



Dorchester Town Council

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13 January 2016

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Tuesday 19 January 2016** 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 November 2015 (adopted by Council on 26 November 2015).

3. Finance Report at 31 December 2015

A

4. Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2016/17

B

5. Apprenticeships

C

6. Community Development

D

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. Staff Pay and Related Budgets 2016/17

Separate

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
Policy Committee – 19 January 2016
Finance Report at 31 December 2015

1. Summary of Current Position

- Revisions to 2015-16 Budget since it was set remain at £30,600 increase (Appendix 2)
- Month 9 underspend v. profile is £66,000 (Appendix 1)
- Key reasons - Cemetery Income (-£16k), Offices Supplies (-£13k), Utilities (-£13k)
- Currently anticipating underspend of £60-80,000 at year end

2. Cash Position at 31 December 2015

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| • Lloyds Bank (2 accounts) | £611,000 | 0.40% interest |
| • National Savings & Investments | £900,000 | 0.75% interest, £1.0 M limit |
|
Total Cash |
£1,511,000 |
(31 October £1,653,000) |

3. Reserves, Balances and other Non-Budget Expenditure

- £58,000 (recent spending inc. Christmas Lights £5,000) spent from Earmarked Reserves to date
- General Reserve likely to be £720,000 at year end, £110,000 more than £613,000 identified in 2015/16 MTFs adopted in January 2015, around £520,000 more than required for routine purposes. Budget Report proposes transfer to create Corporate Projects Reserve

4. Debtors

- Debts outstanding over 30 days at 31 December is £407 related to 4 debtors (31 October £328, 5 debtors).

5. Payments List

- A list of payments made between 1 November – 31 December 2015 is enclosed as a separate document. Supporting vouchers are available in the offices for inspection during normal office hours
- **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £185,950.98, is approved

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 31 December 2015

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	589	442	444	3
Capital Financing	63	48	48	0
Other Payments	538	426	377	-49
To Specific Reserves	253	253	253	0
Income	-203	-154	-173	-19
Net Budget	1,240	1,014	949	-65

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-5	-3	-4	-0
Parks & Open Spaces	157	120	107	-13
Cemeteries	15	22	3	-18
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	38	29	25	-4
Cultural & Twinning	53	47	40	-7
Municipal Buildings	102	85	73	-12
Other Services	158	151	151	-0
Office Team	322	254	238	-16
Outdoor Services	400	311	317	6
Net Budget	1,240	1,016	950	-66

Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	25	25	10	-15
Municipal Buildings	25	25	24	-1
Play Equipment	10	10	4	-6
Vehicles & Equipment	12	12	12	0
Christmas Lights Replace	5	5	5	0
Maumbury Rings s106	15	15	1	-14
Energy & Operational Efficiency	10	10	2	-8
Net Budget	102	102	58	-44

KEY BUDGET VARIATIONS

Service	Reason for Budget Variation		Likely Full Year Variation	Committee Minute
Adjustments made to 2015/16 Budget			£	
Employees				
Office Team	Staff not at top of Grade	-	10,500	P 15/2
	Apprentice (Net of WDDC Grant)		3,000	P 14/35
	Special Item: Office Phone System		4,000	P 15/5
Outdoor Services	Head gardener not appointed	-	10,700	P 15/2
	Pensions not claimed	-	2,800	P 15/2
	Apprentice		6,000	P 14/35
Municipal Buildings	Staff rota revised due to Sunday Church	-	7,000	M 15/20
Supplies & Transport				
Municipal Buildings	Utilities revised due to Sunday Church	-	1,400	M 15/20
Parks & Opens Spaces	Special Item: John's Pond		5,600	P 15/2
	Special Item: Bowling Green		5,000	P 15/16
Cemeteries	Grass Cutting	-	2,000	P 15/2
Other Services	CCTV - no proposals rec'd for 2015/16	-	5,000	P 15/2
Other Services	Energy & Operational Efficiency Reserve		40,000	P 15/14
Other Services	Apprenticeship grants to 4 parthers		6,000	P 14/35
Income				
Parks & Opens Spaces	Bowls Club contribution	-	3,000	P 15/2
Municipal Buildings	Sunday Church hire removed		8,400	M 15/20
Other Services	Treasury Income - higher core cash	-	5,000	P 15/12
			30,600	

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE - 19 JANUARY 2016

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY & REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17

1. The officer team have reviewed the Medium Term Financial Strategy and a budget for the next financial year within the context of current year spending and the external environment.
2. The element of the budget relating to the **Policy Committee** is included at Appendix 1. Net of Special Items the services provided by the Committee have increased from £258k to £259k, the key changes being: -
 - A sum has been allowed for the one-off recruitment of a replacement for the Compliance Manager and for a handover period (£9k)
 - A reduction in Debt Charges (-£5k) and increase in Treasury income (-£5k)
 - Increases in Salaries and oncosts (£8k)
 - A reductions in office supply budgets (-£7k)
3. The element of the budget relating to the **Management Committee** was included in the agenda for and approved at a meeting on 12 January 2016 and totals £850k (2015/16 exc. Special Items £853k, a net reduction of £3k). A list of **Special Items** was recommended for consideration by this Committee as follows:

	£
Skatepark Upgrade	5,600
Picnic Tables & Shield Beds	2,500
WW1 Commemoration	2,000
Queens 90th birthday	5,000
Datasets for Pear system	3,000
Total	18,100

4. In overall terms the Operational **Revenue Budget for 2016/17** has reduced from £1,129k to £1,127k, a net reduction of £2k (Appendix 2). A separate confidential report covers the Council's position regarding a handover for the Contracts Manager, pay rises, national insurance contributions and the living wage, which collectively represent the main reasons for pressure on expenditure in the 2016/17 budget.
5. A **precept** of £1,251k (up 3.39%, £41k on 2015/16) is proposed. This is based on a Tax Base of 6,950 (up 1.42%, 97points) and a Band D charge of £180.00 (up 1.98%, £3.50).
There is no mention of any proposal to cap Town Councils in this year's provisional settlement.
6. If both the precept and Revenue Budget are accepted there would be a **net operational surplus** of £124k in 2016/17 (+£44k compared to 2015/16). While that leaves the Town

Council in a strong position in the short term the longer term situation remains difficult to predict. Any budget decision needs to take account of a wider context which remains the same as 12 months ago:-

- Both West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council are facing cuts due to reductions in government grant, but as yet no clear picture has emerged regarding where these cuts will be
- Council cuts are part of a decline in service provision and grant funding from Central Government departments and agencies, already being felt locally
- The Town Council is currently benefiting from income from tax base growth that will eventually be needed to fund services on Poundbury and in other parts of town which are currently still funded by developers
- The Town Council is gradually developing a vision for Dorchester's future, which other agencies will struggle to find funding for

7. The Council has considered its Corporate Plan informally and identified a number of possible ways of **allocating new revenue budgets** to support the community financially to preserve some levels of service should the County and District Council make cuts to their service provision. For 2016/17 it is proposed that the Revenue Budget is increased as follows, with the release of funds being subject to receipt of a more detailed report to this Committee.

Service	£000	Comments
Poundbury Open Spaces	30	Awaiting transfer from Duchy. Until required, add to Corporate Projects Reserve
Community Development	35	See separate report
Apprenticeships	15	See separate report. Rolling one year, could be cancelled at any point
Services provided by other tiers of government	45	Awaiting information from DCC/WDDC. Until required, add to Corporate Projects Reserve
Total	125	

8. As part of the Corporate Plan discussions members indicated general support for allocating £500,000 to a number of new one-off corporate projects. It is proposed that £500,000 is transferred from the General Reserve/Service Growth Reserve to a **new Corporate Projects Reserve**. It is also proposed that the reserve is initially allocated to the following projects, but that a report is submitted for approval prior to the release of funding for each project: -

Project	£000	Possible use
Borough Gardens Tennis Courts	150	Provide 2 new courts on Bowling Green & replace "Clock court" with garden
Heritage Tourism Project	70	Project Manager to develop new strategy, plus signage and informal heritage refurbishment. Needs matchfunding
Sport & Cultural Partners Major Projects grants	50	Provide token contributions to major sports and culture projects
Local Plan Specialist advice	40	Professional planning advice for discussions with WDDC regarding future allocations

		and/or for neighbourhood planning delivery
DTEP Environmental element	190	Environmental Improvements in South St and High West St
Total	500	

For budget purposes only it is estimated that around £150k of the above may be spent on projects during 2016/17.

