



Dorchester Town Council

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

For information about this agenda contact Adrian Stuart
a.stuart@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

10 September 2014

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Tuesday 16 September 2014** at **7.00pm**.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Public Speaking at the Meeting

The Chairman has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please ask the Chairman before the meeting starts. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as is reasonably possible.

Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate.

A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted.

A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

Membership of the Committee

Councillors V. Allan, R. Biggs, A. Canning, T. Harries, G. Jones, T. Jones, D. Roberts, and The Mayor ex-officio.

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 July 2014 (adopted by Council on 22 July 2014).

3. Finance Report

A

4. Budget 2015/16 & Medium Term Financial Strategy

B

5. District Council Service Review Programme

C

6. Dorset Fire & Rescue Service Consultation

D

7. Dorchester Bowls Club – revision to Deed **E**

8. Local Government Boundary Commission for England – Final Report **F**

9. Request from a resident who is a member of Action Aid

To consider a request to the Chairman by a local resident, a member of Action Aid, that the Council pass the following resolution

“While many ordinary people face falling household income and rising costs of living, some multinational companies are avoiding billions of pounds of tax from a tax system that fails to make them pay their fair share. Local governments in developing countries and the UK alike would benefit from a fairer tax system where multinational companies pay their fair share, enabling authorities around the world to provide quality public services. The UK government must listen to the strength of public feeling and act to end the injustice of tax dodging by large multinational companies, in developing countries and the UK”

The resident advises that more information regarding the request can be found at www.townsagainsttaxdodging.org.uk/councillors

10. Urgent Items

To consider any other items that the Chairman or Town Clerk decides are urgent.

11. 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”.

12. Municipal Buildings – Staffing

**Separate
Report**

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Committee – 16 September 2014

Financial Report at 31 August 2014

1. Summary of Current Position

- At end of month 5 underspend v. profile is £71,000
- Profiling is being gradually improved, and some underspending is due to holding back on expenditure during the early part of the year
- Likely to result in underspend of £25,000 - £50,000 at year end
- Primarily related to Staff & Supply savings
- Markets Income will be £5,000 less due to 2013/14 performance
- Allowing for 2013/14 Closedown. budget revisions made this year and the above, likely to be £65,000 - £90,000 extra in General Reserve at year end

2. Cash Position at 31 August 2014

• Lloyds Bank (2 accounts)	£359,000	0.30% interest
• National Savings & Investments	£602,000	0.75% interest
• Other (Unity & Petty Cash)	£1,000	
Total Cash	£962,000	At 30 June was £1,066,000

- It is **recommended** that £150,000 is transferred from the Lloyds Bank account to the NS&I account during September 2014.

3. Reserves & Balances

- Spending on Specific Reserves is within the profile anticipated
- The Dorchester Festival Reserve was used in April/May 2014 (this year) rather than in March 2014 (last year), i.e. a timing issue
- The General Reserve is likely to be in the region of £535,000 - £560,000 at the year end, around £300,000 more than required for emergency purposes. The Council could choose to top up Specific Reserves or allocate this surplus to projects at its discretion

4. Debtors

Debts outstanding for longer than 30 days at 31 August is £2,605. Further information can be provided if required.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2014

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Employees	665	265	248 -	17
Premises	148	81	68 -	13
Supplies & Transport	343	132	100 -	32
Capital Financing	89	44	43 -	1
To Specific Reserves	114	-	-	-
Income	- 216 -	80 -	88 -	8
Net Budget	1,143	442	371 -	71

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	- 4	1	2	1
Parks & Open Spaces	158	47	25 -	22
Cemeteries	8 -	2 -	5 -	3
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	35	16	15 -	1
Cultural & Twinning	43	21	19 -	2
Municipal Buildings	92	41	33 -	8
Other Services	46	31	29 -	2
Office Team	343	134	116 -	18
Outdoor Services	422	153	137 -	16
Net Budget	1,143	442	371 -	71

Specific Reserves	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	5	0	0	-
Municipal Buildings	20	0	0	-
Play Equipment	10	10	8 -	2
Vehicles & Equipment	20	0	0	-
Dorchester Festival	0	0	5	5
Net Budget	55	10	13	3

Policy Committee – 16 September 2014

Budget 2015/16 & Medium Term Financial Strategy

1. In January 2015 the Council will finalise its precept for 2015/16, and in doing so update its strategy for the period through to 2019. It has a relatively clear picture of its own financial position. It will however be setting a strategy against a background of significant change in the financial capacity of the other 2 Councils who provide services in Dorchester, and who are both signalling the need to cut service provision locally, although it remains unclear what such cuts might mean in practice.
2. The Expenditures that the Town Council has control over and will be considered in January are:-
 - Whether we need to change staff numbers, allow for a pay award, and any issues related to NI and pension (At £644,000 these factors represent 48% of our expenditure)
 - Fixed and gradually declining debt repayments, and the adequacy of contributions to our reserves (£203,000, another 15% of our expenditure)
 - Maintenance of assets, vehicles, utilities and business rates, external services and office costs, events and one off projects (£492,000, the remaining 37% of our expenditure)
 - The above figures differ from the MTFs, reflecting the switch from external Financial provision to an in house post, changes on CCTV and other less significant changes in year. They have had a positive impact of around £20,000 pa.

