

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 1JF Telephone: (01305) 266861 Adrian Stuart, Town Clerk

14th January, 2014

Dear Sir or Madam,

A MEETING of the POLICY COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, DORCHESTER on TUESDAY 21st JANUARY 2014, commencing at 7.00pm.

I hope that it will be convenient for you to attend.

Yours faithfully,

Town Clerk

Public Rights to Speak

If any member of the public wishes to speak at this meeting they may be allowed to do so at the discretion of the Chair. It would be helpful if anyone who wishes to address the Committee made their desire known to the Chair before the meeting starts: anyone allowed to speak will be expected to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as is reasonably possible.

Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that the Code of Conduct requires Members to declare any interest which they have in any matter under discussion. If the interest is regarded as a Personal Interest the Member may remain and take part in the consideration of the item but if the interest is a Prejudicial Interest the Member must withdraw from the Chamber during the consideration of it.

A G E N D A

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. MINUTES

To sign the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2013 (included with the Agenda of, and adopted by, Council on 26 November 2013)

3. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

a) To consider the report of the Financial Services Provider regarding the management accounts for the period 1st April to 31st December 2013 (attached).

b) To consider the short term Management Tasks update for the period 1 October 2013 – 31 December 2013 (attached).

4. **MINUTES OF PANELS**

To receive the minutes of the Resources Panel of 9 January 2014 (attached).

5. MEDIUM TERM FINACIAL STRATEGY AND REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

To receive the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

6. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

To note progress on issues arising in the Internal Auditor's report (attached).

7. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

To resolve "That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion".

8. CONTRIBUTION TO CCTV PROVISION IN DORCHESTER

To consider the report of the Town Clerk (attached).

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL MANAGEMENT REPORT – BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14 AS AT END OF DECEMBER 2013

1. ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES PROVIDER.

1.1 This is the fifth financial report of the financial year 2013/14, and monitors spend to date against profiled position.

2. SUMMARY OF CURRENT POSITION 2013/14.

2.1 The report shows net spend to date of £914k to the end of December, against the full year budget of £1.173m. The total of the profiled budget to the end of December is nearly £871k, meaning the spend position is £43k higher than profiled, down from £49k on the last report. The figures have been reviewed, and, as reported previously, there are a number of one-off issues have occurred which skew the profiling. There are no significant new variances to report. Looking ahead to year end, the expectation is that the various profiled overspends and underspends will flatten out to an approximately neutral budget position. As always, ongoing budget monitoring is essential to forecast the year end position more accurately.

3. SPECIFIC ISSUES.

- 3.3 Budget variances already reported include:
 - £14k invoice for clearing The Walks in 2012/13 but was not accrued for in that year, and hence becomes a charge in 2013/14.
 - Living Wage implementation, estimated at approximately £10k in this year (£20k for a full year).
 - Approx £12k of utility costs that relate to the previous financial year but which were not accrued for, and hence become an additional charge in this year.
 - Administration costs include an unbudgeted £9k payment to the Pension Fund in respect of actuarial strain following a retirement of Equally the Parks budget is underspent by £8k as the budget was higher than the actual payment.
 - The Corporate Management budget includes a £60k income budget for market income (share of the surplus). The first two instalments have been received, at £25k. £52k is expected for the year in total, a shortfall against the budget estimate of £8k. It is understood that this takes account of both 2012/13 and 2013/14 years but a further report is due to the Dorchester Markets Informal Panel at the end of January.

5. CASH POSITION

5.1 A statement of the bank account balances at 31st December 2013 is attached.

6. RESERVES AND BALANCES.

- 6.1 A statement of the current and forecast positions for reserves and balances is attached.
- 6.2 At last year-end, total reserves and balances stood at £672k, of which the general fund was at £402k.
- Taking into account the budgeted transfers to/from reserve, as well as adjustments for items such as the funding of the Corn Exchange building works, total reserves and balances are forecast to be £726k at next year-end, of which the forecast for the general fund is nearly £381k.

6. QUESTIONS.

6.1 If there are questions, comments or observations as a result of this report, please feel free to contact me directly on the email address below.

