



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 provision and design of the skatepark 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 does have a 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.



Town Mayor

November 2012

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 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 Dorchester Sports 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 18 full-time staff and 7 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*

292 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))

The Great Field (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

The Skatepark (See Strategic Objective 1.1(a))

Football and Cricket facilities (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 transferred 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 undertakes some 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 DWT 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 2010/2011 £ | Original Target 2011/2012 £ | Actual 2011/2012 £ | Service | Target 2012/13 £ |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 8,978 | 9,910 | 7,837 | Allotments | 8,765 |
| 536,358 | 596,524 | 617,839 | Parks & Open Spaces | 590,127 |
| 52,601 | 80,879 | 77,339 | Cemeteries | 65,617 |
| 309,930 | 298,218 | 284,759 | Municipal Buildings & Arts | 286,964 |
| 103,483 | 34,040 | 24,020 | Corporate Management | 72,543 |
| 73,631 | 72,815 | 70,590 | Democratic Representation | 72,432 |
| 3,732 | 4,099 | 4,118 | Twinning | 7,945 |
| 22,084 | 29,339 | 29,230 | Planning | 19,295 |
| 1,110,796 | 1,125,824 | 1,115,731 | Net Expenditure | 1,123,687 |

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 £164.07 for the average property. This represents an increase of 3.5% 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 monitor the balance between the provision of allotments and the demand for them.

5.3 Progress on implementing priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2012

| 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 established an Allotments Provision Task and Finish Group last year. This group made a number of recommendations including providing a new allotment site. However, the allotments waiting list is reducing significantly at present and the Council will be asked to consider whether it still wishes to pursue the additional allotment site.</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 2012, dates have been booked for the talks in January 2013 should there be a demand.</i></p> | January 2012 |
| <p>To undertake a further satisfaction survey of allotment holders</p> <p><i>The survey is underway at present.</i></p> | October 2012 |
| <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 January 2012.</i></p> | November 2012 |

5.4 Priority tasks identified for the year commencing April 2013

| 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 2013 |
| To undertake a further satisfaction survey of allotment holders | October 2013 |
| To survey allotment holders with a view to establishing whether there is a significant interest in forming allotment associations. | April 2013 |

5.5 Performance indicators for this service are

| Allotments | Actual 2010/11 | Target 2011/12 | Actual 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Rent charged to allotment holder per square metre | 12.2pence | 14.5pence | 14.9pence | 15.4pence |
| Percentage take-up of allotment plots | 98.4% | 100% | 97.9% | 100% |
| Percentage of plots uncultivated | 1.3% | 0% | 2.6% | 0% |
| Number of people waiting for an allotment (excluding those waiting for a specific plot) | 272 | 100 | 171* | 100 |

* *The waiting list at present has reduced still further to 102*

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 increased significantly from 2004-5 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 also established an Allotments Provision Task and Finish Group to consider future provision and recommended that the Council created an additional allotment site just outside of the town boundary – Section 106 funding was subsequently obtained for the development. However, the national picture with allotment waiting lists is that they peaked in 2010 and this trend is reflected in the Council's own waiting list. The Council will therefore be asked whether it wishes to proceed with seeking to establish a new site in light of the significant reduction in the waiting list.

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 2013 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. In January 2012 a small charge to allotment holders was introduced for this additional service.

5.7 Future

5.7.1 The biggest issue facing the Council is the development or not of new sites so as to endeavour to ensure so far as possible that the demand for allotment gardens is met.

