and public are welcome to attend these meetings unless there is a need to discuss confidential matters.
- 2.7 The Town Council employs a team of 21 full-time staff and 4 part-time staff headed by the Town Clerk. The Council's 'family tree' is reproduced at the end of this plan.

- 2.8 The Council Tax paid by Dorchester residents includes the spending requirements of Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council, Dorset Police and Dorchester Town Council. The District Council is the charging authority responsible for collecting your Council Tax. Many people do not realise that the Town Council receives no revenue support from Government, unlike the District and County Councils; neither does it receive any funding from local businesses and retailers through their Non Domestic Rate.

3 - Town Council Services

The Town Council provides the following services to achieve its Strategic Objectives:

3.1 *Allotments*

272 Plots on 6 sites (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

3.2 *Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces*

Borough Gardens (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Sandringham Sports Centre (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

King's Road Playing Field (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Salisbury Field (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Fordington Green (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

The Walks (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Maumbury Rings (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

14 equipped play areas (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

3.3 *Municipal Buildings*

Corn Exchange (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Town Hall (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Magistrates Room (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Council Chamber (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Dressing Rooms (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Kitchen (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

3.4 *Council Offices and Support Services*

Council Offices (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(c), (d), (e) and (f))

Financial, Administrative and Committee Services (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(c), (d), (e) and (f))

Payroll (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(c), (d), (e) and (f))

Mayoral and Civic events (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

3.5 *General and Civic Services*

Commenting on planning applications and local plans (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Commenting on highway issues including traffic calming schemes, provision of bus shelters, public seats, notice boards and signs (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Environmental issues (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Town Twinning (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

Representing local views including liaison with other authorities and Agencies (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(d) and (e))

Christmas lighting schemes (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Grants to local organisations (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

Dorchester Arts Centre (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Teddy Bears Picnic (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

Supporting community events on Council land (See Strategic Objectives 1.1(a) & (f))

Casterbridge Christmas Cracker (See Strategic Objective 1.1(b))

Dorchester Carnival (See Strategic Objective 1.1(f))

War Memorial (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Thomas Hardy's Statue (See Strategic Objective 1.1(c))

Dorchester Market ¹
 Cornhill Stalls ¹
 Dorchester Cemetery ²
 Fordington Cemetery ²
 Poundbury Cemetery ²

1 As from June 2011 jointly with the West Dorset District Council through the Informal Joint Panel and Markets Protocol .

2 Until April 2011 this function was operated through the Dorchester Joint Burial Committee. The Joint Committee agreed that in the interests of efficiency and economy it should discontinue and its functions transfer to the Town Council from that date.

3.6 In addition to the direct delivery of services the Town Council also works in partnership with other organisations and is involved in partnership or agency agreements with the County and District Councils. It manages highway grass cutting in Dorchester on behalf of the County Council; names streets on behalf of the District Council; is in partnership with the District Council on the Dorchester Heritage Committee and with both the County and District Councils in the scheme to look after the Town's highway trees; and with both other councils and the Environment Agency in a scheme to improve the maintenance of the River Walk.

3.7 The net cost of the Town Council's Services can be summarised as follows:

Actual 2009/2010 £	Original Target 2010/2011 £	Actual 2010/2011 £	Service	Target 2011/12 £
9,591	10,433	10,024	Allotments	9,910
567,370	544,206	586,720	Parks & Open Spaces	596,525
59,052	77,624	76,468	Cemeteries	80,879
336,218	307,762	315,407	Municipal Buildings & Arts	300,718
61,459	107,376	43,490	Corporate Management	31,540
64,589	77,256	69,105	Democratic Representation	72,815
7,585	6,297	3,634	Twinning	4,099
22,090	22,446	21,721	Planning	29,339
1,127,954	1,153,400	1,126,569	Net Expenditure	1,125,825

3.8 A copy of the full Estimates can be obtained from the Council Offices.

3.9 The precept, which is the amount we raise to pay for the services provided by the Council, for the current year represents a Council Tax of £158.51 for the average property. This represents an increase of 0% on last year.

4 - Contracts

- 4.1 This Council recognises that good quality services depend on appropriately skilled and motivated workforces. As a part of this, the Council hereby certifies that all individual contracts awarded during the year which involve a transfer of staff comply, where applicable, with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts. It is not however, anticipated that any contracts of this nature will be awarded this year.

5 – Allotments

5.1 The Council’s strategic objective is

5.1.1 To provide the facility of leisure gardening.

5.2 The Council’s policy is

5.2.1 To endeavour to secure the provision of land sufficient to meet the demand for allotments.

5.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Action in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To endeavour to ensure that the demand for allotment gardens is met with particular reference to pursuing the Duchy of Cornwall for additional land for allotment use</p> <p><i>The Town Council has established an Allotments Provision Task and Finish Group to consider this matter in detail and report back to the Council. The Recommendations of that Group will be presented to Council during the life of this Plan.</i></p>	Ongoing
<p>To organise a programme of talks to existing and prospective allotment holders if required</p> <p><i>There was no demand for the programme of talks in 2011 dates have been booked for the talks in January 2012 should there be a demand.</i></p>	January 2011
<p>To undertake a further satisfaction survey of allotment holders</p> <p><i>Completed</i></p>	April 2011
<p>To survey allotment holders with a view to establishing whether there is a significant interest in forming allotment associations.</p> <p><i>There was no desire expressed to form an allotments association at the meeting of allotment representatives held in May 2011</i></p>	November 2011

5.4 Priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
<p>To endeavour to ensure that the demand for allotment gardens is met with particular reference to pursuing the Duchy of Cornwall for additional land for allotment use</p>	Ongoing

To organise a programme of talks to existing and prospective allotment holders if required	January 2012
To undertake a further satisfaction survey of allotment holders	October 2012
To survey allotment holders with a view to establishing whether there is a significant interest in forming allotment associations.	April 2012

5.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Allotments	Actual 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Rent charged to allotment holder per square metre	11.8pence	12.2pence	12.2pence	14.5pence
Percentage take-up of allotment plots	99.2%	100%	98.4%	100%
Percentage of plots uncultivated	0%	0%	1.3%	0%
Number of people waiting for an allotment (excluding those waiting for a specific plot)	203	100	272	100

5.6 Current Position

- 5.6.1 The Council owns or leases six allotment sites, Alington Avenue, Hawthorn Road, St. George's Road, Louds Mill, Frome Terrace and Herringston Road. In past years overall supply and demand have been very closely matched although there were some local imbalances. The demand for and interest in allotments has been resurgent over the past six or seven years having been fairly stable for a number of years prior to that. The situation was partially addressed by the creation of a number of new plots at Alington Avenue over and above those required for the gardeners being moved from the Louds Mill allotment site as a result of the new depot. Additionally, further allotment space has been earmarked within the plans for the Lubbecke Way extension and housing development at Red Cow Farm. The Duchy of Cornwall will also be providing additional garden style allotments at Poundbury in the future and private allotments are available at Maiden Castle. The Town Council has also established an Allotments Provision Task and Finish Group to consider future provision and the recommendations of that Group will be presented to the Council during the life of this Plan.
- 5.6.2 The Council has previously arranged a programme of talks to existing and prospective allotment holders in the early part of most years which have proved popular. A further series of talks will take place in 2012 if there is a demand from allotment holders.

5.6.3 This Council continues to operate a green waste removal facility for every allotment site which has proved very popular; it also reduces the need for bonfires which are discouraged as they are not environmentally friendly. It should be noted that there is no additional charge to allotment holders for this additional service at the present time.

