DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

21st NOVEMBER, 2006

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 21st November, 2006:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor R.B. Potter) and Councillors R.M. Biggs, T.C.N. Harries, S.C. Hosford, Trevor Jones (Chairman), P.G. Mann and L.M. Phillips.

APOLOGY for absence was received from Councillor C.M. Hebditch.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19th September, 2006, adopted by Council on 26th September, 2006, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12. QUALITY TOWN COUNCIL STATUS

The Committee noted that the Council had achieved Quality status on 23rd October, 2006 and considered a number of points raised in a letter dated 30th October, 2006 from the Chief Executive to the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils confirming the accreditation.

It was

RECOMMENDED

(1) That no change be made to the Council's existing practice for recording apologies for non-attendance at meetings.

(2) That the Town Clerk be requested to arrange for public notice of Council meetings to be published earlier in future.

(3) That the agenda papers for meetings be amended to include a reference to the arrangements for members of the public to speak at them.

(4) That the Chief Executive to the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils be requested to provide examples from comparable councils of the form of annual report which the County Accreditation Panel considers the Council should publish.

13. ‘STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES’

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the proposals affecting town and parish councils set out in the Local Government White Paper ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’.

It was

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that further consideration be given to the impacts on the Council’s activities when the consequent legislation has been enacted and timescales have become clear.

14. STRENGTHENING PLACES, BROADENING CHOICES: SHAPING COMMUNITIES

The Committee considered whether to arrange for Council representation at this Conference which was to be held in London on Tuesday, 13th February, 2007 and it was

RECOMMENDED

That no action be taken.

15. REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES

The Committee considered the report of the Council’s Financial Service Provider on other policies and procedures which it might be prudent to adopt, in particular:

- Corporate Plan
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Asset Management Plan
- Treasury Management Policy
- IT Security Policy
- Internal Audit Plan
- Human Resources Strategy

It was

RESOLVED

(1) That the Financial Service Provider be requested to submit a draft Treasury Management Policy and a proposed Internal Audit Plan for consideration at the next meeting of this Committee.

(2) That further consideration be given at that meeting to the need for and timescale for introducing the other policies and strategies identified in the report.

16. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PERIOD ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER, 2006**

The Committee received and noted Management Accounts for the period ended 30th September, 2006. Arising from the consideration of the Accounts it was

RESOLVED

(1) That the Financial Service Provider be requested to seasonally-weight the profile in future reports.

(2) That any Member with suggestions for other improvements to the format of the reports be requested to inform the Town Clerk as soon as possible.

17. **LOUDS MILL DEPOT – FINANCING**

Further to Minute 33 (2005-06) the Committee considered the level of borrowing required to fully fund the construction of Louds Mill Depot and the basis on which the loan should be taken out subject to loan sanction being received.

It was

RECOMMENDED

(1) That the Town Clerk be authorised to apply for the necessary loan sanction to enable the Council to borrow £200,000 in respect of this project.

(2) That the resultant loan be taken out on a fixed-interest maturity basis over a period of ten years.

18. **THE EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY (AGE) REGULATIONS 2006**

The Committee considered the administrative issues arising from these Regulations which had come into force in October, 2006.

It was

RESOLVED

(1) That the Council's default retirement age be confirmed as 65.

(2) That the Town Clerk be authorised to determine all requests received under the Regulations save in the case of the Town Clerk for the time being, any such request from that individual to be determined by the

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee.

(3) That the remit of the Appeals Panel be extended to enable it to hear any appeals arising under these Regulations.

19. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk on his attendance at a recent training course on risk management organised by the Association of Local Authority Risk Managers and the implementation of risk management within the Council.

It was

RESOLVED

That detailed consideration of this matter be referred to a new Risk Management Panel and that two volunteers be sought at the next meeting of the Council to serve on it with Councillor R.M. Biggs.

20. **DECORATE DORCHESTER**

The Committee noted that, following the Town Clerk's letter dated 19th October, 2006 to the Policy Committee, which had been copied to all Members, it had been agreed to make a payment of £20,000 to the Decorate Dorchester Campaign in the current financial year instead of £5,000 per annum in this and each of the next three financial years. All of the conditions attached to the payment had now been satisfied, as follows:

1. a written assurance from the Council's Financial Service Provider that the making of the payment would not compromise the Council's financial position;

2. the Decorate Dorchester Campaign agreeing to renew the Memorandum of Understanding to cover the period and acknowledging in writing that the Council's financial contribution is equivalent to four-years-worth of advance contributions and that it is not possible to envisage any circumstances in which it will make additional contributions during the lifetime of the arrangement; and

3. Gala Lights acknowledging that the fittings are the property of the Council and undertaking to store, maintain and insure them appropriately.

21. **THE RIFLES REGIMENT – FREEDOM**

The Committee considered a letter dated 1st November, 2006 received by the Mayor from the Colonel of the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment asking the Council to resolve to extend the Freedom of Dorchester to The Rifles Regiment following its amalgamation in 2007. The same principle had been applied to the extension to the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment of the Freedom granted to The Dorset Regiment in 1946.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Freedom of Dorchester presently enjoyed by the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment be extended to The Rifles Regiment following its creation in 2007.

22. **150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE YEOVIL TO WEYMOUTH RAILWAY LINE**

The Committee considered whether to arrange any event to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Yeovil to Weymouth railway line which would take place in January, 2007 and it was

RECOMMENDED

That the Town Clerk be requested to endeavour to establish the form of other celebrations happening around the anniversary and, if necessary, to seek instructions from the Community Activities Panel.

23. **APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS**

As an urgent item the Committee considered a letter dated 15th November, 2006 from the Audit Commission notifying its intention to appoint KPMG LLP as the Council's External Auditors for a period of five years commencing with the audit of the Accounts for 2007-08.

It was

RESOLVED

That no objection be raised to the proposal.

Chairman