9. The **Medium Term Financial Strategy** (Appendix 3) takes account of the following key issues
- West Dorset District Council have again indicated their intention to retain Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG), this year c.£65k, which Central Government indicated it has allocated to support the Local Council tier
 - The 2016/17 Budget as laid out elsewhere in this report
 - Inflation at 2.0% on expenditure where necessary, contribution to reserves and income, with the precept also rising by 2.0%.
 - Debt repayments included based on actual repayments, with no assumption regarding new debt
 - No assumed growth on tax base beyond 2016/17. 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 movement cannot be predicted as it takes account of new properties, single person discounts and benefits
 - No allowance has been made for future further reductions as a result of the efficiency and fee income programme

10. **Earmarked Reserves** (Appendix 4) will total £462k by April 2015, with an additional £135k added in 2016/17. A number of major items of expenditure totalling £369k are planned for 2016/17: -

	£000
Public Works Loan Board – Repayment of Loan	200
Walks Refurbishment – Ph1 West Walks and Bowling Alley Walk	100
Borough Gardens – Repaint Clock and Band Stand	25
Maumbury Rings s106 – Completion of works	14
Play Equipment – General Refurbishment	10
Vehicles and Equipment – Replace Piaggio small vehicle	10
Dorchester West Railway Station Ramp	10
Total	369

At March 2016 Earmarked Reserves are estimated to reduce to £228k.

11. 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 at the present time would be:

	£000
Emergency staffing cover (assuming half and no pay as per contracts)	55
Other temporary budget increases @ 15%	75
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

Taking account of funds to be committed to new revenue services (£50k) and to new Corporate Projects (£500k plus £75k) the General Reserve is estimated at £375k at 31 March 2017. 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, especially as the budget is tightened. At £375k the General Reserve significantly exceeds the minimum level required.

12. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Committee propose that Council adopt the MTFs and Revenue Budget to include: -
- a. A Council Tax Band D charge of £180.00, an increase of 1.98%
 - b. A precept of £1,251,000, an increase of 3.43%
 - c. The transfer of the Service Growth Reserve (£80,000) into the Corporate Projects Reserve
 - d. Indicative allocations of new funding totalling £125,000 a year added to the Revenue Budget, some of which will top up the Corporate Projects Reserve
 - e. A new Corporate Projects Reserve is created, with £420,000 being transferred in from the General Fund and that indicative allocations totalling £500,000 are approved
 - f. A list of Special Items proposed by the Management Committee totalling £18,000

If the recommendations are accepted a final budget will be drawn up for approval by Council.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Appendices

- 1 Policy Committee Budget
- 2 Revenue Budget Summary
- 3 Medium Term Financial Strategy
- 4 Earmarked and Strategic Reserves

APPENDIX 1

	2014/15 Actual £	2015/16 Budget £	2016/17 Budget £
CORPORATE & DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT			
Members Allowance	18,577	20,000	20,400
Members Training (inc CRB)	498	3,000	1,000
Members Travel & Subsistence	0	200	200
Civic & Ceremonial Expenses	1,691	1,500	1,500
Mayoral Expenses	9,876	11,300	11,500
Town Crier	647	600	600
Entertaining & Gifts	124	900	900
Compliance Handover	0	0	9,200
Youth Council & Democracy Day	163	500	500
Office Team	168,180	178,903	180,592
Met by Precept on Taxpayer	199,755	216,903	226,392
OTHER SERVICES			
Sawmills rent	6,560	6,600	7,600
Community Planning	3,400	3,500	3,500
DTC Apprentice Grant	0	0	0
CCTV	5,000	5,000	5,000
Additional Pension	19,000	19,000	19,000
Special Items	0	0	18,000
Debt Charges	84,577	62,700	58,100
Total Expenditure	118,537	96,800	111,200
Treasury Interest - Net of Arlingclose	-4,638	-2,000	-7,000
Sawmills rent recharged	-3,280	-3,300	-3,800
Market Income	-45,733	-50,000	-50,000
Total Income	-53,652	-55,300	-60,800
Met by Precept on Taxpayer	64,885	41,500	50,400