At this point there is no reason to expect any of these costs to rise by more than inflation, at 2%. Staff are currently focusing on a range of exercises that will eventually limit further increases in, or reduce, supply expenditure, and there may be some opportunity to reduce some external spend budgets in 2015/16.

3. The Incomes we have control over are: -
 - Our precept, currently £1,162,000 (84% of our income). The MTFs assumption is that our Council Tax (£173) will rise by inflation, 2%. We should work on the basis that we will be capped if we exceed this level of rise, even though that constraint is not yet in place
 - The Council Tax Base (the number of properties that pay Council Tax) should grow by 1-2% a year, while generally the additional burdens that come with growth are being absorbed into our Expenditure budgets. A 1% growth equates to £12,000 a year
 - While our other two main incomes (Municipal Buildings £71,000 and Markets £55,000) are not increasing, there are signs that we might achieve the budgets. Meanwhile because of fee increases and other changes we expect to increase the remaining budgets (£80,000 for Cemeteries, Allotments, and other sundry incomes) by around £15,000 a year

4. Offsetting our Expenditure against our income, the MTFS for 2015/16 set in January 2014 assumes we will be able to put £19,000 into reserves, largely as a result of reduced debt costs. Based on what we now know at the beginning of the budgeting process it is anticipated that the transfer to reserves in future years might exceed £50,000, unless we make new spending decisions.
5. While our Operational situation appears to remain under control the real issues affecting us result from the fallout to other sectors of government: -
 - West Dorset District Council are likely to carry through further reductions in Council Tax Support Grant – while our 2015/16 MTFS does not anticipate receiving any grant, and we still expect to get some, it is important we continue to remind them that they are retaining money distributed by Government to our tier for their own services. Most importantly though, we are not reliant on this grant, and any money we do receive will go into reserves
 - West Dorset have commenced a programme of service reviews, an update on which follows this report
 - Dorset County Council are signalling their intention to carry out a similar review
 - Local organisations dependant on Government Departments for funding are noting greater difficulty in securing core funding. The largest example of this so far is the removal of funding from Dorchester Arts worth £56,000 a year by the Arts Council, but there are several others already

It will be difficult to take a long term decision on guaranteeing support for the delivery of any one service until the full picture regarding all services that might be under threat has emerged.

6. Lastly our draft Corporate Plan anticipates a number of areas where expenditure might be required, often by partner Councils or other arms of Government. Items include: -
 - DTEP Highways and Parking related capital expenditure
 - Improvements to town centre infrastructure
 - Housing capital expenditure
 - Changes to the way the town is marketed to attract workers in non-government sectors, how the community finds out about what is available locally, and how tourism and heritage providers promote themselves collectively
 - As yet unquantified investments into cultural infrastructure (Arts, Sports, Heritage & Community facilities) to meet the needs of a growing town or to rationalise the infrastructure

Some of the above might be met from sums generated from developers (known as s106, planning gain, eventually Community Infrastructure Levy). The Town Clerk has asked West Dorset District Council for up to date financial statements regarding the sums currently held and anticipated. We have also met regarding the preparation of a Community Assets Audit for the town, which is now underway.

The Council's current levels of Reserves are more than sufficient for Emergency needs. It could therefore use some of its General Reserve to progress capital investment, albeit at a fairly modest level, if partners are unable to do so.