5.7 Future

5.7.1 By far the biggest issue facing the Council is the development of new sites so as to endeavour to ensure so far as possible that the demand for allotment gardens is met. It is hoped to make progress in this area during the lifetime of this plan.

6 - Parks, Open Spaces and Playgrounds

6.1 The Council's strategic objective is

- 6.1.1 To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople, including -
- (a) by the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities;
 - (b) by developing or supporting the creation of additional facilities;
 - (c) by promoting appropriate events.

6.2 The Council's policies are

- 6.2.1 To fix charges at a level which will, so far as possible, ensure the maximum usage and accessibility of the facilities provided commensurate with the Council's duty to minimise its net expenditure.
- 6.2.2 To liaise with all bodies responsible for the provision and promotion of recreational activities.
- 6.2.3 To provide, develop, maintain and encourage the use of the Borough Gardens and other formal and informal open spaces, amenity areas and sports pitches.
- 6.2.4 To provide, develop and maintain facilities giving opportunities for children to participate in mentally and/or physically stimulating activities and encourage social co-operation and interaction in a safe environment, whether such environment is formally designated as a play area or not.

6.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Actions in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To complete the work to upgrade and refurbish Maumbury Rings</p> <p><i>Work is at last progressing – Scheduled Ancient Monument consent has been received for the project and work is underway to replace the road side fence and perimeter retaining wall.</i></p>	Summer 2011
<p>To work with West Dorset District Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and others to progress the provision of facilities, particularly changing facilities, at the Great Field, Poundbury</p> <p><i>The Council has been managing the sports pitches at the Great Field since December 2010. An outside gym has been provided and agreement with the Duchy of Cornwall has recently been received in respect of the location of play equipment.</i></p>	Ongoing

<p>To provide additional facilities for older children at King's Road Playing Fields</p> <p><i>A zip wire has been installed at King's Road. There are currently no plans for any additional equipment at that location.</i></p>	September 2011
<p>To endeavour to facilitate the creation of a perimeter walk around the town</p> <p><i>To be removed from the plan as it is an action that is largely out of the control of the Council.</i></p>	Summer 2011
<p>To create a mini-golf course on the former bowling green at the Borough Gardens and to convert the bowls pavilion to public toilets</p> <p><i>The Council has agreed to submit Section 106 grant applications for these projects; if successful it will be possible to commence these projects next year.</i></p>	When resources permit
<p>To undertake a full and thorough review of all fees and charges</p> <p><i>Recommendations regarding allotment charges are to be presented to the Management Committee in November 2011.</i></p>	November 2011
<p>To install an outside trampoline at King's Road play area</p> <p><i>Completed.</i></p>	June 2011

6.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To complete the work to upgrade and refurbish Maumbury Rings	Roadside fence December 2011 Other aspects summer 2012
To continue to work with West Dorset District Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and others to progress the provision of facilities, particularly changing facilities, at the Great Field, Poundbury	Ongoing
To create a mini-golf course on the former bowling green at the Borough Gardens and to convert the bowls pavilion to public toilets	When resources permit

6.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Parks, Open spaces And Playgrounds	Actual 2009/10	Original Target 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Number of items of play equipment	119	117	120	121
Number of items of play equipment out of use for more than 1 week	0	0	0	0
Percentage of 'Excellent or Good' taken from questionnaire in respect of play areas	84%	77.5%	85%	77.5%
Percentage of 'Excellent or Good' taken from questionnaire in respect of the skatepark	90%	90%	90%	90%
Number of football matches played	311	310	291	310
Number of cricket matches played	97	105	93	105
Number of tennis season tickets sold	45	50	52	50
Number of casual user tennis tickets sold	699	1000	587	1000
Number of hirings of the Weymouth Avenue Pavilion (excluding football and cricket)	103	115	110	115
Number of hirings of the Borough Gardens House Community Room	92	100	80	100

6.6 Current Position

Play Areas

- 6.6.1 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of many areas in Dorchester, including fourteen equipped and one unequipped children's play areas. We completed the installation of safety surfacing in the Town's play areas in 1997 since then we have turned our attention to improving the perimeter fencing of them in a way which is both more attractive and less expensive to maintain than the chain link which was used in most of them previously. Plans are in hand for new youth orientated play equipment and a sports arena at the Great Field to go along with the outside gym already installed. The thrice weekly checks on all play areas have continued. In addition to making financial provision for these works, we shall take any opportunities which present themselves for any further enhancements focusing particularly on activities suitable for older children.

Borough Gardens

- 6.6.2 Much has been done in recent years to improve the appearance of and facilities in the Borough Gardens to ensure that they continue to provide an attractive facility well into the twenty-first century and this process will be carried on. In particular, the clocktower was refurbished in 1993 and repairs to the bandstand were completed in 1995 with both being repainted in 2001 and again in 2008. We have also done a lot to thin-out overgrown shrubberies and to generally improve the planting.
- 6.6.3 Following a successful application to the HLF for a grant towards the cost of restoration of the Borough Gardens, work commenced on park landscaping in line with the original Victorian design, extensive refurbishment of the Borough Gardens House to provide new facilities for community groups and a self contained flat to provide a revenue stream. The fountain has been returned to its former (working) glory, a new children's play area has been created and a refreshment kiosk and toilets provided. The original boundary railings have been reinstated to further preserve the historic character of the park and improve security. The Gardens were officially reopened by Julian Fellowes in May 2007.
- 6.6.4 A 'Friends of the Borough Gardens' group was formally established in the Spring of 1996 to work in partnership with the Council to enhance public appreciation of the excellent facility provided by the Borough Gardens.
- 6.6.5 The Council actively encourages the use of the Borough Gardens for entertainment and community events and this will continue. They are already used for a wide variety of functions and fulfil a very valuable role within the social life of Dorchester and the surrounding area.
- 6.6.6 On the 12th November 2001 the Borough Gardens were included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England as Grade II.
- 6.6.7 The Borough Gardens Bowling Club did not get enough members for them to carry on and wound itself up in 2010. The Council has declared its intention to create a

mini-golf course on the former bowling green and to convert the bowls pavilion to public toilets when resources permit. In the meantime it was agreed that a putting green should be laid out on the site and that local artists be offered to display their works there. The putting green has been laid out during the summer and proved to be reasonably popular although Members have expressed a view that better signage is required to let people know that the facility is available to use.

Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground

6.6.7 The new pavilion at the Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground is continuing to be well received by all and is being further utilised for meetings and other community activities. The Council is committed to improving the playing surface at the Recreation Ground and it was thought that this could not be done until additional facilities were provided elsewhere to accommodate in the short term the teams which would be displaced whilst the work was carried out.

6.6.8 However, in conjunction with Dorchester Cricket Club the Council took advantage of a scheme operated by the English Cricket Board and has obtained specialist advice on ground maintenance and received financial assistance towards levelling the cricket square which has been completed using specialist equipment and contractors without the need to displace any teams. A new artificial wicket has also been installed again funded by the ECB. The Council also worked with Dorchester Cricket Club in respect of the provision of new practice nets which were officially opened in May 2007. The Council has continued to work with the Club and a new covered scoreboard was completed in 2010. All of these improvements complement the new pavilion and improve the facilities for cricket within the Town. Last year saw the return of County cricket for the first time in many years and it was pleasing to see the team come back again this year. It is likely that at least one County match will now be played each year. The Council has also created a fenced area in the far corner of the site which has improved the security of sports equipment such as football posts and cricket sight screens as well as providing a screened area for outside materials.

6.6.9 In response to the increasing demand we have laid out two pitches for mini-soccer at the Recreation Ground.

6.6.10 The Recreation Ground is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and is leased to the Council until 2061. The Council has entered into a Service Agreement with Dorchester Cricket Club which gives it a security of use for a number of years. This enables the Club to apply to the English Cricket Board for grants.

King's Road Playing Field

6.6.11 The usefulness of the football pitch at King's Road Playing Field is severely hampered by the fact that there are no changing rooms. A scheme has been designed following consultation with users but the cost was found to be prohibitive. Following consultation with football representatives the area was laid out as a junior pitch. That pitch has been taken out of use this year so improvements can be made to the playing surface. The Council has also provided, with financial support from West Dorset District Council, new sports arena equipment which is a further facility for free recreation within the Town this facility was enhanced further last year by extending the arena to a fully enclosed double ended court complete with a new youth shelter,

funding for which was provided by Dorchester Youth Extra. A state of the art climbing frame was also installed in 2010 with funding being provided through Section 106 contributions and Play Builder funding. This year has seen the installation of a 20 metre zip wire and trampoline to further enhance the facilities for older children.

Sandringham Sports Centre

- 6.6.12 The pitches at Sandringham Sports Centre were developed in the early 1990s and continue to be a well-used, popular facility. During 1999 we also laid out two mini-soccer pitches on an area of land next to Sandringham adjacent to the new housing.
- 6.6.13 In 2005, to aid drainage, the main football pitch was deep verti-drained with one hundred tons of sharp sand, the pitch was then seeded and fertilised to provide a significantly improved playing surface. This process was repeated again in 2009.
- 6.6.14 The indoor bowls facility at Sandringham Sports Centre was provided by a partnership between the Council and the Dorchester Bowling Club. The Club constructed an extension to provide a further three indoor rinks, bringing the total to six, and the Council supported this extension by granting the lease of the additional area of land free of charge and guaranteeing the bank loan which the Club required. There was bad news for the Club in March this year when it suffered an arson attack. The fire caused major damage and meant that all indoor play had to be cancelled. The good news is that the repairs to the facility were carried out through the summer in time for the 2011/12 indoor season with the Club being officially re-opened on 24th September, 2011.
- 6.6.15 There is an active boules club based at Sandringham and children's play equipment and picnic facilities provided there are extremely popular although the wooden multi play structure recently came to the end of its natural life and has been replaced by a new roundabout designed specifically for the less able, a new set of swings with a disabled person seat, a new wide slide, a new springer and a new multi play piece of equipment suitable for the young and the older generation. The Council has also worked with the Boules club to make improvements to the playing surface and surrounding area. Picnic benches have been added and the playing surface has been compacted and the weeds treated.
- 6.6.16 Building work on an up-to-date rifle and pistol shooting range was completed in 1993 and the Dorchester Rifle and Pistol Club, who provided the facility, intend to extend it and have recently provided a club room for members. The Club continues to operate successfully following the introduction of Government controls on the private ownership of firearms.

Future Sports Provision

- 6.6.17 The requirement for football and cricket pitches already exceeds the present level of supply and, with the expansion of the Town into Poundbury, will continue to grow.
- 6.6.18 The Duchy of Cornwall owns virtually all the substantial areas of undeveloped land on the periphery of the Town and has, therefore, a significant role to play. We have frequent discussions with the Duchy about how we can meet Dorchester's increasing

need for sports facilities and the new sports pitches at the Great Field have helped enormously now that the Council manages them. For future development and use it is essential that multi use changing facilities are included within the plans for the new school.

The Walks

6.6.19 The Council in part owns and wholly maintains the Town Walks.

6.6.20 The Walks have been included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England as Grade II.

Maumbury Rings

6.6.21 The Council has secured a thirty year lease of Maumbury Rings from the Duchy of Cornwall. Maumbury Rings is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the Town Council is leading a project to upgrade and enhance this special site. Working with the Heritage Committee and West Dorset District Council, it is anticipated that the project will be underway within the life of this plan. The Old Police Station site adjacent to the Rings has been developed for residential use. As part of that development the developer has provided a pavilion facing on to the Rings which includes an area for serving light refreshments, a disabled toilet and an external power supply.

Staffing

6.6.22 The Council employs eight full-time, three part-time and occasional casual members of staff on the maintenance of recreational areas.

New Developments

6.6.23 The Council is aware of the pressure for new residential, industrial and commercial development in Dorchester and we shall take all possible and necessary steps to ensure that both public and private development proposals make proper provision for the active and passive recreation of everyone living and working in the town including the provision of sufficient areas of both formal and informal open space.

Public Art

6.6.24 The Council was pleased to be able to contribute to the replica roman Fountain installed in Princes Street. The Council has now taken responsibility of maintaining it for the foreseeable future. A large brass plaque has been set into the pavement at the foot of the fountain explaining its relevance.

6.6.25 *Council Owned Trees*

The Council owns and manages a significant number of trees located around the Town on land for which the Council is responsible. These trees are inspected twice a year, leaf on and leaf off, so as to ensure they are in good health and to identify any work that might be required to be undertaken to keep them that way. A large number of the trees, particularly along South Walks and Salisbury Field Walk, are Horse Chestnuts and the tree inspections have unfortunately identified a large number of

them as suffering from a disease called Phytophthora (bleeding canker) which is rampant across the country at the present time and will, in time, kill the trees. At present there are over 28 mature Horse Chestnuts severely affected with the disease along South and Salisbury Field Walks and this number is sure to rise. Replanting Horse Chestnuts after felling diseased ones means that the new trees will die of the same disease before they reach maturity. The Council has therefore agreed to replant with a different species of tree, the London Plane, which is resistant to bleeding canker. Investigations are also being made into whether it is possible to reduce the width of South Walks slightly so as to allow a larger amount of soil for the trees' roots which would give the newly planted trees a better chance of reaching full maturity and staying healthy for years to come.

Highway Trees

- 6.6.26 The Council values Dorchester's trees highly and was instrumental in creating a partnership with the County and District Councils to ensure that the Town's highway trees receive proper care and maintenance to ensure that the outstanding amenity which they represent is maintained. This partnership arrangement was previously managed by the Town Council but responsibility for the partnership was transferred to Dorset County Council in April 2009. Since then the County Council has undertaken a significant amount of tree work in the town; all of Dorchester's trees have been surveyed and inspected and all of those trees shown to be a danger to public safety have been dealt felled and replaced with new trees. The tree work programme has now moved to proactive maintenance such as tidying up and shaping trees and increasing the tree stock.

7 - The Municipal Buildings

7.1 The Council's strategic objective is

- 7.1.1 To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople –
- (a) by ensuring the external and internal maintenance of the Municipal Buildings to the high standards set on refurbishment to enable the greatest practicable future use of the Buildings.
 - (b) by ensuring that whenever practicable energy saving alternatives are adopted.

7.2 The Council's policies are

- 7.2.1 To fix charges at a level which will as far as possible ensure the optimum usage of and accessibility to the facilities provided.
- 7.2.2 To let the Municipal Buildings whenever possible consistent with the objective of providing and promoting entertainment, use by local organisations, commercial use and leisure-related activities.