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 2012

| Activity (<i>Actions in italics</i>) | Target date |
|--|--|
| <p>To complete the work to upgrade and refurbish Maumbury Rings</p> <p><i>Largely completed - the new roadside fence and wall was completed in August 2012. Three new information boards designed and will be installed in the near future and this will be followed by new benches etc.</i></p> | <p>Roadside fence December 2011</p> <p>Other aspects summer 2012</p> |

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| <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 with play equipment to follow once the earthworks at have been completed. The Council is also looking at options for providing stand alone changing facilities.</i></p> | Ongoing |
| <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 successfully obtained Section 106 funding to convert the bowls pavilion to public toilets and work will commence on this project in January 2013. Only partial funding was received for the mini golf project and this will not be undertaken in the lifetime of this plan.</i></p> | When resources permit |

6.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2013

| Activity | Target date |
|--|-----------------------|
| 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 convert the Borough Gardens bowls pavilion to public toilets | June 2013 |
| To create a mini-golf course on the former bowling green at the Borough Gardens | When resources permit |
| To work with West Dorset District Council, the Duchy of Cornwall and others to address the situation with regard to the need for a further floodlit all weather training pitch with changing facilities in the town. | When resources permit |

6.5 Performance indicators for this service are

| Parks, Open spaces And Playgrounds | Actual 2010/11 | Original Target 2011/12 | Actual 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of items of play equipment | 120 | 121 | 122 | 123 |
| 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% | 91% | 90% |
| Number of football matches played | 291 | 310 | 272 | 310 |
| Number of cricket matches played | 93 | 105 | 87 | 105 |
| Number of tennis season tickets sold | 52 | 50 | 49 | 50 |
| Number of casual user tennis tickets sold | 587 | 1000 | 641 | 700 |
| Number of putting tickets sold | New | New | 855 | 1000 |
| Number of hirings of the Weymouth Avenue Pavilion (excluding football and cricket) | 110 | 115 | 56 | 115 |
| Number of hirings of the Borough Gardens House Community Room | 80 | 100 | 75 | 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 re-opened 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. The conversion to public toilets will happen in the life of this plan as funding has been obtained. Partial funding has been obtained for the mini golf but work on this project will not commence until it is fully funded. In the meantime it has been agreed that a putting green be laid out on the site and that local artists be offered to display their works there. The putting green has been laid for the 2011 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.
- 6.6.8 The Borough Gardens achieved the Green Flag Award for the first time in 2008 and has been successful in retaining it every year since. The Green Flag Award is judged against a rigorous set of criteria to ensure that it is only awarded to those parks and gardens that truly merit it. In 2010 the Borough Gardens also received a Green Heritage Award which is sponsored by English Heritage and recognises that the Council understands, acknowledges and shares the heritage value of the Gardens. This Award has also been retained ever since it was first received.

Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground

- 6.6.9 The 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.
- 6.6.10 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. 2010 saw the return of County cricket for the first time in many years and it was pleasing to see the team come back again last year. Unfortunately there was no County match in 2012 but it is hoped that there will be again in 2013. 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.
- 6.6.11 In response to the increasing demand we have laid out two pitches for mini-soccer at the Recreation Ground.
- 6.6.12 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

- 6.6.13 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. The pitch was taken out of use in 2011 so that improvements could be made to the playing surface. Discussions are presently being held with Sunninghill Prep School regarding the possibility of the school providing combination football/rugby posts at the site.
- 6.6.14 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 in 2010 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. Last year saw the installation of a 20 metre zip wire and trampoline to further enhance the facilities for older children. The Council has also recently agreed to place a notice board at the site.

Sandringham Sports Centre

- 6.6.15 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.
- 6.6.16 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.
- 6.6.17 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 2011 when it suffered an arson attack. The fire caused major damage and meant that all indoor play had to be cancelled. The good news was that the repairs to the facility were carried out through the 2011 summer in time for the 2011/12 indoor season with the Club being officially re-opened on 24th September, 2011.
- 6.6.18 Early in 2012 the Council was approached by two young people who wanted to develop their graffiti skills. There has been a kick wall at Sandringham since the early 1990s. It was not very imaginative or exciting and so the Council thought it offered a good opportunity to do some graffiti art on, creating more exciting targets for improving ball skills and giving local youngsters the chance to learn graffiti art techniques from a professional. The graffiti workshop was held in September this year.
- 6.6.19 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.
- 6.6.20 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

- 6.6.21 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.
- 6.6.22 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 or stand alone changing facilities are provided as soon as possible.
- 6.6.23 The Council has also identified the need in the town for additional floodlit all weather training pitches with changing facilities.

