

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

12th MAY, 2009

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 12th May, 2009:

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

APOLOGY for absence was received from Councillor D.J. Barrett.

55. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17th March, 2009, adopted by Council on 24th March, 2009, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

56. **MOVING ON ... DORCHESTER FRINGE 09**

The Committee considered Minute 62 of the Management Committee relating to the level of the Council's financial support for this event which would be held from 21st to 24th May, 2009.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) The no objection be raised so far as this Committee is concerned to the payment of a grant of up to £5,500 in support of the event subject to the receipt of full detailed accounts and supporting documentary evidence including copy invoices prior to the payment being made.
- (2) That the Arts Panel be requested to conduct an early review of the success of the event to enable the value for money achieved from the Council's financial input to be assessed.

57. **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – 24th MARCH, 2009**

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 24th March, 2009.

58. **ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09**

The Committee noted that, as the Performance and Policy Plan was not produced until November, the Council was now obliged by the requirements of Quality status to produce an Annual Report which needed to be published by 30th June, 2009.

It was

RESOLVED

That approval of the 2008-09 Annual Report be delegated to a working group consisting of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Management, Policy and Planning and Environment Committees.

59. **ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee reviewed the Council's Asset Management Plan which had been modified to incorporate changes in the property portfolio and to correct inaccuracies in the previous approved version.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the revised Asset Management Plan as now submitted be approved.

60. **RESERVES**

Further to Minute 42(d)(4) the Committee received and noted a reconciliation of reserves to cash and temporary investments prepared by the Financial Service Provider.

Arising from the consideration of this matter it was

RESOLVED

That the Financial Service Provider be requested to report to a Special Meeting of the Committee on 25th June, 2009 on predicted cash flow over the next few years.

61. **CORN EXCHANGE LIFT – FINANCING**

Further to Minute 42(d)(3) the Committee considered the report of the Financial Service Provider on alternative means of funding or part-funding the capital works proposed to be undertaken in the Municipal Buildings during 2009-10 and 2010-11 to ensure that the Council's cash position was not compromised.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That, subject to the receipt of the necessary loan sanction, the Town Clerk be authorised to take a loan of £100,000 from the Public Works Loan Board with repayments being made on an annuity basis over a period of five years.

- (2) That the level of the Council's minimum acceptable general reserve be reviewed at the next ordinary meeting of this Committee.

62. **CODE OF CONDUCT – PILOT COMPACT**

The Committee received and noted a copy of a Compact between the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, the Dorset Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Standards Committees of East Dorset District Council, North Dorset District Council and West Dorset District Council and noted that the Chair of the West Dorset District Council Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer would be attending the next ordinary meeting of this Committee to discuss its application and implications so far as the Council is concerned.

63. **THE WALKS**

As an urgent item the Town Clerk reported that he had virtually completed the voluntary registration of the Council's various land holdings with the Land Registry. However, the Duchy of Cornwall had objected to the Council's applications for registration of the North Walk and parts of Colliton Walk and Gallows Hill but had indicated that, subject to the approval of the Prince's Council, it was prepared to transfer ownership of the disputed areas to the Council for no consideration. However the Council would have to bear its own legal fees in respect of the transaction.

It was

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk be authorised to accept the transfer on this basis and to engage solicitors to complete the matter.

64. **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

It was

RESOLVED

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.

65. **BAD DEBTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Financial Service Provider recommending the writing-off of four bad debts in the total sum of £777.18 together with a note of the credit written off by the Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.3 in the sum of £46.67.

It was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the four bad debts identified in the report in the total sum of £777.18 be written-off.
- (2) That the credit of £46.67 written off by the Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.3 be noted.

66. **PROVISION OF ALLOTMENTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk drawing attention to the significant un-met demand for allotments and suggesting a means of increasing the supply of allotments.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the suggestion contained in the report for the creation of an addition allotment site be approved in principle and that the Town Clerk be authorised to pursue the matter with a view to the earliest possible submission of a detailed report on the practical issues surrounding the issue.
- (2) That appropriate representatives of the Duchy of Cornwall be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee to discuss the provision of further additional allotments in future.

(Councillor L.M. Phillips declared a personal interest in this matter as he was an allotment holder.)

Chairman