7.3 Progress on priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To increase lettings income by 3%</p> <p><i>Based on actual income received so far in 2011/12 it is anticipated that income in the year will be 1.7% higher than in 2010/11.</i></p>	March 2012
<p>To increase income as a proportion of operating costs by 3%</p> <p><i>This will not be achieved this year. Although letting income is increased slightly expenditure has increased significantly due to £30,500 being allocated to the Repairs and Renewals reserves in respect of the new lift.</i></p>	March 2012
<p>To review the efficiency of the present lighting rig in the Corn Exchange with a view to changing to LED lighting</p> <p><i>Eight new LED lights have been purchased to replace some of the most high energy lights presently used – the remainder of the lights will be replaced when resources allow and/or when suitable LED replacements become available.</i></p>	September 2011

<p>To investigate and plan for any work that might be required to the oriel window in the Town Hall</p> <p><i>John Stark and Crickmay Partnership has examined the stonework to the oriel window and the remainder of the building and submitted a report to the Council. The Management Committee has agreed that work to the stonework should be undertaken in the Spring/Summer 2012 subject to resources being made available.</i></p>	November 2011
<p>To include a review of the staffing arrangements related to the Municipal Buildings within the staffing review to be undertaken as part of the succession planning for the post of Town Clerk</p> <p><i>New full time Town Hall Keeper appointed in August 2011.</i></p>	June 2011 onwards

7.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To increase lettings income by 3%	March 2013
To increase income as a proportion of operating costs by 3%	March 2013
To undertake repairs to the external stonework of the Municipal Buildings	Spring/Summer 2012
To undertake additional marketing of the Council's letting venues	Ongoing

7.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Municipal Buildings	Actual 2009/10	Original Target 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Number of lettings of the Corn Exchange	322	350	317	350
Number of lettings of the Town Hall	239	300	248	300
Number of lettings of the Magistrates Room	255	315	204	315
Number of lettings of the Council Chamber	40	90	8	40
Number of lettings of the Dressing Rooms	89	100	59	100
Number of civil weddings/partnerships	26 (2009)	30	19 (2010)	30

7.6 Current Position

- 7.6.1 The Municipal Buildings comprise of three letting rooms, the Corn Exchange, the Town Hall and the Magistrates Room with basic capacities of 300, 120 and 40 respectively together with all ancillary facilities including kitchen accommodation. In addition the Buildings accommodate the Council Chamber which is occasionally let on an ad-hoc basis. The Council has significantly improved access to the first floor by providing a lift which is now completed and working well. Both the Corn Exchange and the Town Hall have induction loop systems installed to assist hearing aid users and the Council Chamber has an infra-red hearing reinforcement system. A portable infra read hearing reinforcement system is now available for use in the Magistrates Room. The Town Hall, Corn Exchange and Council Chamber are licensed for Civil Wedding Ceremonies and were the first premises in Dorchester to be so licensed. They are also licensed for civil partnership services, the first of which was held in December 2005 shortly after the new legislation became enacted. The car park at the rear of the Buildings is available for the organisers of events and access is gained via radio controlled gates.
- 7.6.2 The Council embarked on a programme of refurbishment of the Municipal Buildings in 1983 and the final phase of this programme, the refurbishment of the ancillary accommodation at the rear of the building, to provide improved dual-purpose dressing room facilities and a meeting/seminar room was completed in 1997. However work continues to maintain high standards in the Building with an ongoing programme of re-decoration. The sound system in the Corn Exchange and Town Hall reached the end of its useful life and has been replaced. The downstairs toilets were also completely refurbished last year. Last year the Bar Franchise was re-let for a period of three years. For the first time the Council is taking a percentage of the profits made by the bar, previously the franchisee paid a monthly fee. The new arrangement gives an incentive for both the franchisee and the Council to work together to increase profits. The arrangement is working well so far.
- 7.6.3 A routine maintenance schedule has been drawn up with the assistance of outside consultants which will enable most if not all future maintenance activities to be scheduled and budgeted for in advance.
- 7.6.4 The Council employs two full-time and two part time Town Hall Keepers, all of whom work flexibly to provide cover in the Buildings whenever it is required under the direction of a member of the administrative staff who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Buildings.

8 - Planning and Environment

8.1 The Council's strategic objective is

8.1.1 To protect and improve the physical environment of the town.

8.2 The Council's policies are

8.2.1 To adopt a sensitive and constructive approach to development proposals which are put to the Council for comment and, in particular, to take into account all possible implications for the townspeople as a whole or particular groups.

8.2.2 To seek to ensure that proposed developments are appropriate to the size and character of the town, that any potential benefits to the town are maximised and that all developments take account of the principles of sustainable development.

8.2.3 To try to minimise the number of features arising from developments which appear to be out of character with the history and appearance of the town; for example the Council as a matter of policy objects to the erection of internally-illuminated signage in conservation areas.

8.2.4 To take account of the desirability of reducing dependence on private motor cars and to seek to ensure whenever possible that all major projects protect and promote accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and by public transport.

8.2.5 To actively support the Dorchester Heritage Committee and assist in the continuation of the excellent work being undertaken by it.

8.2.6 To adopt policies to protect, enhance and preserve sites of archaeological, historical and environmental interest and their settings so far as the Council is able to do so.

8.2.7 Not to name new streets within the Town after people who are still alive.

8.3 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To continue to respond constructively to invitations for comments on planning applications and other matters.	Ongoing
To encourage and contribute towards the preparation and implementation of a popular and achievable Traffic and Environment Plan for the town.	Ongoing
To encourage the extension of 20mph speed restrictions into appropriate areas of the town.	Ongoing

8.4 Performance indicators for this service are

Planning and Environment	Actual 2009/2010	Original Target 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Number of planning applications commented on	236	N/A	198	N/A
Percentage of planning applications commented on within time limits	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of recommendations to refuse an application that were endorsed by the District Council	12	5	7	5

8.5 Current Position

- 8.5.1 The Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted affecting properties in the town.
- 8.5.2 The West Dorset District Council has delegated Street Naming and Numbering functions to this Council and all matters arising from the operation of the delegation are dealt with by the Planning and Environment Committee.
- 8.5.3 It is Council policy to obtain the suggestions of developers prior to this Committee's consideration of street names provided that developments are not named after living persons and that names used are in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 8.5.4 The District Council has introduced arrangements whereby representatives of town and parish councils are permitted to attend meetings of its area planning committees to speak on matters of concern on particular applications and the Committee takes advantage of this opportunity in appropriate cases.
- 8.5.5 From time to time the Council also facilitates liaison between the developers responsible for major projects and local residents in an effort to ensure that developments proceed as smoothly as possible and with minimal disturbance to those living nearby.
- 8.5.6 The Committee contributes financially to the Dorchester Heritage Committee. Until recently the Heritage Committee was made up of members of the Town, District and County Councils who sat with representatives of other organisations interested in the built environment of Dorchester. Regrettably, due to financial constraints, Dorset County Council withdrew from the Committee in April 2004. The Town and District Councils have decided that the Committee should continue and it is hoped that the County Council will be able to return to the fold sooner rather than later. In order for the Committee to continue functioning following the withdrawal of funding from the County Council, the Town Council undertook to manage the Committee and now provide the clerk and treasurer as well as the meeting venue. The Heritage Committee

promotes (usually small) projects to improve both the appearance of the Town and its interpretation. Recent examples include the erection of plaques on historically significant buildings, ongoing improvement of the River Walk and the introduction of a series of 'Town Trails' which are a series of four walks around the Town giving an indication of Dorchester's heritage from prehistory and Roman through to the modern day.

8.6 Future

- 8.6.1 The existing practice will continue unless there is some change in legislation. The District Council has introduced arrangements whereby representatives of town and parish councils are permitted to attend meetings of its area planning committees to speak on matters of concern on particular applications and the Committee takes advantage of this opportunity in appropriate cases.
- 8.6.2 West Dorset District Council has also agreed to consult this Council at an earlier stage than hitherto on major residential developments so that better account can be taken of the need for community facilities.
- 8.6.3 The Council's policy to support the Dorchester Heritage Committee is set out in paragraph 8.2.5 above. The Committee is not however a statutory requirement and in the case of its dissolution the Council will consider how the funds presently earmarked for the work of the Heritage Committee can be diverted to ensure that maximum benefit to the environment of the town is achieved.

