



Dorchester Town Council

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16 September 2026

You are summoned to a meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER** on **MONDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2026** commencing at **7.00pm.** to conduct the business set out in the Agenda below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denny'.

Charmaine Denny
Town Clerk

Public Attendance and 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 **contact the Clerk by 9.00am on the morning of the meeting.** We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as possible.

Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose interests where appropriate. A Member who declares any interest must leave the room. A Member who declares a registerable interest as a Council nominee to a partner organisation may first address the meeting as a member of the public.

Membership of the Committee

Councillors R. Biggs, S. Biles (Chair), J. Germodo, F. Hogwood, G. Jones, V. Lloyd-Jones (Vice-Chair), K. Reid, R. Ricardo and The Mayor ex-officio.

Agenda

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declaration of Interests**
3. **Minutes**

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 July 2026 (adopted by Council on 27 July 2026). A copy of the Minutes can be found at [Policy Committee](#)

5. **Public Participation**
4. **Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools – Page 3**

To consider a report by the Assistant Town Clerk (enclosed).

5. Draft Policy – Recognition of Long Service – Page 4

To consider a draft policy by the Assistant Town Clerk (enclosed).

6. Financial Update – Page 6

To consider a report by the Responsible Finance Officer (enclosed).

7. Sub group – Neighbouring Parish Councils – Page 10

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (enclosed)

8. Budget Working Group- Page 11

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (enclosed)

9. Dorset Council – Boundary review consultation -Page 12

To consider a report by the Town Clerk (enclosed)

ITEM 4.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 21st SEPTEMBER 2026
USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

1. This report has been prepared at the request of the Committee Chair following submission of a proposal from Cllr Poppy Farmer for the council to develop a policy on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by the council and by projects that it supports.
2. Cllr Farmer's request is a result of concerns about the following effects of AI:
 - usage of fresh water by data centres,
 - AI-generated imagery adversely affecting artists and designers
 - impact on the council's reputation
 - loss of entry level jobs
3. At present, the council does not have a policy on the use of AI in the delivery of its services or on its in projects which it supports through grants. However, in response to the proposal by Cllr Farmer and given the rapid growth in the use of AI, it would now seem appropriate to develop a policy to address the environmental and cultural impacts of AI tools whilst also recognising their potential benefits for increasing the efficiency of service delivery.
4. It is proposed that officers work with partners and stakeholders (such as the Dorchester Youth Council and grant recipients) to develop an AI policy with consideration given to the following:
 - a) the use of AI tools by officers and members in the development of reports, newsletters, communications and social media;
 - b) whether the use of local artists and creatives can be encouraged through the placing of conditions on any grants issued by the council;
 - c) how the council can communicate to the wider community the advantages and negative impacts of AI usage;
 - d) the link between AI usage and the council's revised Climate Action Plan;
 - e) how the use of AI aligns with the council's GDPR and Data Protection policies
5. **Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Committee instructs officers to develop a draft policy on the use of AI tools following research and stakeholder engagement and for the draft to be presented to the Committee early in 2027.

Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)
Dorchester Town Council

ITEM 5.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2026
LONG-SERVICE RECOGNITION POLICY

1. For many years, the council has recognised long-service by its staff and, occasionally, by elected members with a gift and a message of thanks from the Mayor. However, this has been done on an ad hoc basis and in the absence of a formal policy.
2. The council has been fortunate to retain key members of staff for many years and, in some cases, several decades. For example, the Allotments Administrator has just achieved 30 years continuous service and two other members of staff will have each been with the council for 20 years in 2027.
3. There is a need, therefore, to formalise this long-service recognition scheme and attached is a draft policy for members to consider (**Appendix A**). If agreed, this will be included in the Staff Handbook. In developing this draft policy, the council has sought the advice of Peninsula, the council's employment law advisors.
4. The celebration of staff loyalty and appropriate recognition is an important aspect of the council's approach to staff retention and welfare.
5. **Recommendation:** It is recommended that members approve the draft Long-Service Recognition Policy for inclusion in the council's Staff Handbook.

Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)

Dorchester Town Council

APPENDIX A

Long Service Recognition Policy Draft - September 2026

Staff:

Dorchester Town Council operates a long-service awards policy to recognise and celebrate the contribution and loyalty of its staff.

This policy allows for the giving of awards (typically gift vouchers) based on continuity of service with the Council and is not affected by any changes of role during the period of service. The value of awards is set out below but will be reviewed to take account of inflation:

- After 10 years of continuous service, you will be given a £25 gift voucher
- After 20 years of continuous service, you will be given a £50 gift voucher
- After 25 years of continuous service, you will be given a £50 gift voucher
- After 30 years of continuous service, you will be given a £50 gift voucher

The decision to give the award will take into account any misconduct by the member of staff or recent disciplinary actions taken by the council.

The award may be presented by the Mayor or the Town Clerk depending on the wishes of the member of staff in question.

Councillors:

Long service by elected members will also be recognised by the Council and continuous service of at least 25 years will be recognised in the following manner.

- After 20 years of continuous service, you will be given a £50 gift voucher
- After 25 years of continuous service, you will be given a £50 gift voucher
- After 30 years of continuous service, you will be given a £50 gift voucher

END

ITEM 6

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE – 21st SEPTEMBER 2026 FINANCIAL UPDATE AS AT 31 AUGUST 2026

1. Financial Position

1.1 Month 5 spend (**Appendix 1**): £34k under budget:

- £26k under on staff due to vacancies and the pending award (see note below)
- £14k favourable on Wednesday Market receipts.
- £9k favourable on Car Boot Sale receipts.
- £9k over on Markets R&M due to business rates bill paid upfront.
- £4k favourable on hire of Borough Gardens House Community Room.
- £7k under on Parks business rates due to successful appeal on Depot rates.
- £7k over on Parks R&M due to £5k paid out for Bowls Club lease surrender.
- £12k over on Parks & Open Spaces Water, due to water leak at Sandringham. Still under investigation, claim submitted to Water2Business for leak refund.
- All other under and overspends net £5k under

1.2 Pay award announced at 3.3% (budgeted 4.5%), to be implemented in October payroll and backdated to April 2026.

2. Cash Position

Account	Balance as at 31/08/26	Balance as at 30/06/26	Movement	Interest
Lloyds	£121,262.65	£100,461.56	£20,801.09	0%
CCLA			-	
Deposit	£1,825,000.00	£2,025,000.00	£200,000.00	3.79%
	£1,946,262.65	£2,125,461.56	£179,198.91	

- Second part of precept, £956,921.00 due by end of September.
- Debtors over 30 days at 31/08/26 totalled £111.00 across 2 debtors (30/06/26: £2,405.55, across two debtors)
- The payments list for the period 1 July to 31 August 2026 is available on the council's website at: <https://www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/docs/corpgov/financial/260921-Payments-List.xlsx>
Supporting vouchers are available from RFO.

3. Insurance Procurement

3.1 Following a full procurement exercise through the Find a Tender service, three tenders were received. Following evaluation against the criteria of price, quality of cover, and service provision, Clear Insurance Group was identified as the highest-scoring tender.

- 3.2 Clear's submission was approximately £5,500 per annum lower than the next highest-ranked bidder and offers continuity of service.
- 3.3 Clear Insurance Group has therefore been identified as the preferred bidder for the Council's insurance programme for the period commencing 1 December 2026.

4. Recommendations:

- a) That the payments list for the period 1 July to 31 August 2026 totalling £326,901.00 be approved.
- b) That Clear Insurance Group be appointed as the Council's insurance provider for an initial three-year term commencing 1 December 2026, with options to extend for a further one year and subsequent additional one year (3+1+1), at an estimated annual cost of approximately £44,600.

Responsible Financial Officer

Dorchester Town Council

APPENDIX B

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 31 AUGUST 2026

By Spend Type	Budget	Profile	Actual	-Under/Over
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Staff	1,206	534	508	-26
Capital Financing/Debt	15	7	7	0
Other Payments	710	320	339	19
To Specific Reserves	356	335	335	0
Income	-373	-123	-150	-27
Net Budget	1,914	1,072	1,039	-34

By Service	Budget	Profile	Actual	-Under/Over
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Allotments	-10	2	3	1
Parks & Open Spaces	203	127	126	-1
Cemeteries	67	89	95	7
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	46	21	23	2
Cultural & Twinning	78	39	39	-0
Municipal Buildings	249	221	221	-0
Markets	0	-15	-35	-19
Other Services	12	25	19	-6
Office Team	617	280	286	6
Outdoor Services	653	285	262	-23
Net Budget	1,914	1,072	1,039	-34

Earmarked Reserves	Balance 1 Apr 26	Contribution	Reserve transfers	Income	Expenditure	31/08/26
	£	£		£	£	£
Municipal Buildings	25,428.28	80,000.00			6,010.00	99,418.28
Front of House	14,032.28	35,807.63			9,367.23	40,472.68
Vehicles & Equipment Replacement	90,702.00	22,000.00				112,702.00
Parks Premises	27,584.38	12,000.00				39,584.38
Cemeteries	8,159.53	95,000.00			33,108.78	70,050.75
Play Equipment Replacement	13,912.37	30,000.00		27,530.00	15,331.20	56,111.17
Great Field Reserve	23,500.00	2,500.00				26,000.00
Climate Emergency Reserve	73,211.81					73,211.81
Public Realm	438,037.47				2,506.59	435,530.88
Christmas Lights	4,420.45	9,000.00				13,420.45
Arts & Cultural Reserve	12,318.11			650.00	4,624.19	8,343.92
Apprenticeship Reserve	15,503.03					15,503.03
Planning Advice Reserve	16,243.62				3,914.38	12,329.24
Trees Reserve	15,050.87	6,000.00		2,030.00	1,301.30	21,779.57
Tennis Courts Refurb	14,000.00					14,000.00
Markets Reserve	2,911.03			19,924.00		22,835.03
Tourism Reserve	26,395.99				279.50	26,116.49
19 North Square	9,545.00			13,100.88		22,645.88
Elections Reserve	0.00	3,000.00				3,000.00
Corporate Projects Reserve	735,490.14	60,000.00			23,127.50	772,362.64
Graves in Perpetuity	13,979.00					13,979.00
Total	1,580,425.36	355,307.63	0.00	63,234.88	99,570.67	1,899,397.20

ITEM 7

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2026

SUB GROUP – NEIGHBOURING PARISH COUNCILS

1. At the Full Council meeting held on 29 September 2025, Councillors Biles, Germodo, Kent-Ledger, Leaper, Lloyd- Jones, Potter, Reid and Ricardo were appointed to the Local Plan/Future Direction Task and Finish Group
2. The Task and Finish Group was established as it was felt that it would be helpful to have a small Member Working Group to guide and oversee the work related to the Local Plan and the proposed Community Governance Review. This would enable the Council to react quickly to matters which may emerge between Committee cycles. That Working Group should also meet with representatives of Charminster and Stinsford Parish Councils to discuss future action should DOR13 remain in the Local Plan.
3. The group have yet to formally meet; however representatives from the group along with the Town Clerk met with Councillors and Clerks from Bradford Peverell, Charminster and Stinsford Parish Councils on the 24th August
4. At this joint meeting it was agreed by each Council that a group consisting of two councillors from each Council would meet regularly to discuss any work or planning related matters that affect all parties
6. **Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Committee appoint two members of the Local Plan/Future Direction Task and Finish Group to sit on the Sub Group (name to be confirmed) with neighbouring Parish Councils.

Town Clerk

Dorchester Town Council

ITEM 8

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2026
BUDGET WORKING GROUP

1. Annually each January the Council set the budget for the forthcoming year
2. Previously the Councils Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), has drafted the budget and then consulted with the Chair of the Policy Committee and Town Clerk before presenting the proposed budget to Council.
3. It is proposed that a budget working group consisting of the RFO, Town Clerk and upto four members is set up
4. The working group would allow for officers and councillors to work collaboratively and review the budget in detail; specifically looking at high cost budget areas and discuss specific budget lines with responsible officers
5. It is anticipated that the group would meet in October and then in December
6. As finance is a key area of the Policy Committee, the Chair of the Committee would automatically become part of the working group
7. **Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Committee appoint up to four members (to include the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee) to form a Budget Working Group alongside the RFO and Town Clerk.

Town Clerk

Dorchester Town Council

ITEM 9

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE 21ST SEPTEMBER 2026

CONSULTATION – ELECTORAL REVIEW OF DORSET COUNCIL

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published [proposals](#) for new electoral arrangements for Dorset Council.
2. A public consultation on the proposals is running from 1 September 2026 to 9 November 2026. The aim is to then publish final recommendations in March 2027. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements are scheduled to come into effect at Dorset Councils elections in 2029.
3. The proposals have sought to:
 - Make sure that, within an authority, each councillor represents a similar number of electors
 - Create boundaries that are appropriate, and reflect community ties and identities
 - Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances
5. **Recommendation:** For members to agree on a written response to be submitted by officers on behalf of the Town Council for the Electoral Review of Dorset Council Consultation

Town Clerk

Dorchester Town Council

Appendix C

Proposed Parish Warding Arrangements for Dorchester

