



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

17 June 2015

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Tuesday 23 June 2015** 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

Mayor R. Potter and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, S. Hosford, G. Jones (Chairman) and T. Jones.

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 2015 (adopted by Council on 24 March 2015).

3. Finance Report at 31 May 2015

A

4. Refurbishing the Town Walks

B

5. Review of Committee and Panel processes, and appointments to Outside Bodies

C

6. Utility Expenditure Review

D

- 6. Use of Section 106 Funding for Recreational purposes E**
- 7. Dorset County Members Divisional Grants Budget F**

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
Policy Committee – 23 June 2015
Finance Report at 31 May 2015

1. Summary of Current Position

- Revisions to 2015-16 Budget since it was set - £24,000 reduction (Appendix 2)
- At end of month 2 underspend v. profile is £27,000 (Appendix 1)
- Too early to identify any pattern in underspends

2. Cash Position at 31 May 2015

• Lloyds Bank (2 accounts)	£484,000	0.30% interest
• National Savings & Investments	£900,000	0.75% interest, £1.0 M limit
 Total Cash	 £1,384,000	 (At 28 Feb was £1,123,000)

3. Reserves, Balances and other Non-Budget Expenditure

- £20,000 (Cathodic Protection system) spent from Earmarked Reserves to date
- No current plans for spending Service Growth Reserve which receives £80,000 this year
- Parkour (£20,000) and Curtains (£4,600) funded from external sources
- General Reserve likely to be £703,000 at year end, £90,000 more than £613,000 identified in 2015/16 MTFs adopted in January 2015, around £500,000 more than required for routine purposes
- It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that a review of the Corporate Plan take place with the aim of allocating up to £500,000 to new Corporate projects and commencing consideration of Service Growth issues

4. Debtors

- Debts outstanding over 30 days at 31 May is £2,382 (28 February £3,981)
- An update will be provided at the meeting

5. Payments List

- A list of payments made since 1 March enclosed as separate document. Supporting vouchers available in the offices for inspection during normal office hours
- **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list be approved

6. Recommendation to adjust the Budget from Management Committee

- See Appendix 3

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 May 2015

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	592	99	96	- 2
Capital Financing	63	17	17	-
Other Payments	523	128	109	- 19
To Specific Reserves	213	213	213	-
Income	- 203	- 25	- 32	- 7
Net Budget	1,188	430	403	- 28
By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	- 5	1	0	- 0
Parks & Open Spaces	146	71	65	- 6
Cemeteries	15	30	23	- 6
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	38	6	5	- 1
Cultural & Twinning	53	5	5	- 1
Municipal Buildings	102	49	44	- 6
Other Services	118	96	96	- 0
Office Team	324	74	68	- 6
Outdoor Services	397	97	96	- 1
Net Budget	1,188	430	403	- 28
Specific Reserves	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	25	25	0	-25
Municipal Buildings	25	25	20	-5
Play Equipment	10	10	0	- 10
Vehicles & Equipment	12	12	0	-12
Christmas Lights Replace	5	5	0	-5
Maumbury Rings s106	15	15	0	- 15
Net Budget	92	92	20	- 72

KEY BUDGET VARIATIONS

Service	Reason for Budget Variation	Likely Full Year Variation
		£
Variations from 2015/16 Budget		
No notable variations to date		-
Adjustments made to 2015/16 Budget		
		£
Employees		
Office Team	Staff not at top of Grade	- 10,500
	Apprentice (net of WDDC grant)	3,000
Outdoor Services	Head gardener not appointed	- 10,700
	Pensions not claimed	- 2,800
	Apprentice	6,000
	Staff rota revised due to Sunday	
Municipal Buildings	Church	- 7,000
Supplies & Transport		
Municipal Buildings	Utilities revised due to Sunday Church	- 1,400
Cemeteries	Grass Cutting	- 2,000
Other Services	CCTV - no proposals rec'd for 2015/16	- 5,000
Other Services	Apprenticeship grants to 4 partners	6,000
Income		
Parks & Opens Spaces	Bowls Club contribution	- 3,000
Municipal Buildings	Sunday Church hire removed	8,400
Other Services	Treasury Income - higher core cash	- 5,000
		- 24,000

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 16 JUNE 2015
Minute Extract

RESTORATION OF JOHN'S POND

7. Restoration of John's Pond

The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Town Clerk on the need to undertake some restoration work to John's Pond in order to address a number of serious issues that had been identified which included removal of silt, repair to the sluice gate and rebuilding the walls of the pond following tree root removal.