	2014/15 Actual £	2015/16 Budget £	2016/17 Budget £
OFFICES TEAM			
Salaries	176,062	185,792	189,591
Overtime	0	1,000	1,000
Employers National Insurance	11,650	13,934	17,973
Employers Superannuation	28,533	30,821	31,448
Training Courses	729	1,800	1,800
Travel & Subsistence	1,134	1,500	1,500
Subscriptions (Professional Bodies)	2,834	3,000	3,000
Cleaning Materials	977	1,200	1,200
Rates	4,475	4,700	4,700
Gas	975	1,700	1,000
Electricity	2,992	1,900	1,200
Water	269	300	300
Repairs & Maintenance	2,773	2,700	2,700
Waste Services	250	250	250
Financial Services	0	3,500	3,400
Employment Law and H & S	0	3,500	3,400
Bank Charges	1,397	1,400	1,000
Internal & External Audit Fees	1,749	4,000	4,000
Legal & Professional Fees	8,042	3,000	3,000
Insurance	31,054	30,000	32,000
Printing & Stationery	1,922	4,200	2,000
Newsletter	5,673	6,000	6,000
Office Equipment & Facilities for I.T.	11,958	7,000	7,000
Telephones	2,303	3,200	1,800
Advertising	2,544	1,000	1,000
Photocopier Charges	5,172	7,000	6,000
Postage & Franking Machine	1,638	5,400	2,500
Special: Telephone System	1,000	0	0
Total Expenditure	308,104	329,797	330,762
Recharge to Dorchester Markets Panel	-1,500	-1,100	-1,530
Net Expenditure recharged to Services	306,604	328,697	329,232

REVENUE BUDGET & RESERVES

	2014/15 Actual £	2015/16 Budget £	2016/17 Budget £	Change in Budget £
Parks & Open Spaces	534,654	558,402	565,472	7,070
Allotments	11,181	4,318	5,729	1,411
Municipal Buildings	140,143	152,026	134,894	-17,132
Cemeteries	62,569	84,131	80,815	-3,316
Cultural & Twinning Activities	57,352	72,052	63,091	-8,961
Corporate & Democratic Manage.	197,634	216,903	226,392	9,489
Other Services	45,885	41,500	50,400	8,900
Operational Budget	1,049,418	1,129,332	1,126,793	-2,539
Precept	1,162,423	1,209,555	1,251,000	-41,445
Transfer to/from General Reserves	113,005	80,223	124,207	-43,984
Subjective Analysis of Revenue Budget				
Employees	594,029	630,357	643,248	12,891
External Payments	466,633	506,705	499,405	-7,300
Transfers to Reserves	112,500	132,500	134,600	2,100
Capital Financing Costs	84,577	62,700	58,100	-4,600
Income	-208,321	-202,930	-208,560	-5,630
Operational Budget	1,049,418	1,129,332	1,126,793	-2,539
General Reserve				
Opening Balance at 1 April	402,619	608,941	749,152	
Transfer to/(from) Ops Budget	113,005	80,223	124,207	
Likely Operational underspend	0	70,000	0	
Transfer to Service Growth/Corp. Projects	0	-80,000	-495,000	
Council Tax Support Grant	93,317	69,988	46,659	
Closing Balance at 31 March	608,941	749,152	425,018	
Less allocated to new Revenue services	0	0	-50,000	
Remaining unallocated General Reserve	608,941	749,152	375,018	
Service Growth/Corporate Projects Reserve				
Opening Balance at 1 April	0	0	80,000	
Transfer from Revenue Budget	0	80,000	495,000	
Expenditure from Reserve	0	0	150,000	
Closing Balance 31 March	0	80,000	425,000	
Earmarked Reserves				
Opening Balance at 1 April	321,898	407,534	462,234	
Transfer from Revenue Budget	112,500	132,500	134,600	
Expenditure from Reserves	26,864	77,800	368,977	
Closing Balance 31 March	407,534	462,234	227,857	
All Reserves held at year end	1,016,475	1,291,386	1,027,875	
Outstanding PWLB Debt at 31 March	£ 532,000	498,000	264,000	
Tax Base	6,715	6,853	6,950	
Band D Charge	£ 173.12	176.50	180.00	
Precept	£ 1,162,423	1,209,555	1,251,000	