Paul Ackrill FCCA

Finance Manager, Dorset County Council

For Dorchester Town Council Email: p.ackrill@dorsetcc.gov.uk

<u>Table 1 - Subjective Analysis - By spend / income type</u>

	Current Budget for the year	Profile To 31-Dec	Actual To 31-Dec	Variance - favourable / (adverse)
<u>Expenditure</u>	_	_	_	_
Employees	618,818	464,114	447,562	16,552
Premises Related Expenses	216,696	176,882	193,819	(16,938)
Transport Related Expenses	27,231	19,748	19,658	91
Supplies and Services	421,574	273,254	334,486	(61,232)
Third Party Payments	46,496	30,820	34,923	(4,103)
Transfer to Specific Reserves	11,813	3,563	3,563	0
Capital Charges	0	0	152	(152)
Capital Financing Costs	91,862	70,819	70,819	0
<u>Income</u>				
Grants	0	0	0	0
Reimbursements & Contributions	67,923	72,731	67,120	5,612
Customer & Client Receipts	193,591	95,535	123,848	(28,313)
Contributions From Reserve	0	0	-2,750	-2,750
Net budget	1,172,976	870,934	914,014	(43,080)

Table 2 - Analysis by departmental heading

	Current Budget for the year	Profile To 31-Dec (Original Estimates)	Actual To 31-Dec	<u>Variance -</u> <u>favourable</u> <u>/ (adverse)</u>
Allotments	131	75,796	1,759	3,218
Parks, Gardens & Open Spaces	581,541	375,188	376,264	(1,076)
Cemeteries	58,732	80,520	55,858	24,662
Buildings & Cultural Activities	106,863	74,139	99,532	(25,393)
Corporate Management	82,261	20,886	78,458	13,248
Democratic Representation	38,750	25,581	24,564	1,017
Administration	294,713	226,521	270,407	(43,886)
Twinning	8,869	1,402	4,467	(3,065)
Planning & Environment	1,116	-9,099	-9,531	432
Heritage Committee	0	0	12,235	(12,235)
	1,172,977	870,934	914,014	(43,080)

Table 3 - Summary

Original budget position:

Net expenditure budget 1,172,977

Funded by:

Precept -1,110,439
Council Tax Support Grant -111,752
Budgeted net position 2013/14 -49,214

Projected End of Year (over)spend based on 31st December 2013

(73,851)

Statement of current and forecast position for Reserves

	Balances at 1 Apr 13	Budgeted Transfers To/From Reserves	Forecast position for 31/3/14
General Fund	402,547	- 71,000	380,761
Specific Reserves			
TARMAC RESURFACING RESERVE	1,000	1,000	2,000
MAJOR REPAIRS RESERVE	5,000	5,000	10,000
REPAIRS & RENEWALS FUND	1,000	33,250	34,250
BUILDINGS REPAIRS RESERVE	8,500	8,500	17,000
GRAVES IN PERPETUITY RESERVE	14,352	14	14,366
ARTS RESERVE	2,750	- 2,750	-
TOWN CRIER UNIFORM RESERVE	299	299	598
CONTRIBUTIONS DEFERRED ACCOUNT	15,077	-	15,077
LOAN REPAYMENT RESERVE	120,000	20,000	140,000
MUN BUILDINGS REP & RENEWALS	10,000	13,000	23,000
REPAIR & RENEWAL PARK EQUIPMNT	3,000	1,000	4,000
PLAY EQUIPMENT RESERVE	12,000	-	12,000
DEPOT REPAIR RESERVE	5,000	-	5,000
MB BOILER REPLACEMENT RESERVE	3,000	-	3,000
CHRISTMAS LIGHTING RESERVE	2,500	2,500	5,000
COUNCIL OFFICES REPAIRS RESERVE	1,000	1,000	2,000
HOLMEAD WALK PLAY AREA	15,000	_	15,000
	219,478		302,291
Other funds			
PUB WATCH DEPOSITS	4,207		4,207
HERITAGE COMMITTEE	12,037	3,000	15,037
MILLSTREAM CONTRIBUTIONS	34,165	- 10,000	24,165
	50,409	_	43,409
Total balances	672,434	<u>-</u>	726,461

Statement of bank accounts and cash

Bank ac	counts
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Lloyds payment account	-24,840.66
Lloyds general account	847,993.67
National Savings account	76,725.88
Lloyds business call account	0.11
Unity Trust account	1,000.00

Cash 593.07

Area	Activity	Smart Target	Performance so far
Financial Management	Ensure appropriate budget management	That the Council spends no more than is budgeted in overall terms That a satisfactory explanation is provided for all budget variances of over £2,000 or 10%, whichever is higher	To be undertaken at year end
	Prepare the 2014/15 budget for consideration by Council	Budget agreed by Council on 28 January 2014	On target to deliver budget
Staff Management	Undertake Personal Achievement and Development interviews	That all PAD's are written up and signed off appropriately by 31 Dec 2013	67% @ 31/12/13 90% @ 21/1/14
Democratic Management	Maintain high standard of committee administration	That all deadlines for the production of minutes and agendas are met	On target so far
Civic Services	Deliver successful Remembrance Day commemorations	That the service is recognised, in general terms, as a positive reflection on the Town Council	Task completed satisfactorily
Municipal Buildings	Lettings	Agree the terms of a review of how we maximise the potential of the building, taking account of financial and community needs, by 31 March 2014	No progress at this stage
Cemeteries	Grounds maintenance	Review of new grass cutting and general maintenance arrangements concluded by 31 March 2014	Grass cutting contract reviewed, to be relet Jan 2014. Grass cutting arrangements satisfactory