The work would need to be undertaken by a specialist contractor and the cost had been estimated at £6,080. A grant of £500 had been awarded from The Grid Community Award Scheme towards the project and Members agreed that Policy Committee be requested to identify further funds so as to enable the project to go ahead.

Once the work had been completed Members felt that a small event to re-open the pond should be undertaken.

Resolved

That Policy Committee be requested to identify the remaining funding so as to allow the John's Pond restoration project to be undertaken.

Note to Policy Committee members:

- This item was previously discussed as part of the budget setting, but deferred due to lack of Special Item funding at that time
- In May the Council received a report identifying an underspend of £116,000 on the Revenue Budget for 2014/15, resulting in an increase of the General Reserve
- Item 7 on today's agenda signals a wish on the part of County members to assist the resolution of some minor outstanding issues along the Millstream

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
Policy Committee – 23 June 2015
Refurbishing the Town Walks

1. The Committee received a report on 17 March 2015 outlining progress on the project, which included the following key points: -
 - The Town Council had an aim of upgrading the tarmacked walks to highways standard and transferring long term maintenance of them to the highway authority. Our budget includes £25,000 pa transfer to a reserve to carry out the upgrade (total £45,000 at 31 March 2015)
 - DCC Highways were commissioned to identify the cost of the upgrade, and had estimated it to be £350,000, significantly more than previously expected
 - The merits of options ranging from “Do Nothing” through to “Continue to full transfer” were considered
2. Recognising that the cost was very high, but also that there were long term benefits to a transfer, the Committee resolved that

“Further discussions take place with Dorset County Council Highways Team to better understand the options available to the Town Council, including an assessment of the likelihood of external funding, with a report to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee”
3. Officers met in early May to understand the scale of the works and consider an appropriate way forward. A clear plan emerged from that meeting that could be pursued if the Council wish to continue with a strategy of upgrade and transfer, as follows: -
 - Separate the works into four elements
 - i. Hardy’s statue to Trinity St (via West Walks Road and Bowling Alley Walk)
 - ii. South Walks Road
 - iii. Colliton Park (The Grove and Northernhay)
 - iv. East Walks (Salisbury Fields)
 - Focus initially on the high usage, high profile area (section i) above) and some priority patching works (a 10 metre access stretch at Northernhay/Glyde Path Road), these works costed at c. £150,000
 - DCC would look to identify £50,000 of funding from non-revenue sources, being section 106 highway monies and possible grant funding, with DTC meeting £100,000 from Earmarked Reserves, which will be available by April 2016

- Transfer this section of footpath to DCC, while retaining and continuing to maintain green spaces adjacent to the paths. As adopted highway the Town Council will no longer be responsible for cleaning the highway, potentially reducing our expenditure by c. £7,100 pa
 - Once section i) is completed look for external funding opportunities to support our use of reserves to transfer other sections, in the order laid out ii – iv, over the long term
4. If this strategy is acceptable we will develop a programme to start on section i) this financial year, using the General Reserve to cover the shortfall in lieu of a contribution to Earmarked Reserves in the next financial year.
 5. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the strategy outlines in paragraph 3 is accepted.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL



Policy Committee – 23 June 2015

Review of the Committee and Panel Process

1. The Town Council operates a Committee and Panel systems broadly as follows:
 - Monthly Planning & Environment Committees, making comment on c. 15-20 planning applications each month, occasional comments regarding traffic issues, and ad hoc involvement in a range of wider planning and environmental issues (typically 2 hours per month)
 - Bi-monthly Management Committee meetings reviewing performance for most external services Parks and Open Spaces, Buildings, Cemeteries, Allotments and Events, including occasional decision-making to adjust the delivery of services (typically 1.5 hours every two months)
 - Bi-monthly Policy Committee meetings considering corporate planning, financial and governance issues, staffing arrangements, and overall policy direction for the town, with occasional decision-making to adjust the resources used for the delivery of services (typically 1 hour every two months)
2. The Council also operates a Panel process, effectively Sub-Committees with the flexibility to involve non-councillors or to make site visits, on either a permanent or task and finish basis. In 2014 the number of Panels was reduced from 9 to 6, being the Arts, Community Activities Outdoor Services, Property Maintenance, Risk and Resources and Traffic Panels. These six panels met, in total, 7 times during the 2014/15 cycle, while a Task and Finish Group formed to consider Dorchester Arts move to the Corn Exchange met twice. Panels have no decision making powers, but there is a recognition that recommendations to Committees from Panels result from more detailed review than would routinely be the case at the Committee level.
3. The Council has requested that a review of the Member arrangements below Council level take place this year, with any changes to be implemented immediately following decision by Council. The options open to Council with regard to Committees are: -
 - No change to the current system – assumes that the structure is effective and efficient
 - Modest rebalancing of workloads between the Committees – this would require more responsibility to transfer to the Policy Committee from the other Committees
 - Major change to increase the number of Committees, taking back some of the workload passed to the Panels
 - Major change, reducing the number of Committees from 3 to 1 or 2, or even more radical change to abolish Committees altogether to be replaced by monthly meetings of Council
4. A separate question is how to conduct the review in order for all members to feed into the design of any alternative arrangement. Options include: -
 - A small (say 6 members) task and finish group to review current arrangements, gather views via a questionnaire and make recommendations to Council in September

- An informal meeting of Council to discuss the issue, facilitated by either the Town Clerk or some senior Councillors

If selecting a group of members to undertake the review, appropriate consideration should be given to the role of Chairmen and experienced/inexperienced members of Council.

5. It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMEND** an appropriate way forward to Council to include: -

- A preference regarding the scale of the review (Para 3)
- A process for conducting the review (Para 4)

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
Policy Committee – 23 June 2015
Utility Expenditure Review

1. In 2014/15 the Council spent £66,000 on supplies of Electricity, Gas, Water and Sewerage services to c. 20 sites across the town and on our phone service. The Financial Controller and Town Clerk are reviewing this expenditure, with a view to: -
 - Ensuring that we still need the service being paid for
 - Reducing consumption by cutting out waste
 - Reducing consumption by investing in infrastructure
 - Improving procurement of what we still have to consume
2. Preliminary work has focused on desk top analysis and has produced some useful information which is being shared with specialists.

GAS, ELECTRIC AND WATER (BUDGET £58,700)

3. Dorset County Council's Sustainable Property Team have been engaged, initially to review 3 properties at a price of £950 (Municipal Buildings, Louds Mill Depot and Weymouth Ave Pavilion) to help us answer the following questions: -
 - Is our utility consumption appropriate to the use of each building?
 - What do we need to do to reduce wastage in water, gas and electric consumption on each site
 - Would any site benefit from a change in infrastructure, which would have an acceptable payback? – may include connect or disconnect to/from sewers, switch heating from electric to gas and consideration of solar generation
 - Across all of our sites, what is the best way to procure gas and electric supply contracts, and to prepare to procure water at a future date? – to include benefits of procuring through DCC
4. Feedback from DCC is expected before the Policy Committee meeting. If it proposes infrastructure investment a further report will be made with cost benefit data before the end of this year. Members will need to take account of this when considering future Reserves levels.

PHONES (BUDGET £6,200)

5. The Council has engaged Carter Utilities for around 3 years to manage procurement of lines, calls, broadband and mobiles (£2,600). This has already reduced our costs in recent years, although further savings are anticipated.
6. The initial review focused on items not covered by Carter Utilities. Six contracts with BT for the supply of lines, a mobile phone and outdoor bells, have been cancelled, reducing spending by £860 pa.

7. Our telephone system was installed in the 1980's. Until this year we have paid for maintenance at £580 pa. BT no longer support the system, so the maintenance contract has been terminated, but this leaves a risk to business continuity if failure occurs.
8. New systems take advantage of VOIP technology to move both data and voice communications over the same network and use fewer lines, reducing cost, while the functionality of the phone system will provide some marginal benefits. A new system is likely to cost £3-£4,000 to install, but we would reduce our lines by 2 (£250 saved) and would move to ad hoc maintenance which is unlikely to be needed (£580 saved), reducing the budget would reduce by around £800 a year, giving a 4-5 year pay back. One alternative is to remain with our current system and accept that it will fail at some point. Other alternatives are being explored.
9. A review is currently taking place of 5 lines used for alarm and public call boxes (costing £600) and our 8 mobile phone contracts (costing £1,500).
10. In total the budget for Phones in 2015/16 is £6,200, and a realistic target is to reduce it to £3,300 by 2017/18, saving £2,900 pa.
11. It is **RECOMMENDED** that £4,000 is reserved to replace the telephone system at an appropriate time.

Use of Section 106 Contributions for Recreational purposes

1. The growth of the town brings forward new development that places pressure on existing recreational infrastructure. Some planning decisions require developers to contribute cash to improve that infrastructure, commonly known as section 106 contributions.
2. The sums are collected and subsequently distributed by the planning authority, West Dorset DC, who have used a number of different methods for engaging with Dorchester District councillors prior to a decision being taken by the Planning Director at the Council. The most recent holistic attempt was a meeting on 1 March 2012, to which the Mayor and Town Clerk were also invited. At that time c. £234,000 was available from general development, and decisions were taken to allocate most of it to relatively modest schemes. Some ad hoc allocations have been made since.
3. Further contributions have been received and a large sum has been accumulated from the Poundbury Phase 2 development that was not part of the 2012 discussions. The sum now available may be as much as £1.6 Million.
4. In summer 2014 the Town Clerk requested that an audit of recreational facilities be conducted by WDDC, to assist with our strategic and operational planning and to inform distribution of the sum accumulated. Over the last 9 months District and Town Council staff have worked together to meet with most of the sports clubs and many of the facilities providers to assess their current position and understand their long term aspirations. Separately WDDC have undertaken a modelling exercise using standard Sport England software and have also conducted a survey of community building space available for cultural hire in the town.
5. There is now sufficient evidence to prepare some initial proposals to design an infrastructure to cope with the town's future growth, and consult on some specific allocations of section 106 monies to help deliver that infrastructure. WDDC officers have offered an opportunity to meet with Town Councillors to explain the process and preliminary ideas before consulting more fully with providers and users. The proposed date is 21 July at 5.30 pm, ahead of the Council meeting that takes place that night at 7.00pm.
6. As well as identifying physical changes that might be made, the process has allowed Town Council staff to understand what else is missing that might assist better use of available facilities. The message from this exercise is similar to other messages in the Corporate Plan for Heritage, the Economy, and Community services: -
 - Good facilities are not always made available by providers, often because of lack of capacity to do so
 - It is not always obvious to users what is available for them to use

- There is no forum for discussion between the myriad groups involved in sport and culture in the town, frequently leaving providers doing their own thing which compromises potential partnerships
- The impact of changes to how local government is financed is requiring the community sector to play a greater role in realising their own needs

There may be a role for the Town Council to play in ensuring that, once the right investments in infrastructure have been made, providers and users collaborate more effectively to make best use of that investment.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**Policy Committee – 23 June 2015****Dorset County Members Divisional Grants Budget**

1. Dorset CC has, for the second year, made £5,000 available to each of its members to allocate in support of local initiatives to improve the communities that they serve. The two members for Dorchester, Richard Biggs and Trevor Jones, have decided to combine their grant, and to seek the support of the Town Council for the allocations that they make each year.
2. Following discussion a proposal has been made for the use of the £10,000 allocation for 2015/16, as follows: -
 - Dorchester Opportunities Group – A playgroup providing service for pre-school children who require additional support, operating from the Prince of Wales pre-school site, who wish to improve their outdoor play area and provide specialist play equipment - £3,800
 - First Steps pre-School – A playgroup providing services for pre-school children, operating from the Manor Park site, who wish to replace general equipment and resolve storage on their site - £560
3. Having made two allocations, noting the report to the Management Committee regarding John's Pond, the two members have invited Dorchester Town Council to provide a report on the condition of the Millstream sections that run from Hangman's Cottage to Kings Road, which suffers from lack of clarity regarding ownership, but which has benefitted from a significant programme of works overseen by the Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee in recent years.
4. Remaining funds totalling £5,640 will be reserved until the report has been produced.
5. The two DCC members would welcome the support of this Committee for the approach laid out in the report.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk