

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

22nd SEPTEMBER, 2009

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 22nd September, 2009:

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

In attendance:
Councillor R.B. Potter
Ms D. Edwards, KPMG LLP

19. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21st July, 2009, adopted by Council on 28th July, 2009, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. **ACCOUNTS AUDIT MEMORANDUM: REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE**

The Chairman welcomed Deborah Edwards of KPMG LLP, the Council's External Auditors. Ms Edwards presented the ISA260 report to those charged with governance and indicated that the current intention was to issue unqualified opinions at the end of September on both the accounts and value for money audits.

A number of technical adjustments had been made to the Final Accounts during the process of the audit but the only material amendments which impacted on the surplus on the Income and Expenditure Account related to accruals of £3,456 in respect of an invoice from Dorchester Bowls Club and of £11,054 in respect of an invoice from Dorset Works Organisation, both of which had been received after closure of the accounts. The Committee received and noted a revised copy of the Final Accounts which had been amended to take account of adjustments made during the audit.

The Town Clerk circulated a draft Management Representation letter for the Committee's consideration and it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the auditors' report to those charged with governance be noted and that the Town Clerk be authorised to issue the Management Representation letter accordingly.

Arising from the consideration of this matter and the content of the report to those charged with governance it was also

RESOLVED

- (2) That the Town Clerk be requested to ask all Members to up-date their registrations of interests on a bi-annual basis, in March and September each year.

21. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 31st August, 2009.

22. **PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT LAW AND HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICES**

In accordance with Minute 14 the Committee further considered a proposal received from Ellis Whittam for the provision of Employment Law and/or Health and Safety services to the Town Council. The engagement of Ellis Whittam or a similar provider of these services would ensure that the Council's employment documents were kept up-to-date and would also provide assistance and some measure of insurance against employment-related actions.

The Town Clerk reported on the Council's current arrangements for procuring advice in these areas and on his discussions with existing clients of Ellis Whittam.

It was

RESOLVED

That the combined employment law and health and safety services of Ellis Whittam be retained for an initial period of three years at a cost of £4,450 in the first year.

23. **MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the review of the levels of Members' allowances under the Council's approved Scheme following the review of the level of basic allowance paid to members of the West Dorset District Council.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Parish Basic Allowance be increased to £956 with effect from 1st April, 2009.
- (2) That travelling and subsistence allowances be increased to the levels set out in the Appendix to the report now submitted.

- (3) That the Town Clerk be authorised to implement future such increases without reference to Committee during the period ending with the fundamental review of the Members Allowances Scheme to be carried out prior to 1st April, 2012.

24. **PROVISION OF ALLOTMENTS**

Further to Minute 66 (2008-09) the Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the feasibility, costs and benefits of using part of King's Road Playing Field for allotments.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Committee does not consider the benefits which would be achieved are justified by the costs of implementation of the project and that no further action be taken in the foreseeable future.
- (2) That discussions continue with the Duchy of Cornwall in an effort to identify suitable land for the affordable development of additional allotments within or in the near vicinity of the Town.

25. **ANNUAL PAY AWARD**

The Committee noted that agreement has now been reached on the Annual Pay Award effective from 1st April, 2009. The agreement provided for an increase of 1.25% on Spinal Column Points 4 to 10 and an increase of 1% from Spinal Column Point 11 upwards. In addition the agreement also provided for an increase in minimum holiday entitlement from 20 days to 21 days per annum; there was no equivalent increase to the holiday entitlement of staff with five years service or more which remained at a minimum of 25 days per annum.

Chairman