

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

20th JANUARY, 2009

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 20th January, 2009:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor C.M. Hebditch) and Councillors D.J. Barrett, R.M. Biggs, V. Black, T.C.N. Harries, Trevor Jones (Chairman) and L.M. Phillips.

APOLOGY for absence was received from Councillor M.A. Allwood.

34. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18th November, 2008, adopted by Council on 25th November, 2008, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. **MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES**

(a) **Planning and Environment Committee – 5th January, 2009**

The Committee considered Minute 63 of the Planning and Environment Committee dealing with its Estimates for 2009-10 and it was

RESOLVED

That this Minute be considered at Minute 42 below.

(b) **Management Committee – 13th January, 2009**

The Committee considered the under-mentioned Minutes of the Management Committee:

Minute 37 – Municipal Buildings – Lift

Minute 38 – Estimates – 2009-10

Minute 51 – Dorchester Arts Review.

It was

RESOLVED

- (1) That Minute 37 be approved and that the financial implications of the project be considered at Minute 42 below.
- (2) That Minute 38 be considered at Minute 42 below.
- (3) That Minute 51 be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

36. **POWER OF WELL BEING**

The Committee received and noted a copy of The Parish Councils (Power to Promote Well-being) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2008 together with an accompanying Legal Briefing prepared by the National Association of Local Councils.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

That no action be taken in respect of this matter for the time being but that the issue be reviewed in the event of a project being identified as desirable which the Council has no specific legal power to undertake.

37. **EXTERNAL AUDIT: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER – 2007/08**

The Committee received and noted a copy of the Annual Audit Letter in respect of 2007-08.

38. **INTERNAL AUDIT**

In accordance with Council Minute 45 the Committee gave further consideration to the most recent report of the Council's Internal Auditor in the light of the comments of the Town Clerk and the Financial Services Provider on the action already taken or proposed to address the various issues raised in it.

It was

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the Town Clerk be requested to report to Council at its next meeting on the matter of the signed copy of the bar franchise agreement for the Municipal Buildings.

39. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 31st December, 2008.

40. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

(a) **Cash Deposits**

In accordance with Minute 26 the Committee considered the report of the Financial Service Provider on the fluctuations in the value of the Council's cash deposits in recent years together with a summary of a range of investment interest rates currently available.

It was

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the Financial Service Provider be requested to submit a report to the next Meeting of this Committee on the practical and financial implications of the Council dividing its cash deposits between two or more financial institutions.

(b) Treasury Management Policy

In accordance with Minute 26 the Committee considered a suggested revised Treasury Management Policy and it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the revised Treasury Management Policy as now submitted be approved.
- (2) That the Financial Service Provider be requested to submit a report to the next Meeting of this Committee on the financial implications of early redemption and/or consolidation of the Council's various borrowings.

41. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Committee received and noted an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period to 31st March, 2012. The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to, and expressed concern about, the significant reduction in the value of the Council's General Reserve during the period covered by the Strategy.

42. **DRAFT BUDGET AND ESTIMATES – 2009-10**

(a) Planning and Environment Committee

The Committee considered the draft Estimates for the Planning and Environment Committee as approved by that Committee at Minute 63 and it was

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Estimates for the Planning and Environment Committee be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

(b) Management Committee

The Committee considered the draft Estimates for the Management Committee as approved by that Committee at Minute 38 and it was

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Estimates of the Management Committee be approved so far as this Committee is concerned subject to the deletion of the income line 'Sponsored Events' under Cultural Activities on page 9 and its amalgamation with 'Sundry Income' towards the top of that page.

(c) Policy Committee

The Committee considered its draft Estimates for 2009-10.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the draft Estimates for 2009-10 as now submitted be approved.

(d) Budget for 2009-10

The Committee considered the Budget for 2009-10 and the precept required.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Revised Estimates for 2008-09 and the Estimates for 2009-10 be approved subject to the modification set out at (b) above.
- (2) That a precept in the sum of £1,068,568 be levied on the West Dorset District Council in respect of the financial year 2009-10 requesting that payment be made in two equal instalments on 1st April and 1st October, 2009.
- (3) That further consideration be given at the next Meeting of this Committee to the most advantageous means of funding the capital works to be carried out in 2009-10 and 2010-11 to refurbish the ground floor toilets in the Municipal Buildings and to rebuild the main staircase and install a platform lift in the Buildings.
- (4) That the Financial Service Provider's Reconciliation of Reserves to Cash and Temporary Investments be considered at the next Meeting of this Committee.

43. **DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL – AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

The Committee noted that a copy of this Report was available for inspection in the Council Offices.

44. **A MANAGER’S GUIDE TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Committee received and noted a copy of this document which had been prepared by the Improvement and Development Agency, the National Association of Local Councils and the Audit Commission and noted that it was intended to issue a companion guide for members of town and parish councils later in the year.

The Town Clerk pointed out that the document had highlighted issues of lack of consultation with users of the Council’s football and tennis facilities which would be addressed and the absence of a mechanism for the Management Committee to assign relative priorities to the Objectives identified by the various panels which reported to it.

45. **CONSULTATION – CODE OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLICITY**

The Committee decided not to submit any comments in response to this consultation document.

Chairman