The Walks

- 6.6.24 The Council in part owns and wholly maintains the Town Walks.
- 6.6.25 The Walks have been included by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England as Grade II.
- 6.6.26 The Council does have a long term aspiration for The Walks to be formally adopted as highways by Dorset County Council. Before this can happen The Walks need to be brought up to an adoptable standard the cost of which is prohibitive at the present time.

Maumbury Rings

- 6.6.27 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 – the road side fence and wall were both replaced this year. 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

- 6.6.28 The Council employs nine full-time, two part-time and occasional casual members of staff on the maintenance of recreational areas.

New Developments

- 6.6.29 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

- 6.6.30 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.

Council Owned Trees

- 6.6.31 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

- 6.6.32 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 2012

| Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>) | Target date |
|---|--------------------|
| To increase lettings income by 3% <i>Based on actual income received so far in 2012/13 it is anticipated that income in the year will be 4% down on 2011/12.</i> | March 2013 |
| To increase income as a proportion of operating costs by 3% <i>It is unlikely that this will be achieved this year. Letting income is slightly down and so is anticipated expenditure but not sufficiently to allow the target to be achieved.</i> | March 2013 |
| To undertake repairs to the external stonework of the Municipal Buildings <i>The Council has now received loan sanction to enable the stonework repairs to go ahead. The job will be tendered over the winter with work due to start in March 2013 and be completed in May 2013.</i> | Spring/Summer 2012 |
| To undertake additional marketing of the Council's letting venues <i>The Council has agreed that the focus for marketing from now on will be via the internet with the first job being to make the Council's website more attractive to potential hirers.</i> | Ongoing |

7.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2013

| Activity | Target date |
|--|--------------------|
| To increase lettings income by 3% | March 2014 |
| To increase income as a proportion of operating costs by 3% | March 2014 |
| To undertake repairs to the external stonework of the Municipal Buildings | Spring/Summer 2013 |
| To undertake additional internet marketing of the Council's letting venues | Ongoing |

7.5 Performance indicators for this service are

| Municipal Buildings | Actual 2010/11 | Original Target 2011/12 | Actual 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number of lettings of the Corn Exchange | 317 | 350 | 333 | 350 |
| Number of lettings of the Town Hall | 248 | 300 | 321 | 300 |
| Number of lettings of the Magistrates Room | 204 | 315 | 212 | 250 |
| Number of lettings of the Council Chamber | 8 | 90 | 3 | 20 |
| Number of lettings of the Dressing Rooms | 59 | 100 | 53 | 100 |
| Number of civil weddings/partnerships | 19 (2010) | 30 | 16 (2011) | 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 in 2010. The Bar Franchise was re-let for a period of three years in 2010 and 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 has worked well and the Council has agreed to extend the franchise agreement to 2015.
- 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 2013

| 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 2010/2011 | Original Target 2011/12 | Actual 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Number of planning applications commented on | 198 | N/A | 215 | 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 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 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 has previously contributed financially to the Dorchester Heritage Committee. However from this year the annual grant will no longer be automatic – the Heritage Committee will be required to bid to the Council for funding for specific projects as it does with funding from West Dorset District Council. 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 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 2012

| Activity (<i>Action shown in italics</i>) | Target date |
|--|-------------|
| To increase the number of exchange visits between Dorchester and its twin towns with particular emphasis on young people. <i>Every opportunity is taken to encourage exchange visits. This has been achieved again this year through a youth football tournament with footballers from Lübbecke which was organised by Dorchester Town Youth Football Club with support from the Council.</i> | Ongoing |