APPENDIX 3

Medium Term Financial Strategy	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revenue Budget					
Employees	630	643	647	660	673
External Payments	507	499	509	520	530
Transfers to Reserves	133	135	137	140	143
Capital Financing Costs	63	58	48	46	44
Income	-203	-209	-213	-217	-221
Operational Budget	1,129	1,127	1,129	1,149	1,169
Precept	1,210	1,251	1,276	1,302	1,328
Transfer to/from General Reserves	81	124	147	153	159
General Reserve					
Opening Balance at 1 April	609	750	376	421	449
Transfer from/to Operational Budget	81	124	147	153	159
Likely Operational Underspend	70	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Support Grant	70	47	23	0	0
Used for new Revenue Services	0	-50	-50	-50	-50
Transfer to Corporate Projects Reserve	-80	-495	-75	-75	-75
Closing Balance at 31 March	750	376	421	449	483
Corporate Projects (ex Service Growth) Reserve					
Opening Balance at 1 April	0	80	425	300	225
Transfer from Revenue Budget	80	495	75	75	75
Expenditure from Reserve	0	-150	-200	-150	0
Closing Balance 31 March	80	425	300	225	300
Earmarked Reserves					
Opening Balance at 1 April	408	462	228	315	405
Transfer from Revenue Budget	133	135	137	140	143
Expenditure from Reserves	-78	-369	-50	-50	-50
Closing Balance 31 March	462	228	315	405	498
All Reserves held at year end	1,292	1,029	1,036	1,079	1,281
Outstanding Debt at Year End	498	264	230	196	162
Council Tax	£ 176.50	180.00	183.60	187.27	191.02

Notes

1. Inflation has been assumed at 2.00% from 2016/17 onwards
2. Transfer to Specific Reserves reflects a one-off transfer to the Service Growth Reserve in 2015/16
3. Debt Charges are based on current debt profiles
4. No allowance has been assumed for Council Tax Base growth
5. Council Tax Support Grant is based on a profile supplied by WDDC
6. Expenditure from Reserves in 2016/17 reflects a loan repayment of £200,000
7. No allowance has been made to take on new services as a result of decisions by other tiers of government or as a result of new developments in the town
8. Savings which will be identified in budgets as a result of review processes have not been factored into the MTFs

RESERVES	Cttee	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Main reason for Reserve
		Mar 15 £	15/16 £	15/16 £	Mar 16 £	16/17 £	16/17 £	Mar 17 £	
Earmarked Reserves									
Infrastructure & Equipment									
Cemeteries	Man	47,000	30,000	25,000	52,000	30,600	0	82,600	Roads and Walls at Poundbury
Municipal Buildings	Man	39,000	20,000	25,000	34,000	20,400	0	54,400	Exterior works
Borough Gardens	Man	17,500	5,000	0	22,500	5,100	25,000	2,600	Painting Band Stand and Clock
Play Equipment	Man	43,854	12,000	10,000	45,854	0	10,000	35,854	Replace equipment
Walks Resurfacing	Pol	45,367	25,000	0	70,367	37,700	100,000	8,067	Upgrade Walks prior to adoption
Vehicles & Equipment	Man	5,367	17,500	11,500	11,367	17,800	10,000	19,167	Fleet replacement
Trees	Man	1,500	0	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	Bleeding Canker Horse Chestnuts
Cultural									
Arts Festival	Man	3,000	3,000	0	6,000	3,000	0	9,000	Periodic Festival
Christmas Lights	Man	5,000	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	Periodic replacement of lights
Town Crier Uniform	Pol	598	0	0	598	0	0	598	Uniform for a new Town Crier
Miscellaneous Reserves									
Loan Repayment	Pol	160,000	20,000	0	180,000	20,000	200,000	0	Repay long term loan
Maumbury Rings s106	Man	15,077	0	1,200	13,877	0	13,877	0	Heritage refurbishment
Dorchester West Rail. St'n	Pol	10,000	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	Access Ramp
Graves In Perpetuity	Man	14,271	0	100	14,171	0	100	14,071	Maint. and/or flowers on 6 graves
		407,534	132,500	77,800	462,234	134,600	368,977	227,857	
Strategic Reserves									
Corporate Projects	Pol	0	80,000	0	80,000	495,000	150,000	425,000	Own or partner capital projects
General	Pol	608,941	220,211	80,000	749,152	-324,134	50,000	375,018	Back Up. Min £200k required
		608,941	300,211	80,000	829,152	170,866	200,000	800,018	
Total Reserves		1,016,475	432,711	157,800	1,291,386	305,466	568,977	1,027,875	