7. Summary

- Our own financial position is stable
- We are likely to face a number of requests to support services that we do not fund, but the scale and merit of these requests will not be clear for up to 3 years
- In the medium term we will have some revenue capacity to provide support for some services that would otherwise disappear
- Or we could use that capacity to fund debt associated with new capital investments, supplemented by our own Reserves
- Or we could accept that we don't support new services or new capital investment, and either continue to retain both the Reserves and top them up annually, or pass money back to Council Tax payers

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Medium Term Financial Strategy	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Yoy %
	£000	£000	£000	£000	Change
Employees	602	614	626	639	2.00
External Payments	567	578	590	602	2.00
Transfers to Specific Reserves	115	117	120	122	2.00
Capital Financing Costs	89	67	60	53	-
Income	(206)	(210)	(214)	(219)	2.00
Operational Budget	1,167	1,167	1,182	1,197	
Precept	1,162	1,185	1,209	1,233	2.00
Council Tax Support Grant	93	0	0	0	
Transfer to/(from) General Reserve	88	19	27	36	
General Reserve					
Opening Balance at 1 April	382	470	489	516	
Transfer to/(from) Revenue Budget	88	19	27	36	
Closing Balance at 31 March	470	489	516	552	
Specific Reserves					
Opening Balance at 1 April	285	345	462	582	
Transfer from Revenue Budget	115	117	120	122	
Expenditure from Reserves	(55)	0	0	0	
Closing Balance 31 March	345	462	582	704	
All Reserves held at year end	815	951	1,098	1,256	

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**Policy Committee – 16 September 2014****West Dorset District Council Service Reviews and related issues**

1. In July the Committee received a report concerning WDDC's Service Review programme. The Committee agreed to commence a process to assist the Council to decide how it wished to respond to particular reviews when WDDC begins its process.
2. The District Council met with 6 Town Councils on 1 September to give an overview to the process. Their presentation is available, along with a statement prepared by the Town Clerk in response to questions raised by WDDC. While many reviews will affect residents in Dorchester (e.g. Development Management, Environmental Health), there is no significant role for the Town Council to play in their future delivery. Several other reviews focus on central support services (IT, HR, Financial Services, etc).
3. Of the 22 reviews the Town Council should primarily focus on: -
 - Community Planning & Development – 2014/15
 - Support for Voluntary and Community Organisations – 2014/15
 - Tourist Information Centres – 2014/15
 - Public Toilets – 2015/16
4. Background information regarding Community Planning was provided to the July Committee. A request has been made to DACP for a summary of the benefits to the town of having a Community Planning function for the Dorchester area, and once this has been received the Council will be able to come to a view.
5. WDDC have provided the following data for Support for Voluntary & Community Organisations: -
 - WDDC provides annual support of c. £214,000 to organisations in Dorchester, a very significant part of an overall budget of £872,000 (list appended)
 - It has been confirmed that the target saving for the service is a minimum of £80,000, around 10% of the total budget
 - The Dorchester Markets Grant Fund is not part of the review, but it is anticipated that any learning points in relation to distribution processes will be considered for implementation to grants distributed from this fund
6. No approach has yet been made in relation to Tourist Information Centres or Public Toilets.
7. **The Committee may wish to set some time aside to consider developing the Town Council's position with regard to all of these services.**

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Review of Community & Voluntary Sector Funding

Appendix

2013/14

£

Total Budget	This may include central recharges	872,000
Target Saving	Minimum target, c. 10% of budget	80,000

Grants Distributed

Core Funding	Arts & Other	144,795
Rate Relief	Sports, Arts, & Other	51,025
Leisure Development Fund	2013/14 appears to be a typical year	18,576

Total Support Provided **214,396**

Core Grant Funding to Dorchester Based Groups

£

Dorchester Arts	Key Funder with Arts Council	36,345
Dorset County Museum	Part of this offsets All Saints Church rental	11,573
Dorchester CAB	50% of grant to body for D. & Sherborne	82,350
Dorchester Youth Advice Centre		4,438
Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership		1,350
County Groups	Community Action & Race Equality Council	8,739

Total Core Funding **144,795**

Rate Relief to Dorchester based Groups

Dorset County Museum		7,355
Keep Museum		3,409
Relate		2,420
YMCA		1,269
Dorset Advocacy		1,236
Age UK		1,066
Dorchester CAB		848
Dorchester Dance & Ballet		685
Routes		551
1610 Ltd	Dorchester Sports Centre	23,668
St Osmunds CSC	St Osmunds Sports Centre	5,899
Dorchester Arts Centre	Grove Centre	318
Others		2,301

Total Rate Relief **51,025**

2012/13

Leisure Development Fund Grants to Dorchester based organisations

£

Dorchester Arts	Festival GvL & Bldg works /Accoustic Clouds	3,460	700
Prince of Wales School Ass.	Gifted & Talented programme	1,000	-
Dorchester Youth Extra	Anonymous	3,000	2,000
St Osmunds CSC	Equipment/Business Plan Review/lighting	5,000	6,884
Dorchester Athletics Club	Facilities for disabled athletes	957	-
Dorset Musical Instrument Trust	Steinway overhaul	3,000	-
Durnovaria Silver Band	Building purchase	-	5,000
Angel Exit Theatre	Create Ballad of Martha Brown	-	2,000
London Dorchester Cttee Trust	Programme of events	-	1,992

Total Leisure Development Fund **16,417** **18,576**

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**Policy Committee – 16 September 2014****Dorset Fire & Rescue Service – Consultation about future direction**

1. Dorset Fire Authority (DFA) and Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) are consulting widely about their future governance structure, using collaboration with other organisations in a bid to reduce cost, largely through changes to governance and back office structures.
2. The consultation provides some basic facts about DFRS, as follows: -
 - The stand-alone service currently provides services to Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, serving a population of 744,000 residents plus visitors to the area
 - They currently attend over 8,500 incidents a year
 - There are 26 fire stations, 7 with full-time crews supplemented by on-call firefighters, the remainder depending on on-call firefighters only
 - Their work extends beyond emergency situations, working with a number of local community groups focusing on promoting safety
 - Within an annual budget of over £30 Million they employ 800 staff
 - The service costs £66.60 a year to a Band D Council Tax payer
 - The Fire Authority already considers itself to be one of the most cost-effective in the country, and has already made £4M financial savings a year since 2005
3. Recognising that further reductions in Government Grant are to come, and needing to reduce its budget by a further £2.3 - £3.2M a year DFRS is looking at collaborative arrangements with other organisations and are consulting on 3 possible options for change:
 - An independent Fire Authority working more closely with Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Councils and other partners – this is expected to save at least £0.8M and would retain key decision making at a Dorset level, but it would leave up to £2.4 M of savings still to be found, most likely in front-line services
 - An independent Fire Authority working more closely with Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority and Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Councils and other partners – this is expected to save at least £0.9M and would retain key decision making at a Dorset level. This requires shared Fire expertise and corporate costs, and would leave up to £2.3 M still to be found, most likely in front-line services
 - Full merger with Wiltshire and Swindon FA to create a single fire authority, while also collaborating with other public sector partners — this is an increasingly common approach, Devon and Somerset having merged in 2007. The combined budget would be £55M, a saving of £4.0M across the combined area, with the potential for more in the long term, mainly by combining fire specialisms – the approach would reduce, but not necessarily remove the need for reductions in front line services
4. DFA have identified option 3 as their preferred option, as it generates the potential for greater resilience, as well as creating opportunities for greater reductions to reduce non-

front-line costs, reducing the amount of front-line cuts that will still be needed. It does however reduce the influence that elected Dorset members will have over the provision of services within Dorset.

5. This Council is invited to: -

- Identify its preferred option from the 3 outlined in paragraph 3
- Make any comments about any of the issues raised
- Comment on the consultation document itself
- Raise any issues that it feels might particularly affect people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

6. **The Committee's instruction is sought.**

7. Alongside the questionnaire the Council received the following documents, which are available in the Council Offices prior to the Committee taking place

- A new combined fire authority for Dorset and Wiltshire – Draft business case (58pgs)
- Dorset FRS and Wiltshire FRS Safer 2020 (74pgs)
- Strengthening our fire and rescue services Public Consultation (12pgs, also available on line at www.dorsetfire.gov.uk)
- Dorset and Wiltshire Vision Statement (8pgs)

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL



Policy Committee – 16 September 2014

Dorchester Bowls Club – Variation to a Deed

1. In August 1990 the Town Council signed a deed with Dorchester Bowling Club Trustees (DBC), the elements of which were as follows: -
 - DBC would construct an Indoor Bowling Club on a piece of land leased to it at Sandringham
 - In addition to a number of grants raised, they would borrow £120,000 from Barclays Bank PLC to carry out the construction
 - In the event of default on the Barclays loan by DBC the Town Council would guarantee to repay that loan and would take over the building
 - In exchange for this valuable and potentially risky guarantee DBC undertook to share any surplus it made at a future date according to a formula set out in the deed
 - The deed introduced restrictions on how DBC set its fees in order that the Town Council might reasonably expect to see a surplus
2. The approach taken gave DBC and their lender protection at an important and early time during the Club's development in exchange for a financial benefit to the Town Council when the Club's finances had become stable.
3. Ultimately there was no need to draw on the Council's guarantee in the early years, and 23 years after the agreement was signed the Club finally repaid the loan to Barclays Bank. The final loan repayment was a trigger for the Town Council to begin to benefit from a share of the surplus the Club makes. At 31 December 2013 the Club had a net cash position of £134,000 and no long term debt.
4. There are some differences between a surplus generated according to the strict interpretation of the deed, and one made according to normal accounting procedures, notably the treatment of depreciation, contributions to reserves and what is considered to be legitimate expenditure. Additionally the deed requires DBC to set fees at no less than 90% of other clubs in the area, even if the Club does not have a need for the income.
5. While relationships have been positive throughout the last 23 years there will always be potential for conflict over how some of these clauses are interpreted by the two parties, as the membership matures and those involved in the formative years of the club, and who know the valuable role that the Town Council played at that time, play a lesser role in the Club's affairs. With that in mind the Town Clerk has had informal discussions with trustee representatives about replacing the current deed with one that assumes a relatively fixed financial value based on current operations. Such an approach gives both parties a degree of financial certainty and frees the Club up to manage its own affairs without having to refer back to the constraints in the agreement.

6. It is **recommended** that with effect from 1 April 2014 (i.e. backdated) the current deed is replaced by one which

- Requires the Club to pay an annual sum of £3,000, indexed to RPI
- Gives the Club the right to request suspension of payments if membership numbers fall significantly or expenditure increases significantly for reasons that appear reasonable to the Town Council (wording to be agreed with the Club)

7. If the recommendation is accepted a new deed will be drafted, signed and sealed.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Committee – 16 September 2014

Warding Arrangements for Dorchester

1. The Committee has previously made recommendations to Council with regard to the LGBCE's review of ward boundary arrangements for Dorchester, at both District and Town Council level.
2. The LGBCE has notified us of their final recommendations to Parliament, to be adopted in October 2014 and implemented for the May 2015 elections.
3. The final recommendations are: -
 - 9 Dorchester Councillors at District level, out of a total of 42, being 3 in North Ward and 2 in the other 3 wards, giving a variance from the average elector/councillor ratio ranging from -8% to +2% based on projected 2019 electorates
 - 20 Town Councillors, being 8 in North Ward and 4 in the other 3 wards
4. The recommendations mirror those made as proposals in their previous consultation. The Town Council replied to the consultation identifying that the proposals were electorally unfair and proposing two alternatives
 - 6 Councillors in North Ward and 4 in the other wards
 - 8 Councillors in North Ward and 5 in the other wards
5. The elector ratios recommended by the LGBCE for Dorchester Town Council are as follows: -

Ward	2012 Electors	Cllrs No.	Electors/ Cllr	Variance %	2019 Electors	Cllrs No.	Electors/ Cllr	Variance %
East	3,745	5	749	-1%	4,022	4	1,006	11%
North	4,297	5	859	13%	6,091	8	761	-16%
South	3,489	5	698	-8%	4,235	4	1,059	17%
West	3,654	5	731	-4%	3,791	4	948	4%
Total	15,185	20	759	-	18,139	20	907	-

6. By 2012 North Ward had grown to a stage where the current arrangements of 5 councillors per ward were no longer appropriate, necessitating some form of change. The LGBCE's recommendation for Dorchester Town Council, however, create a situation where North Ward becomes significantly over-represented while South and East ward are significantly under-represented. The 2019 proposal results in a vote in North Ward carrying around one third more weight than one in South Ward. This is worsened in the period immediately after 2015, during which time the population of North Ward will not yet have grown to its predicted level.

7. The LGBCE recommendations fall well short of their own +/- 10% target for electoral equality, although legislation does not require them to consider electoral equality at the local tier of government (para 8.5 of their June 2012 Technical Guidance). Para 3.11 of the guidance identifies that they cannot make changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils that are unaffected by any changes to district wards. Local authorities can, however, undertake community governance reviews for such purposes, implementing any changes by their own Order.

8. The final LGBCE report comments as follows: -

We also received a submission from Dorchester Town Council. However, this submission solely related to a proposal to alter the size of Dorchester Town Council. We consider that changing the total number of parish councillors is not a direct consequence of our district warding recommendations. Therefore, we are unable to accept these proposed changes as part of our final recommendations. We consider that this matter would be more properly addressed by way of a community governance review undertaken by the District Council.

9. Informal advice has been received from District Council officers advising that the timescale between now and 7 May 2015 is short, and will also be a very busy period for them due to the need to prepare for three elections, using new district ward boundaries. Notwithstanding this the Town Council has the right to request that a community governance review is carried out.

10. If the Town Council wishes to pursue a review it would be advantageous to: -

- Put a clear case as to the need for a review using the above material
- Make clear proposals as to the alternative(s) that it wishes to be considered, including impact on elector ratios
- Focus on changes to councillor numbers rather than boundary changes
- Offer any assistance that the District Council could make use of in order to speed up the process and reduce the impact on District Council staff resources

11. The Committee's instruction is sought.

Adrian Stuart

Town Clerk