9 - Twinning

9.1 The Council's strategic objective is

9.1.1 To support and develop the existing twinning links with Bayeux, Lübbecke and Holbæk.

9.2 The Council's policies are

9.2.1 To establish and maintain formal links between Dorchester and its twin towns in an effort to promote increased international understanding and friendship.

9.2.2 To support informal links between local organisations in Dorchester and their counterparts in the twin towns in all appropriate ways including financial assistance when applicable.

9.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To increase the number of exchange visits between Dorchester and its twin towns with particular emphasis on young people.</p> <p><i>Every opportunity is taken to encourage exchange visits. In recent years this has been achieved through youth football tournaments organised by Dorchester Town Youth Football Club with support from the Council.</i></p>	Ongoing
<p>To start giving consideration to the 20th anniversary of twinning with Holbæk.</p> <p><i>The Mayor of Holbæk has written to the Council confirming that the Holbæk Kommune has not set aside any funding for the twinning anniversary. It is therefore highly unlikely that any substantial activity will take place.</i></p>	2012

9.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To increase the number of exchange visits between Dorchester and its twin towns with particular emphasis on young people.	Ongoing

9.6 Current Position

9.6.1 The links with Bayeux were established in 1959, those with Lübbecke in 1973 and those with Holbæk in 1992. All are thriving and there are successful twinning societies in support of all three twinings in Dorchester.

9.7 Future

- 9.7.1 The Council will continue its support for twinning including the encouragement of voluntary bodies, although no further formal twinings will be entered into for the foreseeable future. The Council will continue to deal positively with any requests or suggestions which are put to it to further the spirit of international friendship, co-operation and understanding which the twinning movement engenders.

10 - Cultural Activities and Grants to Organisations

10.1 The Council's strategic objectives are

10.1.1 To provide improved opportunities for the active and passive recreation of the townspeople -

(a) by promoting appropriate events and activities, on occasion in co-operation with other local bodies and individuals;

(b) by encouraging the expansion of cultural activities in the town.

10.1.2 To support the work of local organisations by making financial grants and, where appropriate, providing assistance in kind.

10.2 The Council's policies are

10.2.1 To continue to support Dorchester Arts Centre and other organisations delivering arts-related events in the Town.

10.2.2 To continue to promote public entertainment events of the widest possible appeal and accessibility including assistance with the Dorchester Festival, participation in the Dorchester Arts Forum and representation on the Dorchester Arts Centre's Management Committee.

10.2.3 To provide financial and other assistance to deserving local organisations subject to their need being demonstrated.

10.3 Progress on implementing priority task for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To ensure that the benefit of this expenditure extends as widely as possible, with the greatest possible impact and appeal to a wide cross-section of Dorchester's residents.</p> <p><i>The Council again supported a wide range of cultural activities and events in the Town. A number of grants were also given to deserving local organisations and charities throughout the course of the year.</i></p>	Ongoing
<p>To work with partner organisations to implement the recommendations of the Dorchester Arts Review</p> <p><i>The Council was fully involved with the Dorchester Arts Review and will help implement its recommendations whenever the opportunity arises.</i></p>	2009 onwards

To continue to develop and exploit the facilities available in the town for events within the remit of the Arts Panel <i>Ongoing.</i>	Ongoing
To endeavour to increase the involvement in the arts of people of all ages and particularly of young people <i>The Council's youth festival initiative was held again this year, the event is targeted specifically at young people and is organised by young people and attendance at this event continues to grow.</i>	Ongoing
Whenever and wherever possible to assist in developing an overall direction and strategy for the arts in Dorchester <i>The Council is always willing to assist in this regard.</i>	Ongoing
To investigate the feasibility of staging an additional outside media event at either Maumbury Rings or the Borough Gardens <i>The Council arranged a very successful event in Maumbury Rings in April 2011 which, amongst other things, involved showing the Royal Wedding on a giant outside television screen.</i>	November 2011

10.4 Priority task for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To ensure that the benefit of this expenditure extends as widely as possible, with the greatest possible impact and appeal to a wide cross-section of Dorchester's residents.	Ongoing
To work with partner organisations to implement the recommendations of the Dorchester Arts Review	2009 onwards
To continue to develop and exploit that facilities available in the town for events within the remit of the Arts Panel	Ongoing
To endeavour to increase the involvement in the arts of people of all ages and particularly of young people	Ongoing
Whenever and wherever possible to assist in developing an overall direction and strategy for the arts in Dorchester	Ongoing

10.5 Current Position

10.5.1 The Council has been a long-time supporter of the Dorchester Arts Centre and affords financial assistance to it, both in respect of its general running costs and in respect of particular projects. The Council has formalised its support to the Arts Centre with the creation of a yearly Service Level Agreement which clearly sets out what the Arts

Centre can expect from the Council and the Council from the Arts Centre. It also fully supports the Dorchester Festival both financially and in kind and makes grants in respect of other arts-related events not connected with the Arts Centre.

- 10.5.2 The grants which are available to local organisations are usually fairly small, the Council taking the view that the limited resources which are available for this should benefit as many people as possible. Over thirty such grants were made in the last financial year.
- 10.5.3 The Council inaugurated a programme of Council-sponsored free concerts in the Borough Gardens in 1996 and these continue to be extremely popular and well-supported. One very welcome result of this initiative is that local organisations are now using the Gardens for their own community and charitable events and the Council is happy to make them available for such purposes free of charge. The same is true of other areas such as Maumbury Rings, King's Road Playing Field and Fordington Green which are all used for public events at various times of the year.
- 10.5.4 In 2008 the Council worked on a joint project with Dorset County Council, Dorset County Museum and West Dorset District Council to hold a two day Roman Festival. This event was repeated in 2010 but was based solely at Maumbury Rings rather than at both there and the Roman Town House which had proved to confuse people when it was done that way in 2008. It was estimated that about 1,400 people visited the festival over the weekend and also 236 children took part in the Roman Revels, which was the schools events held in the week running up to the festival. No further events are planned to be held.
- 10.5.5 This year saw the third Dorchester Youth Festival, ANONYMOUS 11 which was held in Maumbury Rings on the Saturday of the August Bank Holiday weekend. The idea for this event came from the Council and was organised by Dorchester Youth Extra in partnership with us. The weather was kind and the event attracted a good audience of young people building on the previous two events. The event was well organised and included a wide range of music as well as displays from various organisations providing activities for young people from Dorchester and the surrounding area. It is proposed to repeat the event next year subject to funding.

11 - Dorchester Markets

11.1 The Council's strategic objective is

11.1.1 To administer the operation of Dorchester Markets jointly with the West Dorset District Council through the Informal Joint Panel and Markets Protocol.

11.2 The Council's policies are

11.2.1 To take all action necessary to secure the continuing viability of Dorchester markets in the interests of maintaining Dorchester's position as a focus for the rural hinterland;

11.2.2 Consistent with this policy to maximise income from the operation of the markets to be offset against the Council's total expenditure;

11.2.3 To encourage the taking of appropriate action by the Joint Panel to prevent the holding of rival markets within the area of Dorchester's charter market rights.

11.3 Priority task for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To take whatever actions and decisions are necessary to ensure the continuing viability of Dorchester's markets and to monitor closely the effects on Dorchester's markets of other markets in the area, including Farmers Markets.	Ongoing

11.4 Performance indicators for this service are

Dorchester Markets	Actual 2009/2010	Target 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Income to the Council (excluding net income from car boot sales)	£64,552.07	£66,714	£50,000	£63,564
Car boot sale net income (donated to local charities)	£9,455.84	£10,500	£10,500	£10,500

11.5 Current Position

11.5.1 The ownership of Dorchester's market rights was a matter of considerable contention following the reorganisation of local government in 1974 and was only resolved by agreement in 1984. As a consequence of that agreement a Joint Committee was established with eight representatives from the West Dorset District Council and six from the Town Council and it is this Joint Committee which considers most matters relating to the operation of the market rights and area. Matters concerning the market which fall for consideration by the Town Council in its own right are dealt with by the Management Committee.

11.5.2 The agreement finalised in 1984 gives the Town Council 35% of the net proceeds of the operation of the market rights and the Council's share is estimated at £66,714 in 2010/11.

11.5.3 This past year saw the Dorchester Markets Joint Committee dissolve itself to be replaced with an Informal Joint Panel and Protocol (from June 2011). The creation of the Informal Panel meant a financial saving being made of £5,000 as a result of it no longer being necessary to arrange for the preparation of financial statements and having to have them internally and externally audited. This allowed for a further distribution of £3,250 to the West Dorset District Council and £1,750 to the Town Council. Other than these changes the Informal Joint Panel continues, much in the same way as the Joint Committee, with the same number of meetings each year and the same number of Members sitting on the Panel from both West Dorset District and the Town Councils.

11.6 Future

11.6.1 The Council will continue to participate fully and positively in the operation of Dorchester markets and will ensure that any future developments which might affect part or all of the current location of the market do not have an adverse impact on the viability and vitality of the market operation.

11.6.2 The Council will continue to encourage enforcement action against the operators of unauthorised markets within Dorchester's market area.

11.6.3 The Sunday Car Boot Sales held at the market and organised by the Market Franchisee on behalf of the Joint Panel yield a considerable income to the Committee (see paragraph 11.4 above), which has said that the net proceeds from the sales will be disposed of by way of charitable donations to qualifying organisations within Dorchester's market area which extends for a radius of $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles from the market site.

12 - Office Administration

12.1 The Council's strategic objectives are

12.1.1 To determine the level of spending by the Council to ensure adequate funding for the many commitments and projects of the Council including staffing costs but having regard to the effect on present and future Council Tax payers.

12.1.2 To provide administrative support to enable the Council to function in an efficient and effective manner.

12.2 The Council's policies are

12.2.1 To ensure that the necessary administrative support is available and trained to keep abreast of changing circumstances for all Council, Committee and Panel meetings and to assist Members in the discharge of their duties.

12.2.2 To formulate and keep under review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to ensure the appropriate use of estimates and budgets so as to continue effective control over Council spending.

12.2.3 To arrange the Council's civic and ceremonial duties in order to uphold the status of the County Town.

12.2.4 To support and encourage community organisations in the town, financially or otherwise.

12.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Action taken shown in italics</i>)	Target date
To review the Council's risk arrangements <i>The Council's risk arrangements were reviewed at the end of last year and this review incorporated the risks associated with the Council becoming responsible for the cemeteries function from April this year. The risk arrangements will be reviewed again prior to the end of the year.</i>	Ongoing
To respond positively to Government initiatives and requirements <i>The Council has and will continue to respond positively to Government initiatives and requirements.</i>	Ongoing
To finalise the Council's Business Continuity Plan <i>To be approved at the next meeting of the Risk Management Panel.</i>	November 2011

To provide risk management training for Members following the Council elections in 2011 <i>Yet to be arranged.</i>	May/June 2011
To amend the Risk Register to include a new opportunities section which would set out opportunities for savings with targets which could then be monitored through the risk management process <i>The Risk Registers have been amended to include a 'New Opportunities' section – this new section will be considered when the Risk Management Panel next meets.</i>	November 2011

12.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To review the Councils risk arrangements	Ongoing
To respond positively to Government initiatives and requirements	Ongoing
To undertake succession planning in respect of proposed retirement of the Town Clerk in early to mid 2013	September 2011 onwards

12.5 Performance indicators for this service are

Office Administration	Actual 2009/2010	Target 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Percentage of correspondence acknowledged within 14 days	96% ¹	95%	94% ²	95%
Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	78% ³	98%	86% ⁴	98%

Notes: 1 – Based on September - November, 2010 2 – Based on September - November, 2011
3 – Based on September – November, 2010 4 – Based on August - October, 2011

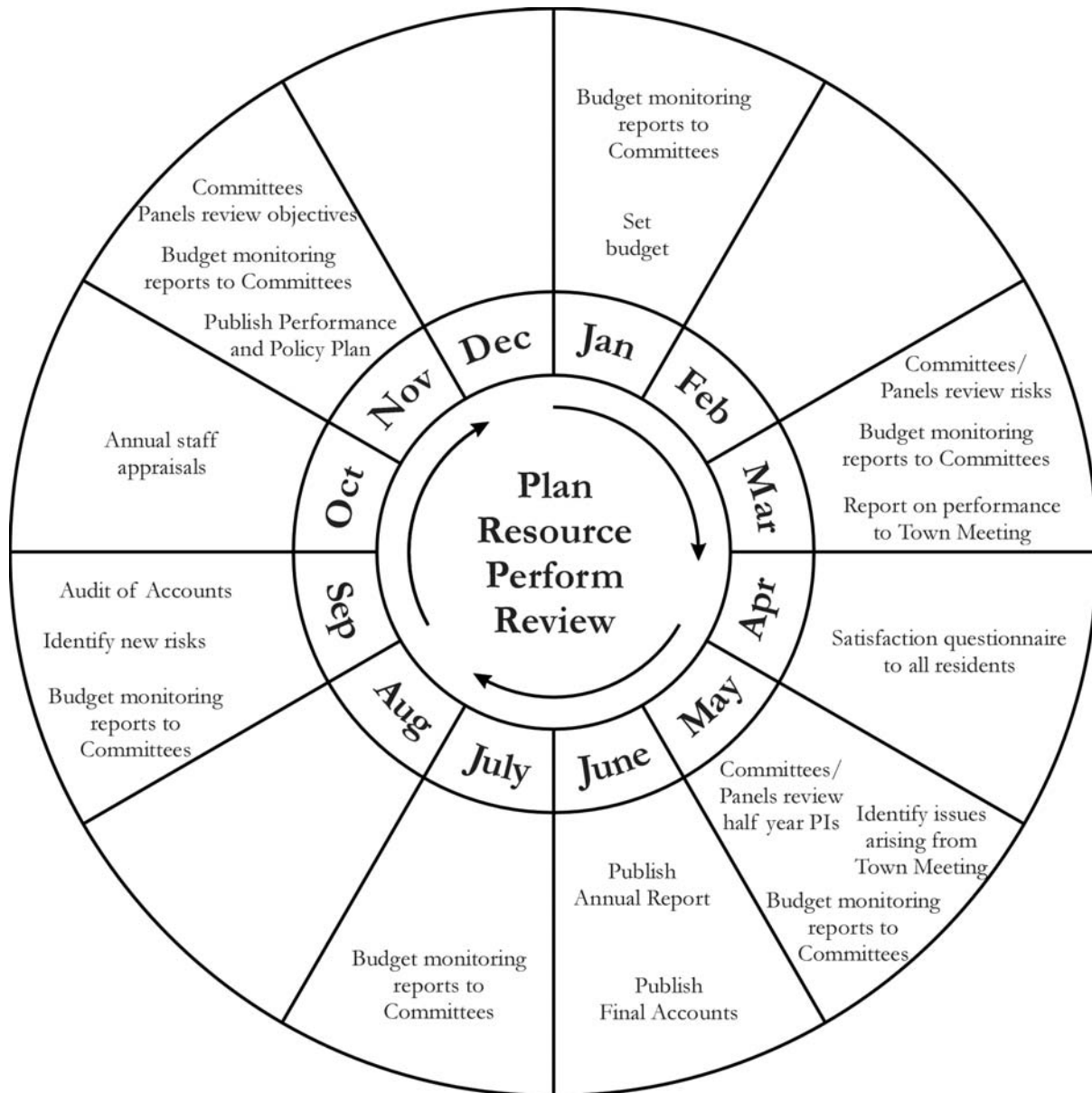
12.6 Current Position

12.6.1 Following a review of the Council's office staffing arrangements in 2002 conducted by independent advisers from South West Provincial Employers an additional post of Deputy Town Clerk was created in addition to the then other five permanent full-time members of staff - the Town Clerk, the Finance Officer, the Senior Administrative Assistant, the Administrative Assistant and the Clerk/Typist.

12.6.2 The appointment meant originally that the Council will be able to meet the considerable work that arose from best value as well as various other Government initiatives.

- 12.6.3 One of the Council's long standing employees, the Outdoor Services Officer, retired at the end of 2003. Following deliberation the Council concluded that the funding for this post would be best served through the appointment of a Compliance Officer who could deal with the contract and monitoring work arising from the best value review and overall management of the Outdoor Services team. This appointment was made in December 2003 and the revised staffing arrangements have been working well.
- 12.6.4 The Council, until December 2004, employed a Community Partnership Development Worker whose fixed term contract post was funded jointly by the Town, District and County Councils and whose job it was to prepare a community strategy for Dorchester and the surrounding area as required by the Local Government Act 2000. The Community Plan was completed and since then a part time Community Support Worker has been appointed to support the actions proposed in the plan. This officer is employed by Dorset Community Action but this Council does provide office accommodation.
- 12.6.5 Following the resignation of the Council's full time Finance Officer the Council, following a tendering process, contracted out its finance function to West Dorset District Council as from 1st April, 2006.
- 12.6.6 The Council's Town Clerk has indicated his intention to retire early to mid 2013 and the Council has already started the succession planning process. South West Councils have been engaged to conduct a staffing review based on terms of reference provided by the Council.
- 12.6.7 The Council has adopted a performance management framework which formalises the arrangements for how the feedback of decisions regarding the reaching and setting of targets and objectives within the Plan was to be achieved. The framework formalises this process together with a wider structure that can be used to bring together all the various management elements into a continual cycle of performance management. The cycle of performance management can be seen below:-

12.7 The Performance Management Framework



12.8 Future

- 12.8.1 The Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of its administration and continue to seek to maximise the benefit of its investment in new technology which is yielding substantial benefits in terms of both presentation and, more importantly, efficiency. It will also do everything possible to ensure that civic and ceremonial occasions continue to be conducted with all due dignity.

13 - Civic Services

13.1 The Council's strategic objective is

13.1.1 To preserve the town's identity and promote its heritage through the Town Mayor's attendance at Civic and other local organisations' events.

13.2 The Council's policy is

13.2.1 To arrange the Council's civic and ceremonial duties in order to uphold the status of the County Town.

13.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks for the year commencing April 2011

Activity (<i>Action taken shown in italics</i>)	Target date
<p>To organise events which add to the richness of life in the Town as and when</p> <p><i>Ongoing – the Council has organised or assisted in many events over the past year including Remembrance Day, Thomas Hardy Wreath Laying, Mayor Making and many more.</i></p>	Ongoing
<p>To be involved in the commemoration in respect of Armed Forces Day</p> <p><i>Completed - The Council worked closely with the RNA (Dorchester) Branch again this year to bring together the Veterans Parade and events in the Gardens with the Council's Civic Service. The event was very well received with a good audience.</i></p>	June 2011
<p>To commence planning for the commemoration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012</p> <p><i>Planning has commenced and it is proposed, amongst other things, that a music day be held in the Borough Gardens to feature music through the six decades of the Queen's reign.</i></p>	2011 onwards
<p>To plan for a celebration of Prince William's royal wedding</p> <p><i>Completed – A hugely successful event was held in Maumbury Rings which involved showing the wedding on a big screen followed by a 'last night at the proms' style music performance by the Dorset County Orchestra – it was estimated that 4,000 people plus attended the event.</i></p>	2011 onwards

13.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2012

Activity	Target date
To organise events which add to the richness of life in the Town as and when	Ongoing
To be involved in the commemoration in respect of Armed Forces Day	June 2012
To commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.	June 2012

13.6 Current Position

- 13.6.1 The Town Council is very proud of its traditions and of the role which the Mayor and Councillors have played in the life of the town over the centuries. Length of service on the Council is a factor which is used to guide the Council on a number of ceremonial issues and this section sets out some of the practices which the Council uses to help guide its decisions on this sort of issue.
- 13.6.2 A Mayoral Selection Committee, which is chaired by the current Deputy Mayor and is comprised of all past Mayors for the time being serving on the Council, meets in January each year to receive a list of Members' seniority for Mayoral purposes and to give instructions on it. It meets again, usually in February or March, to agree on a recommendation as to the selection of the next Mayor.
- 13.6.3 In allocating seniority to newly elected Members of the Council those with the highest percentage of poll receive the highest place. In the event of a Member being re-elected after a period off the Council that person's previous service will be taken into account in the allocation of seniority.
- 13.6.4 The Council organises or is involved in a variety of civic events on an annual basis, the Mayor Making Ceremony, Mayor's Civic Service, Wreath Laying at Thomas Hardy's Statue, the Crown Court Ceremonial and Remembrance Day and also arranges events on an ad-hoc basis such as the service to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

14 - Dorchester Cemeteries

- 14.1 Dorchester's Cemeteries used to be owned and managed by the Dorchester Joint Burial Committee, which was separate from the Town Council and included a representative of Winterborne Herringston Parish Council. The Town Council appointed the majority of the Joint Committee's members and contributed most of its precept.
- 14.2 In 2010 the Joint Committee decided that, in the interests of efficiency and economy, it should discontinue and transfer its functions to the Town Council with effect from 1st April, 2011. A consultation process was undertaken with Winterborne Herringston Parish Meeting and the staff of both the Joint Committee and the Town Council as was required by the Statement of Practice on Staff Transfers in the Public Sector.
- 14.3 Following the consultation process the request from the Joint Committee for the Town Council to take on the Joint Committee's functions was agreed and the Council made all the practical arrangements needed to transfer the Joint Committee function to the Town Council such as the transfer of assets, the transfer of staff, practical arrangements for administering the burial function, risk management arrangements, insurance arrangements, contract review, budget provision, sealing of documents, health and safety and much more. The burial function was transferred to the Council on 1st April, 2011 and is now fully integrated within the Town Council.
- 14.4 The other partner with the Town Council that made up the Joint Burial Committee was Winterborne Herringston and the Council has agreed that the facility for single fee burials should be extended to the residents of Winterborne Herringston in perpetuity in recognition of their longstanding membership and support for the Joint Burial Committee.

15 - Councillors of Dorchester Town Council

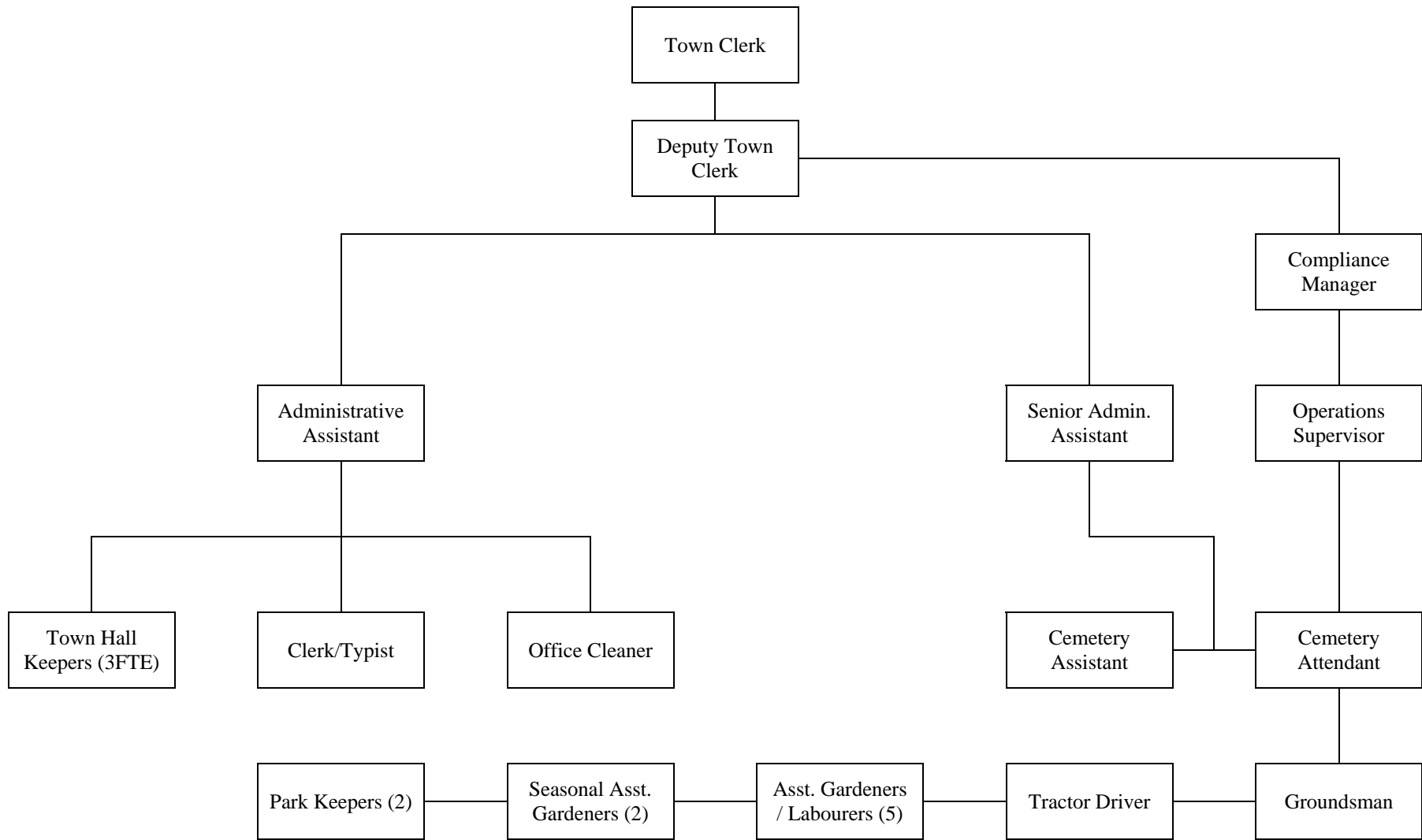
Councillor Vivienne Allan, 28 Somerleigh Road, Dorchester, DT1 1TJ	250023	North Ward
Councillor Richard Biggs, 20 Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RS	260156	North Ward
Councillor Andy Canning, 11 Alfred Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DW	261592	North Ward
Councillor Susie Hosford, 1 Meadow Cottages, Martinstown, DT2 9JL	880102	North Ward
Councillor David Taylor, 4 Normandy Way, Dorchester, DT1 2PP	263382	North Ward
Councillor Carolyn Biggs, 20 Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RS	260156	South Ward
Councillor Tess James, 70 Monmouth Road, Dorchester, DT1 2DG	262359	South Ward
Councillor Gareth Jones, 30 Culliford Road, Dorchester, DT1 2AT	262478	South Ward
Councillor Robin Potter, 22 D'Urberville Close, Dorchester, DT1 2JT	264416	South Ward
Councillor Molly Rennie, 13 Alington Road, Dorchester, DT1 1NS	268572	South Ward
Councillor Tim Harries, 9 Brookhouse Street, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3GL	07970 653796	East Ward
Councillor Stella Jones, Syward Cottage, Syward Road, Dorchester, DT1 2AJ	264335	East Ward
Councillor Fiona Kent-Ledger, 28 Olga Road, Dorchester, DT1 2LX	250253	East Ward
Councillor Tamara Loakes, 3A Holloway Road, Dorchester, DT1 1LG	757526	East Ward

Councillor Tony Lyall, 13 St. George's Road, Dorchester, DT1 1PA	266254	East Ward
Councillor Karen Armitage, 58 Windsor Road, Dorchester, DT1 2JB	251447	West Ward
Councillor David Barrett, 41 Holmead Walk, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3GE	259269	West Ward
Councillor Trevor Jones, OBE, Syward Cottage, Syward Road, Dorchester, DT1 2AJ	264335	West Ward
Councillor Peter Mann 13 Beech Court, South Walks Road, Dorchester, DT1 1DX	266796	West Ward
Councillor David Roberts, 14 Swanbridge Park, Dorchester, DT1 1ND	269394	West Ward

16 – Representation on Outside Bodies

The Council appoints representatives to a variety of other bodies in the Town. These are set out below:

Age Concern Dorchester	K.E. Armitage
Ashley Churchill & Thorner Trust	R.M. Biggs
Citizen's Advice Bureau Management Committee	C.S. Biggs
Dorchester Arts Centre	R.B. Potter
Dorchester Association for Research into Local History and Archaeology	P.G. Mann
Dorchester-Bayeux Society	T. James
Dorchester-Lübbecke Society	D. Taylor
Dorchester-Holbæk Society	V. J. Allan
Dorchester BID Board	T.C.N. Harries
Dorchester Community Nursery School	E.S. Jones
Dorchester Crime Prevention Panel	M.E. Rennie
Dorchester Local Area Partnership	T. James
Dorchester Municipal Charities	K.E. Armitage
	D. Taylor
	T. James
	L.M. Phillips
	M.E. Rennie
	P.G. Mann
	S.C. Hosford
Dorchester Stop The Drop	D.J. Barrett
Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan Working Group	A.J. Canning
	S.C. Hosford
	E.S. Jones
Dorchester Volunteer Centre	R.B. Potter
Dorchester Youth and Community Centre Management Committee	A.J. Lyall
Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils	D.J. Barrett
Dorset Broadcasting Action Group	G.M. Jones
Dorset Playing Fields Association and Sports Council	R.B. Potter
Footpaths Liaison Officer	D.S. Roberts
The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership	D. Taylor
PACT Steering Group	T.C.N. Harries
	D. Taylor
Poundbury Inter-Authority Working Panel	Chairmen,
	Management and
	Policy Committees
Promote Dorchester Community Interest Company	S.C. Hosford
RELATE - Dorset Marriage Guidance Council	V.J. Allan
St Osmund's Community Sports Centre Sub-Committee	E.S. Jones
Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre Management Committee	E.S. Jones
The Thomas Hardy Society Limited	P.G. Mann
Transition Town Dorchester	T.F. Loakes



The Council also employs a person placed through the County Council's Social Services Directorate.