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE - 19 JANUARY 2016****APPRENTICESHIPS**

1. In 2014 the Town Council part funded, with the District Council and the National Apprenticeship Service, two apprentices in the Borough Gardens. One subsequently secured a full time role in the Gardens while the other gained valuable work experience and a qualification.
2. In 2015 the Town Council initiated six apprenticeships in the town, 2 in our own Outdoor Services team and one each at Dorchester Arts, Dorset County Museum, Dorchester CAB and Age UK Dorchester. Five are in post, while the sixth was appointed and resigned, with the community partner seeking to re-recruit in the New Year.
3. The 2015 intake has again demonstrated the benefits of the scheme to those involved: -
 - For the young person
 - Paid work, albeit at a low rate of pay – c. £120 pw
 - A year's NVQ related training in a subject that is of interest to them
 - A first experience of the working environment
 - An opportunity to try a career path before making a long term decision
 - A valuable addition to their CV
 - In some cases a fresh start after their education has ended
 - Occasionally the apprentice secures a long term role in the sponsoring organisation
 - For the organisation
 - An extra pair of hands for a period of time at low/no cost
 - Personal enrichment for staff involved in mentoring and supporting the apprentice
 - The satisfaction of helping a young person develop their skills and of contributing to wider community opportunities for local young people
4. The key funder for both the above was West Dorset DC, who have provided 8 x £3,000 grants over the last two years, from a fund set up about 5 years ago. The fund is now exhausted and as a result the scheme cannot be replicated identically in 2016.
5. Notwithstanding this, the need for apprenticeships remains, as does the desire of both District and Town Council officers to sponsor some form of scheme. Options might include:
 - Further Outdoor Services apprenticeships funded largely by the Town Council
 - Grant aiding new or existing community partners to take on apprentices, recognising that the partner will need to part fund the placement
 - Working with the BID and Chamber to focus on the commercial sector

6. Funding is an issue, with each apprenticeship costing a minimum of £6,400: -
- The National Apprenticeship Scheme still appears to be an option for many applicants, providing £1,500 per apprentice
 - West Dorset DC might be persuaded to continue with some grant funding, albeit at a much lower level
 - Other local bodies or trade agencies might be persuaded to provide some funding and there may be some grant pots available, although securing this might prove more labour intensive than the sums generated
 - Partner employers would inevitably need to provide an element of self-funding
 - Having a Town Council budget upfront to demonstrate leadership would assist the process of securing funding from elsewhere
- 7. It is recommended that, subject to Council approval of the 2016/17 Revenue Budget, £15,000 is made available in the 2016/17 Revenue Budget as a one off item to progress apprenticeships, either at Dorchester Town Council or with community and business partners.**

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2016
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN DORCHESTER

1. This report is prompted by two events:
 1. West Dorset DC have concluded their review of Community Partnership funding and have decided to significantly reduce funding to their Dorchester Local Area Partnership (DLAP), to which we also make a contribution
 2. Our Corporate Plan identified the need to support development within and between different parts of our community, e.g. the business sector, or between the business sector and the heritage sectorThese two issues are related but not the same.
2. In September this Committee resolved:
 - i. That, when the current funding arrangement from West Dorset District Council comes to an end, Dorchester Town Council should focus on encouraging community development with key partners within the town, rather than becoming directly involved in a Partnership covering a much wider area
 - ii. That the Town Clerk should continue discussions with West Dorset District Council about how this new arrangement might fit within an overall framework for Community Enabling within the district