9.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2013

| Activity | Target date |
|---|----------------|
| To increase the number of exchange visits between Dorchester and its twin towns with particular emphasis on young people. | Ongoing |
| To celebrate the 40th anniversary of twinning with Lübbecke. | September 2013 |

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 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 2012

| 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. However, only a very limited number of grants were given to deserving local organisations and charities throughout the course of the year due to the Council significantly reducing its grants budget.</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 |

10.4 Priority task for the year commencing April 2013

| 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 |
| To investigate the cost and feasibility of installing a permanent, all-weather, vandal-proof PA system at the Borough Gardens bandstand. | April 2013 |

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. Due to the financial pressure faced by the Council this year it was found necessary to significantly reduce the money available for small grants. It is hoped that the budget will be reinstated in future years.
- 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 fourth Dorchester Youth Festival, ANONYMOUS 12 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 three 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 2013

| 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 2010/2011 | Target 2011/12 | Actual 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Income to the Council (excluding net income from car boot sales) | £50,000 | £63,564 | £63,564 | £63,564 |

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 £63,564 in 2012/13.
- 11.5.3 In June 2011 the Dorchester Markets Joint Committee dissolved itself and was replaced with an Informal Joint Panel and Protocol. 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.
- 11.5.4 The Council will be kept informed of the activities of the Informal Joint Panel through the Minutes of any meetings of the Panel being presented to the Council's Management Committee for information on a timely basis.

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 significant income to the Panel which has continued to agree 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 2012

| Activity (<i>Action taken shown in italics</i>) | Target date |
|---|--------------------|
| To review the Council's risk arrangements <i>The Council's risk arrangements and risk registers were reviewed in March 2012 and will be reviewed again in November 2012.</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 |

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>To undertake succession planning in respect of proposed retirement of the Town Clerk in early to mid 2013</p> <p><i>Succession planning is well underway in respect of the retirement of the Town Clerk and the Senior Administrative Assistant. It is proposed that a new Town Clerk will up the post in late May 2013 and there will be a new appointment of part time Senior Administrative Assistant to deal with Planning and Environment Committee with existing staff taking on the remaining duties of that post.</i></p> | <p>September 2011 onwards</p> |
|--|-------------------------------|

12.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2013

| Activity | Target date |
|--|-----------------------|
| To review the Councils risk arrangements | Ongoing |
| To respond positively to Government initiatives and requirements | Ongoing |
| To ensure a successful and smooth transition from the present arrangement to the new Town Clerk and the other revised staffing arrangements. | November 2012 onwards |

12.5 Performance indicators for this service are

| Office Administration | Actual 2010/2011 | Target 2011/12 | Actual 2011/12 | Target 2012/13 |
|--|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Percentage of correspondence acknowledged within 14 days | 94% ¹ | 95% | 85% ² | 95% |
| Percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days | 86% ³ | 98% | 94% ⁴ | 98% |

Notes: 1 – Based on September - November, 2011 2 – Based on August - October, 2012
3 – Based on September – November, 2011 4 – Based on August - October, 2012

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.

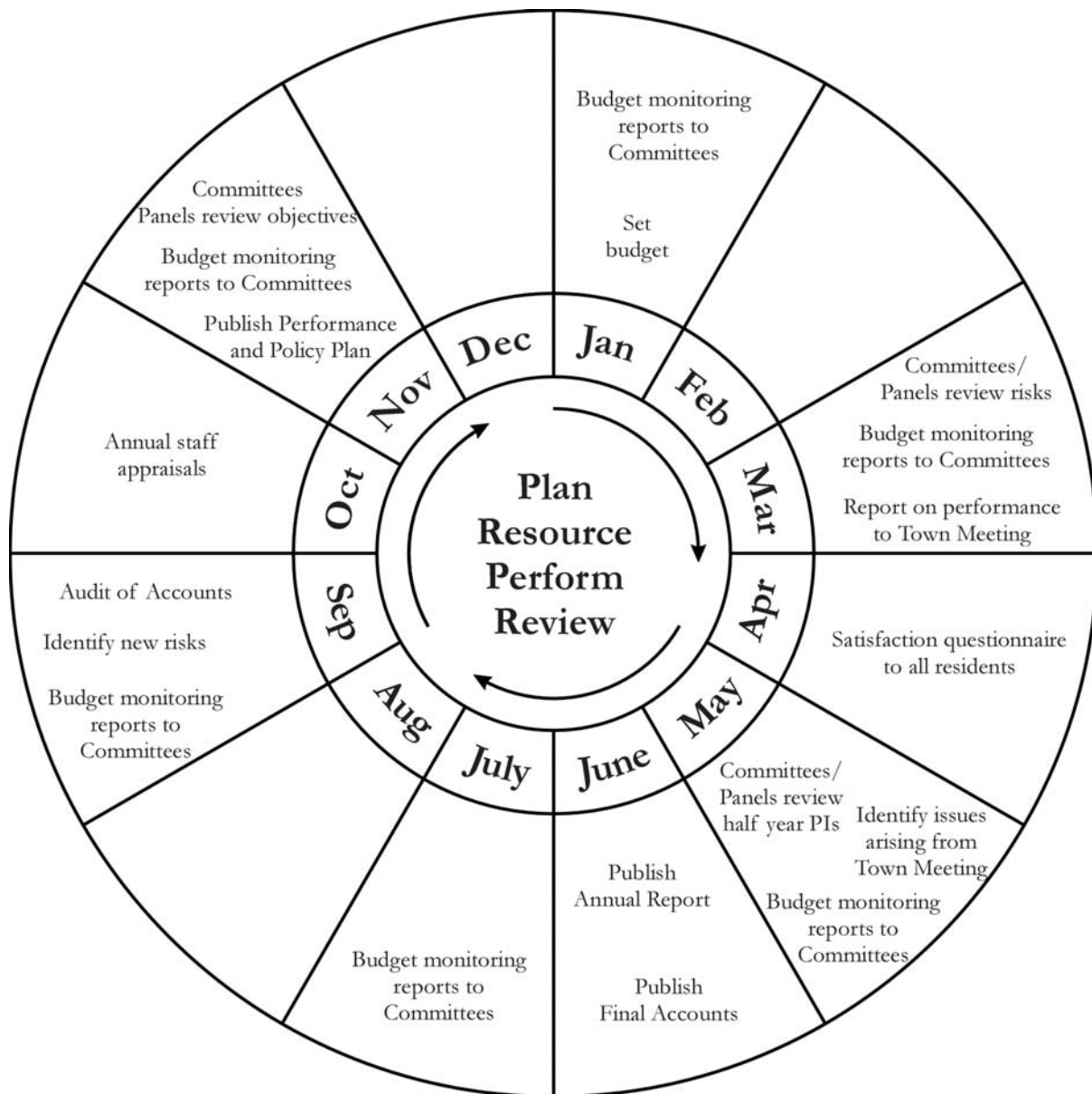
12.6.2 The appointment meant originally that the Council will be able to meet the considerable work that arose from best value as well as various other Government initiatives.

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. The Operations Supervisor has indicated his wish to retire flexibly from May 2013 and the Council will need to consider this matter during the life of this plan.

- 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 and until early 2012 this Council provided office accommodation. The officer is now based at Dorset Community Action's offices.
- 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 and Senior Administrative Assistant are both retiring from June 2013. Succession planning is well underway and it is hoped to make an appointment to the Town Clerk post by the end of February 2013 so as to enable the successful candidate to take up post at the end of May 2013. Following a staffing review by South West Councils it was agreed to reallocate some of the duties of the Senior Administrative Assistant to existing staff and employ a part time clerk to work on the Planning and Environment Committee and its associated duties. The reallocation of duties to existing staff is likely to have grading implications and it will be necessary to increase the hours of one member of staff. These arrangements are being negotiated at the present time and will be concluded in readiness for the new part time clerk to the Planning and Environment Committee to take up post in the middle of May 2013.
- 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 2012

| 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 unfortunately the weather was dreadful and both the Veterans march and the events in the Borough Gardens had to be cancelled. The Council's Civic Service was moved from the Gardens to the Town Hall.</i></p> | June 2012 |
| <p>To commence planning for the commemoration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012</p> <p><i>Completed – The Council arranged an afternoon of music and images from the six decades of the Queen's reign held in the Borough Gardens. Unfortunately the weather was again dreadful which meant that the audience was nowhere near as big as was expected.</i></p> <p><i>There was also a Diamond Jubilee Beacon Lighting event held at Salisbury Fields the night before the Borough Gardens event.</i></p> | June 2012 |

13.4 Priority tasks for the year commencing April 2013

| Activity | Target date |
|---|--------------------|
| <p>To organise events which add to the richness of life in the Town as and when</p> | Ongoing |

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| To be involved in the commemoration in respect of Armed Forces Day | June 2013 |
| To give initial consideration to the Government announcement of national commemorations in respect of the centenary of the outbreak of World War One | September 2013 onwards |

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 commemoration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

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 One of the two staff members that work exclusively at the cemeteries is to retire in February 2013. This retirement will afford an opportunity to review the staffing and contract arrangements at the cemeteries and this review will be undertaken during the life of this plan.
- 14.5 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

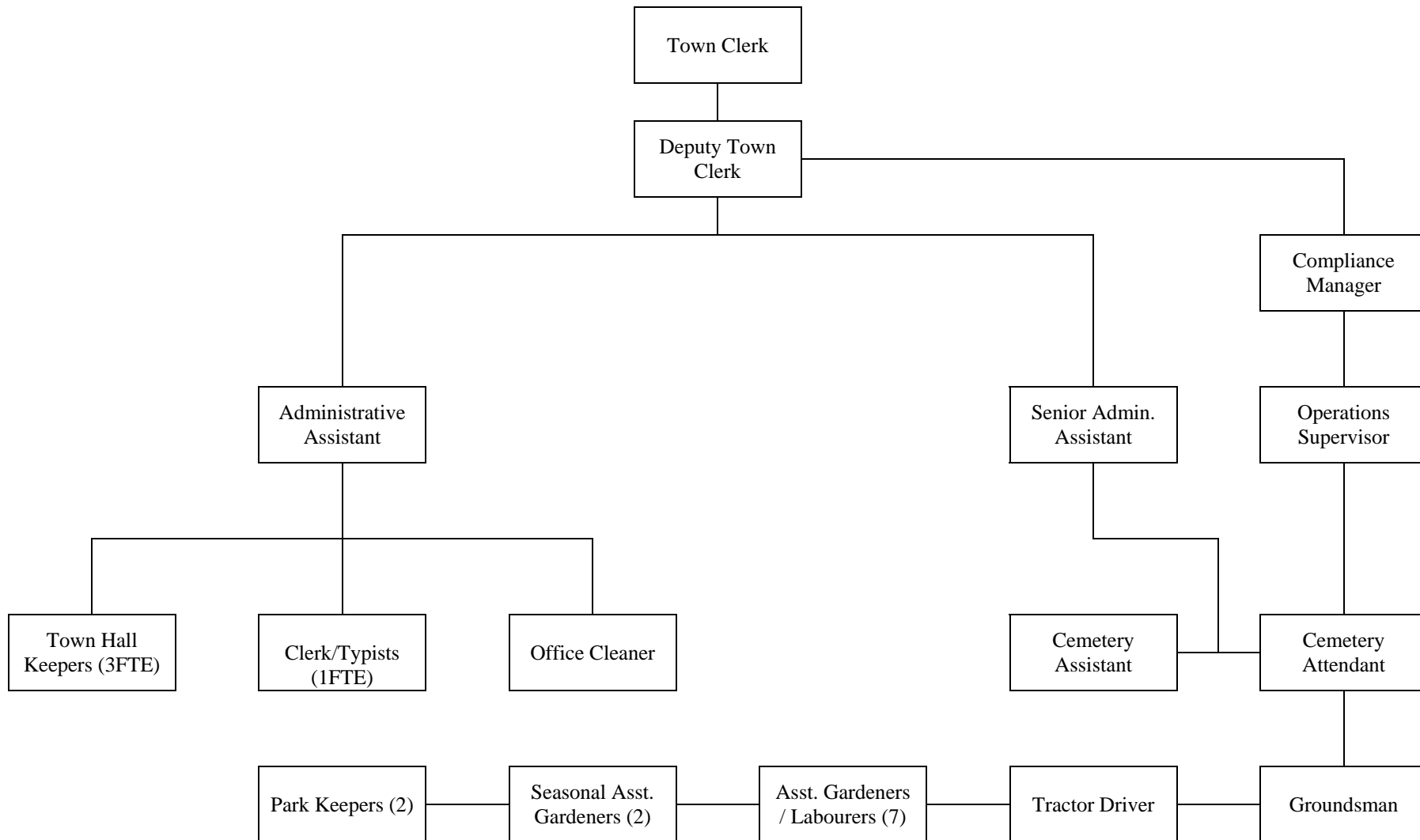
| | | |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Councillor Vivienne Allan, 28 Somerleigh Road, Dorchester, DT1 1TJ | 250023 | North Ward |
| Councillor Richard Biggs, 20 Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RS | 260156 | North Ward |
| Councillor Andy Canning, 11 Alfred Road, Dorchester, DT1 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, 8 Dunnabridge Street Dorchester, DT1 3TQ | 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 | R.M. Biggs |
| | T.C.N. Harries |
| Ashley Churchill & Thorner Trust | C.S. Biggs |
| | R.B. Potter |
| Citizen's Advice Bureau Management Committee | P.G. Mann |
| Dorchester Arts Centre | T. James |
| Dorchester Association for Research into Local History and Archaeology | D. Taylor |
| Dorchester-Bayeux Society | V. J. Allan |
| Dorchester-Lübbecke Society | T.C.N. Harries |
| Dorchester-Holbæk Society | E.S. Jones |
| Dorchester BID Board | M.E. Rennie |
| Dorchester Community Justice Panel | Vacancy |
| Dorchester Community Nursery School | T. James |
| Dorchester Crime Prevention Panel | K.E. Armitage |
| | D. Taylor |
| Dorchester Local Area Partnership | T. James |
| Dorchester Municipal Charities | F.E. Kent-Ledger |
| | M.E. Rennie |
| | P.G. Mann |
| | S.C. Hosford |
| Dorchester Stop The Drop | D.J. Barrett |
| Dorchester Transport and Environment Plan Working Group | T.C.N. Harries |
| Dorchester Volunteer Centre | R.B. Potter |
| Dorchester Youth and Community Centre Management Committee | A.J. Lyall |
| Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils | R.B. Potter |
| 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 |
| | S.C. Hosford |
| Promote Dorchester Community Interest Company | V.J. Allan |
| RELATE - Dorset Marriage Guidance Council | E.S. Jones |
| St Osmund's Community Sports Centre Sub-Committee | P.G. Mann |
| The Thomas Hardy Society Limited | T.F. Loakes |
| Transition Town Dorchester | R.B. Potter |
| Volunteer Centre Dorset | |



NOTE:- It is very likely that this staffing structure will change over the life of this plan due to the proposed revised arrangements following the retirement of the Town Clerk and Senior Administrative Assistant, the possible flexible retirement of the Operations Supervisor and the outcome of the staffing review in respect of cemeteries staffing arrangements following the retirement of the Cemetery Assistant.