Area	Activity	Smart Target	Performance so far
Parks, Open Spaces & Playgrounds	Implement Great Field play equipment	That new play equipment and a new arena are installed by 31 March 2014	On target. Arena and 1 piece installed at 31 Dec 2013
Parks, Open Spaces & Playgrounds	Develop plan to improve surfacing of the Walks	That a plan is agreed at Committee regarding improvements to the Walks surface, up to a standard consistent with highways adoption, by 31 March 2014	No progress to date
CCTV	Review Town Council's involvement in funding the provision of the service	That a decision is taken by Council by 28 January 2014 regarding the level of contribution to be made by the Council	Review on target
Cultural Activities	Christmas celebration events	That the Christmas Lights and Cracker event are recognised, in general terms, as a positive reflection on the Town Council	Completed. One complaint about lights not functioning – weather related
	August Bank Holiday Maumbury Rings events	By 31 December 2013 to review the nature of and the arrangements for implementing events in 2014	Completed and reviewed by Arts Panel

Five Governance activities	s that we are focusing on		
Area	Activity	Smart Target	Performance so far
Democratic Representation	Panels and Outside Body representation	That a review of the Council's Panel structure and OB representation is undertaken by 25 March 2014	Agreed to start review late Jan 2014
Corporate Governance	Corporate Plan	Produce a new style Corporate Plan for the Council by 25 March 2014	Briefing for Council 28 Jan 14
Corporate Governance	New MTFS including a review of fees and charges structure	Produce strategy, including a preliminary plan for how the role of direct income will support the strategy, by 28 January 2014	Draft completed. First two incomes reviewed by Resources Panel 9 Jan 14
Democratic Representation	Better Informed Members	That 2 relevant developmental events are delivered for Councillors by 31 March 2014 That weekly update briefings are made available to members by e-mail	Finance strategy at Council 26 Nov 13 Development Control event in preparation
	Annual Audit letter	That changes are implemented consistent with AAL recommendations by 31 March 2014	2012/13 Audit reports actioned Plan in place for Dec 13 audit report
Risk	Review the Council's corporate and operational risks	That full Council agree the Risk Registers by 25 March 2014	Completed Council 26 Nov 13

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES PANEL

9TH JANUARY 2014

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor E.S. Jones) and Councillors R.M. Biggs, S.C. Hosford, G.M. Jones, Trevor Jones (Chairman) and R.B. Potter.

In Attendance: Councillors V.J. Allan and M.E. Rennie.

6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

The Panel received the report of the Town Clerk, plus an update from West Dorset District Council regarding Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) and the Council Tax Base. Members noted the changes made since the last report to the Panel in November, with regard to pensions, market income and Grass Cutting in Cemeteries.

The Panel received an updated Summary Revenue Budget that, allowing for receipt of £93,000 CTSG, would allow £90,000 to be transferred to the General Reserve in 2014/15, and a Medium Term Financial Strategy that, allowing for no CTSG in future, still had a positive net financial position in each of the next four years.

The Panel agreed that the Town Clerk should respond to the District Council's Revenue Budget consultation in relation to the reduction in CTSG compared to that received in 2013/14.

A full report on the budget and precept would be made to the Policy Committee, which would make recommendations to Council.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT PROVISION

The Panel noted the Town Clerk's report of progress on the procurement of new auditors for the 2014/15 financial year and it was

RECOMMENDED

That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Policy Committee take part in the interviews for the appointment of the auditor, and that authority to appoint the auditor be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Policy Committee

8. **FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVISION**

The Panel considered the Town Clerk's report regarding an alternative method of delivering the Council's Financial Services requirements, through the direct appointment of a Financial Controller, with aspects of their role covered by other members of the team to replace existing contract arrangements.

The Panel fully considered the advantages and disadvantages of both delivery methods, noting the proposal to integrate financial services provision into the work of the offices team, rather than employ one officer who would exclusively provide the role, and also the potential extra capacity to improve office systems that would result from having an in house resource. The Panel also noted the need for basic financial management skills to be a core element of the role of any future Town Clerk.

Some concern was expressed regarding the risk of non-appointment, and how other tiers of local government might respond given any decision to terminate the existing contract. It was acknowledged that cover for payroll also presented a risk.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That, subject to the receipt of a letter of comfort from Dorset County Council regarding cover arrangements, and subject to the transfer of payroll management to Dorset County Council's Payroll bureau, the post of Financial Controller should be added to the Council's establishment, and in due course the job descriptions of other members of the office team should be renegotiated to include appropriate cover arrangements for the role

9. OUTDOOR SERVICES TEAM – FUTURE STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel considered and endorsed the report of the Town Clerk, and asked that a report be prepared to the Management Committee covering

- a) The appointment of a foreman for the Depot based Outdoor Services Team
- b) The appointment of an apprentice to the Outdoor Services Team, funded by savings elsewhere in the budget
- c) A review of arrangements for cleaning the Walks

10. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

It was

RESOLVED

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

11. **INCOME GENERATION**

The Panel considered proposals for future income generation from direct service users, in order to reduce the burden on Council Taxpayers and it

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That discussions take place with Funeral Directors regarding future fee levels, prior to a report being made to the Management Committee.
- (2) That a report be prepared to the Management Committee regarding revised fees for new allotments tenancies

POLICY COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2014

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY & REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15

- 1. The Committee has previously adopted the minutes of the Resources Panels of 6 November 2013 and will consider the minutes of 9 January 2014 at this meeting. The Panel has been reviewing the main changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Revenue Budget for 2014/15 (separate document).
- 2. The MTFS (Page 7) takes account of the following key issues
 - a. Receipt of Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) in 2014/15, but not beyond with a consequent loss of £112k compared to this year
 - b. The 2014/15 Budget as laid out elsewhere in this report
 - c. Inflation at 2.0% on all expenditure, contribution to reserves and income except debt, with the precept also rising by 2.0%.
 - d. Debt repayments included based on actual repayments, with no assumption regarding new debt
 - e. No assumed growth on tax base beyond 2014/15. Any Tax Base growth will create an additional income which will allow for new services to be provided, or reduce the need to raise the precept. Tax Base is now far less predictable as it also takes account of benefits and is therefore more closely linked to the economic cycle
 - f. No allowance has been made either for reductions resulting from an efficiency programme or extra income arising as a result of fee increases, both of which would have a positive impact on the MTFS
- 3. A **precept** of £1,162k (up 4.68%, £52k on 2013/14 but still £20k below 2012/13) is proposed. This is based on a Tax Base of 6,715 (up 2.7%) and a Band D charge of £173.12 (up 1.95%, £3.31).
- 4. Taking account of all of the above, if CTSG disappears in 2015, the annual contribution to there would be a small contribution to the General Reserve annually. In other words the Council should be in a position to carry on providing its own services in the medium term. However such a strategy does not allow the Council to develop its services or to respond to the impact of lost services by other providers.
- 5. The **Revenue Budget for 2014/15** (Pages 1 6) takes account of the following key changes:
 - a. Pay related budgets have been adjusted for Living Wage (+£18k), office staffing changes (-£2k), the removal of one off pension payments (-£36k,) pensions on overtime (+£4k) and the pension revaluation (+£5k) and a 1% pay rise (+£7k); the net change is -£4k
 - b. Expenditure budgets have been adjusted for Cemetery Grass cutting (-£11k), Community Development (+£4k), inflation (+£6k) and other minor adjustments; a net change of Nil
 - c. Contributions to reserves have been maintained at current levels (+£1k) and debt charges have reduced (-£3k) due to not taking up debt on the Municipal Buildings repairs
 - d. Income has been adjusted for Markets (£-5k), inflation and minor adjustments; a net

- e. The net change in the Revenue Budget year on year is -£7k
- 6. **Special one off items** of £18k have been allowed for, but this sum does not all have to be allocated. A list of issues that have been raised through the Committee process is included below, totalling £19,000, should the Committee wish to make a proposal to Council: -

	£
Community Speed Watch Equipment (P&E)	1,000
Skate Park fencing/access points improvements (M)	7,500
Cemeteries memorial stability testing (M)	2,000
Corn Exchange wall and dressing room roof investigations (M)	3,500
WW1 Commemorations – war memorial refurbishment and events (M)	5,000

- 7. **Earmarked Reserves** are listed at Page 8. The main reserve relates to repayment of the Depot loan, due in 2017. A new reserve has been created for repair of the Walks, while a number of other reserves have been combined. A fuller review of Earmarked Reserves will take place at the end of the financial year. For the moment the key decision is to maintain current contribution levels.
- 8. The Council has received communication from West Dorset District Council that **Council Tax Support Grant** will be cut by £19,000 in 2014/15, to £93,000. They have also advised not to assume grants from 2015/16. The Town Clerk will ask the District Council for clarification of the reasoning behind these statements.
- 9. The **General Reserve** is held to deal with problems and opportunities that might arise. It should reflect the operational environment and the economic circumstances within which the Council operates, and the level of Earmarked Reserves held. Appropriate cover would be:

	£000
Emergency staffing cover (assuming half and no pay as per contracts)	50
Other temporary budget increases @ 15%	80
Temporary loss of income @ 15%	30
1 major one off event not covered by Insurance or Reserves	20
2 minor events not covered by Insurance or Reserves	20
Total	200

- 10. The Revenue Budget shows a General Reserve estimated at £470k at 31 March 2015. However this will be adjusted by under/overspends in both this year and next; historically the Town Council has underspent its budgets but this should not be automatically assumed. At £470k the General Reserve would be sufficient.
- 11. The final budget may be affected by any decision to reduce contributions to CCTV (item 8 on this agenda).
- 12. It is recommended that Council adopt the MTFS and Revenue Budget as laid out, and specifically that:
 - a. The Council Tax Band D charge is set at £173.12, an increase of 1.95%
 - b. The precept is set at £1,162,423
 - c. A list of Special Items is proposed to Council by this Committee

Accounts & Audit Services Ltd

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2013/14 INTERNAL AUDIT FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

AUDIT Dorchester TC

DATE 2 December 2013 PAGE 1 of 2

W/P REF	AUDITOR'S COMMENT	COUNCIL RESPONSE
2.1e	£865.30 recoverable VAT input tax was charged to Legal & Professional fees and should be recovered	Had been identified and was already in hand $-SN$
5.2	Burials Excel record (ex Red Book) no longer req'd since application forms now filed at HQ, provided other controls are tightened: • Cemeteries Administrator (CA) to hold receipt book and fully complete the receipts with nominal codes • General Administrator (GA) to have access to receipt book for banking and coding purposes • GA to issue office receipt to CA quoting opening and closing receipt book numbers • CA to enter cemetery receipt book number, amount rec'd and date on each application form • CA should continue to update Excel Collection sheet in respect of Cemeteries income, but need only quote the Cemetery receipt number in the narrative column The above should address the issue of Exclusive Rights of Burial income being miscoded. Historical miscodings should be identified and journalled to the correct nominal code	Accepted – Will put in place by 06/01/2014 GW Accepted - Will use receipt book for burials from January which will make it much easier to keep an audit trail. JH
5.4	Booking System for Council premises is now much improved, but could be streamlined further, saving admin time and providing additional controls. Each invoice should include a copy of the already available "All bookings" report, obviating the need to include detail on the invoice itself, removing duplication.	Accepted - Will start using the RBS Invoicing Software from January 2014 - The customer will receive this invoice - the information will then be entered into Sage - showing the Receipt No. JH
	Where a Bar is provided the invoice number should be recorded on the booking system, allowing a check of income received from the bar provider, and also the amount received which will provide useful management information	Accepted – will put in place from 02/01/2014 JH
	Sports Pitches – GA should quote invoice number on the system to provide an audit trail from booking to debtor system	Accepted – put in place from 02/12/2013 GW
		Given that the client was satisfied when they paid

5.6	Invoice 12127 was charged at the Borough Gardens room hire rate rather than the Weymouth Avenue rate – a credit note should be issued for the overcharge (19.14 + VAT)	the invoice we intend to take the issue no further. AS
	Tennis Seasonal Income receipts: GA should include name of ticket holder on SAGE for audit trail purposes	Accepted - will inform administration team to action from 06/12/2013. GW
7.1	No continuity of ticket numbers during August 2013 period. As a result no assurance that all income has been accounted for – sum at risk likely to be low value	Accepted - Will be addressed – <i>PM</i>
7.1	Payroll – In sample period, while all payments were correct, Attendance fee payments were not paid out	Actioned - Fee payments were paid out in the following month $-SM$
	One new pension payment was miscoded to 47030199 – needs to be corrected, and correct code inserted on monthly payroll journal proforma	Actioned - Correction made and proforma updated – <i>SM</i>
		AS Adrian Stuart SN Steve Newman PM Pete Mullins JH Julie Hollings GW Georgina Wakely SM Sandra Moseley
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