West Dorset DC and Community Planning

3. It is understood that WDDC will bring the current arrangement, in which they fund Dorset Community Action to deliver a service, to an end by 31 March 2016. At that point our own funding commitment of £3,500 to DCA will also end. I will communicate to Dorset Community Action that in the event that this decision requires them to incur wind down costs the Town Council would expect to meet a share of those costs in proportion to its annual contribution. This would bring to an end the current Community Planning service in the wider Dorchester area.
4. West Dorset DC wish to discuss with us how a lesser service might be delivered across the district and have reserved £6,000 per area (for 4 areas) plus a smaller sum for Beaminster area. Discussions may lead to a contract or alternatively WDDC may seek an arrangement elsewhere.
5. In the event that this Council decides to pursue the appointment of a Community Development Officer I will enter into discussions with WDDC about their expectations and if they are compatible with our plans I will seek to enter into a contract to deliver their expectations alongside our own. Realistically if they are focused on an area wider than Dorchester there will be no benefit to agreeing a contract, if they accept that a service will be delivered only in Dorchester there should be an opportunity to agree a contract.

Community Development by Dorchester Town Council

6. The Town Council already has a good record of working alongside our local community. Examples of this include: -
 1. Numerous collaborative cultural and community events on sites we own, e.g. the Borough Gardens and Maumbury Rings and around the town, e.g. Christmas Cracker and Remembrance Day
 2. Minor infrastructure partnerships such as Christmas Lights, Town Centre benches, sport and play facilities
 3. Grant funding, Boot Sale grants, twinning, sponsorship and subsidised access to our facilities (buildings, sports pitches, etc)
 4. Networking with and between different sectors of the community to facilitate change, initiated or led by councillors and staff, that often lead to the above

Over the last two years there has been a conscious effort to be less of a provider and more of an enabler. This is already apparent in our Borough Gardens events programme and early discussions are underway with key sports facility users to identify how we can assist them to become more self-sufficient.

7. Our Corporate Plan recognises the need to develop our role as a facilitator of co-operation between organisations in our own community, and also to take account of the needs of parishes whose residents recognise Dorchester as their local town. This might be broken down into individual tasks such as:
 1. The Heritage Tourism initiative, bringing heritage partners together with commercial operators in the tourism industry to establish a plan to increase tourism visits
 2. Working with local authority and business partners to look at how town centre management and environment might be better co-ordinated
 3. Working with faith and community groups to establish better partnership working to respond to the challenge of cuts in public social service support for specific groups such as the young or the elderly
 4. Taking on the mantle of co-ordinating some of the community led initiatives previously supported by the DACP, e.g. Try This, promoting the Strollers
 5. Actively seeking opportunities to integrate new residents into community life as the town grows, e.g. Poundbury, Brewery Square, Dorchester Prison
 6. Supporting and co-ordinating the development of good quality community information and facilitating access to it, through websites, print and face to face contact

The above are just a few examples of how our resources might be refocused to improve the sense of community which is already strongly embedded in parts of the town.

8. The Council is already fortunate that many of its staff are involved in the community and have been willing to use those community links to facilitate activity. As our back office processes are streamlined there may be more opportunities for staff to develop their roles. This should both be welcomed and encouraged but also managed to ensure it does not present conflicts.
9. Notwithstanding the potential to redeploy existing staff resources, step change can only be achieved through an additional resource. This could be delivered through:

- A dedicated staff resource, which provides flexibility that doesn't exist with contracts, allows much better integration with other team members and also ensures that the focus is on our priorities
- A contract with an agency, which means we are not dependant on an individual and gives access to a wider range of that organisation's skills and contacts

10. At present there is not a financial pressure to limit the allocation of a resource to a role, but as other local authority tiers reduce their spending that pressure might increase. Our ability to redeploy existing staff resources towards community development activity may also increase. On the other hand there is currently a significant need to attract a quality resource with many opportunities for development presenting themselves, but also being time-limited. Under these circumstances it is difficult to specify a contract for a defined period and for a specified amount of work.

11. Taking account of the above it is recommended

- that, subject to Council approval of the 2016/17 Revenue Budget, £35,000 is provided to engage a Community Development Officer on a grade to be established for a fixed period of three years (maximum salary £27,000 plus oncosts), to be offset by any saving on the Community Partnership budget and any income from a service level agreement with West Dorset District Council**
- that a work plan is developed with the new post holder to be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee**

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk