

Dorchester Town Council

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16 July 2025

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER** on **MONDAY 21 JULY 2025** at **7.00pm**.

Steve Newman
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, G. Jones, V. Lloyd-Jones (Vice-Chair), K. Reid, R. Ricardo, D. Taylor 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 12 May 2025 (adopted by Council on 20 May 2025). A copy of the Minutes can be found at www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk/The-Council/Committees/Policy-Committee

- 4. Financial Update – Page 4**

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

5. Draft Corporate Plan – Consultation Outcome – Page 6

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

6. Statement of Reasonable Expectations– Page 9

To give consideration to a draft 'Statement of Reasonable Expectations' (enclosed). This document has been produced by DAPTC. Otherwise known as a 'Charter' or 'Partnership Agreement' this is a high level statement that it is hoped all parties can sign up to in the spirit of co-operation and co-working. The document is presently being considered by Dorset Council.

7. Amendment to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders – Page 12

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

8. 19 North Square Offices – Page 15

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

9. Dorset Council Consultation on its Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Dorset Council is running a consultation on its draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Members are welcome to respond to the consultation individually and request the Town Clerk to respond on behalf the Council following consultation with the Chairs of Policy and Management Committees.

Details of the consultation can be found here - [Dorset's local nature recovery strategy - Dorset Council](#)

10. Lubbecke 1250th Anniversary Celebration – 15-17 August 2025

The Chair of the Management Committee has agreed to represent the Council at this celebration in lieu of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor who are unable to attend. The Council's established policy is to pay travel expenses to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and the Committee is asked to extend that policy, on this occasion, to the Chair of Management Committee.

11. Town Centre Working Group – Page 20

To consider a proposal from the Town Centre Working Group (enclosed).

12. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

To resolve "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".

13. Development Assistant Post – Page 25

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

14. Dorchester Arts Partner Project – Page 27

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

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 JULY 2025

FINANCIAL UPDATE AT 30 JUNE 2025

1. Financial Position

- Month 3 spend (Appendix 1) £10k Under:
 - £12k over on Parks R&M due to £14k on Holmead Play Park Fencing.
 - £8k over on Sponsorship due to grant to Keep 106 (agreed by Policy Committee).
 - £30k under on staff due to pending pay award.
 - All other under and overspends net £5k under

- Cash Position**

Account	Balance as at 30/06/25	Balance as at 31/03/25	Movement	Interest
Lloyds	31,666	162,653	-130,987	0%
NS&i	6,859	6,859	0	1.00%
CCLA				
Deposit	1,725,000	1,525,000	200,000	4.34%
	1,763,525	1,694,512	69,013	

- Following closure of Lloyds Dorchester, the option of switching banks is ongoing. In the meantime, a request has been sent to [Cash Access UK](#) to carry out review of community cash access needs, the first step in applying for a community banking hub.
- A system for taking card payments is being investigated as another alternative to cash and cheque receipts.
- Debtors over 30 days at 30/06/25 = £1,250, 1 Debtors (30/04, £0, 0 Debtors)
- Payments list 1 May to 30 June 2025 on website. Supporting vouchers available from RFO
 - RECOMMENDED** that the payments list, totalling £532,973.68 is approved.

Nigel Hayes

Responsible Financial Officer

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 30 JUNE 2025

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	1,125	319	290	-29
Capital Financing/Debt	15	7	7	0
Other Payments	556	230	250	19
To Specific Reserves	344	344	344	0
Income	-216	-45	-45	-0
Net Budget	1,823	855	845	-10

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-10	0	0	-0
Parks & Open Spaces	179	97	108	11
Cemeteries	-24	9	13	4
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	42	15	15	0
Cultural & Twinning	71	32	40	8
Municipal Buildings	355	320	319	-1
Other Services	-12	28	24	-4
Office Team	582	178	165	-12
Outdoor Services	640	177	162	-15
Net Budget	1,823	855	845	-10

	Balance 1 Apr 25 £	Contribution £	Reserve transfers	Income £	Expenditure £	Balance 30/06/25 £
Municipal Buildings	56,994.27	20,000.00			51,565.99	25,428.28
Front of House	31,642.81	239,000.00	-40,000.00		219,787.18	10,855.63
Vehicles & Equipment Replacement	113,473.22	22,000.00			45,171.22	90,302.00
Parks Premises	10,053.93	19,000.00			1,469.55	27,584.38
Cemeteries	36,931.25	10,000.00			9,356.83	37,574.42
Play Equipment Replacement	29,714.65	1,000.00				30,714.65
Great Field Reserve	11,000.00	2,500.00				13,500.00
Climate Emergency Reserve	30,948.70		57,067.60		6,114.75	81,901.55
Public Realm	440,310.47	5,000.00				445,310.47
Christmas Lights	4,420.45					4,420.45
Arts & Cultural Reserve	4,871.85			500.00	125.29	5,246.56
Apprenticeship Reserve	16,565.43					16,565.43
Planning Advice Reserve	18,498.62					18,498.62
Trees Reserve	13,663.30	20,000.00			5,266.70	28,396.60
Tennis Courts Refurb	10,800.00					10,800.00
Tourism Reserve	33,975.43				4,341.23	29,634.20
19 North Square	11,000.00					11,000.00
DTC Website & IT	1,230.00			1,431.37	1,285.00	1,376.37
Corporate Projects Reserve	714,958.39	5,082.00	40,000.00		8,021.00	752,019.39
Graves in Perpetuity	14,010.67					14,010.67
Total	1,605,063.44	343,582.00	57,067.60	1,931.37	352,504.74	1,655,139.67

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 JULY 2025

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2025-29 – OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1. The Council's draft Corporate Plan, which covers the life of this Council, was agreed for consultation at the end of last year.
2. A special edition Newsletter was produced and delivered to all households in the town. This Newsletter celebrated the Council's 50th anniversary and asked resident for their views on the draft Corporate Plan. The Council's main ambitions were set out and a short questionnaire was included which could be responded to digitally or by completing and returning. The consultation was also advertised extensively on social media and on the Council's website and a face to face opportunity was given at the informal Annual Town Meeting.
3. The results of the consultation are set out below:-

Q1 In broad terms, do you agree with the Council's strategic aims? (96 responses)



Q2 Is there anything else that you would wish to add to these aims? (75 responses)

45.5% of the comments received were related to matters already stated in the aims or the actions proposed to be taken to support the Council's vision.

25% of respondents did not have anything to add.

12% of the comments were matters over which the Town Council has no control.

6% of comments were individual responses which did not propose any new aims.

4% of respondents were concerned about anti-social behaviour in the town.

2.5% of respondents wanted the TIC to return.

2.5% of respondents suggested more and improved public toilets.

2.5% of respondents wanted improved bus services.

The Town Clerk also received a direct response to the consultation via email which proposed that a new strategic aim should be included in the Plan as follows:-

- Promoting Dorchester as a welcoming and inclusive town for all.

The respondent felt that this would be a good idea because:

- It is already very in keeping with the philosophy and actions of the Town Council
- It appeals to both residents and visitors
- There are existing groups in the town who are supported by the Town Council already doing things that enhance the town's inclusivity, such as Dorchester Access Group, Space Youth Project, the One World Festival etc
- It encourages the Town Council to ensure there are a range of events and services that are accessible and inclusive and appeal to a wide range of people.
- It encourages event organisers to consider their event and if there could be specific actions taken to ensure the events are accessible eg wheelchair access
- It is a really positive way of promoting our town that will appeal to many visitors.

Q3 Which, if any, of the aims would you remove? (46 responses)

57% of respondents would not remove any of the aims.

24% of respondents wished to see the Council's climate change aim deprioritised or removed.

19% of respondents either provided responses unrelated to the question and / or one off responses.

Q4 Our medium term plan is that our part of the Council Tax (presently £210 per year for a Band D) will only rise by 2% per year with any savings we make on our service being used to develop our other services. Do you agree with this? (95 responses)



4 It is pleasing to see that the vast majority of respondents do feel that the Council's proposed strategic aims and financial planning for the period 2025 to 2029 are the correct way forward. The consultation did not identify any significant omissions or new areas of work.

5. With regard to the response received proposing the new strategic aim about inclusivity it is suggested that this should be included. As the respondent states, this aim is in accordance with the Council's philosophy and actions and it would be beneficial to state that in the adopted Plan.

6. The majority of respondents did not wish to remove any of the aims proposed in the Plan. 24% of respondents did however wish to see the Climate Change action deprioritised or removed. In considering this Members should be aware that the Council, in May 2019, agreed a motion to recognise that there was a climate emergency and to consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities, including energy use, with the aim of being zero-carbon by, at the latest, the year 2030.

7. It is recommended that the Council approves the Corporate Plan 2025-29 subject to the inclusion of 'Promoting Dorchester as a welcoming and inclusive town for all' as a new strategic aim.

Steve Newman
Town Clerk



Statement of Reasonable Expectations



Introduction

This statement sets out the reasonable expectations for collaboration between Parish and Town Councils and Dorset Council. It aims to foster better working relationships, enhance democratic representation, and ensure effective service delivery for the benefit of local communities.

1. Mutual Respect and Recognition

- Dorset Council recognises Parish and Town Councils as statutory, democratically elected bodies with legislated roles and responsibilities, the power of taxation and a deep understanding of local issues.
- Parish and Town Councils respect Dorset Council's role as the Principal Authority in strategic planning and delivery of a range of statutory services across its jurisdiction.
- Both parties commit to a spirit of cooperation, valuing each other's contributions and responsibilities, with a view to ensuring an effective and appropriate response to the differing needs and priorities of local places and communities.

2. Communication and Engagement

- Dorset Council will provide timely and relevant updates on policies, projects, and decisions affecting local communities, and will consult with Parish and Town Councils well before making decisions or policy changes that impact their role and operations or the wellbeing of their place and community.
- Parish and Town Councils will share local insights and concerns to inform Dorset Council's decision making by attending regular forums or liaison meetings when established to facilitate open dialogue and exchange of views.
- Clear points of contact will be maintained to ensure smooth communication.
- Consultation periods will allow sufficient time for meaningful input, and each party undertakes to consider the other's views and insights before making decisions, to seek clarification where necessary, and provide meaningful feedback.



3. Support and Capacity Building

- Dorset Council will offer encouragement, guidance and training opportunities to strengthen the capabilities of Parish and Town Councils, with a view to expanding their role in the system of local governance.
- Resources, toolkits, and best practice examples will be shared between the parties to support effective local governance.
- Parish and Town Councils will proactively seek opportunities to upskill and enhance their role in service delivery, community leadership and engagement.
- Parish and Town Councils will develop financial and strategic plans for the short, medium, and longer term to set out their ambitions for the community around them and enhance their role in place management.
- Elected members for all parties should be supported and trained to understand the benefits of co-working and partnering toward better outcomes for communities they jointly serve.
- Development of personnel in Parish and Town Councils, particularly those in senior roles like Clerks, will be encouraged to enable them to undertake broader roles and responsibilities effectively.

4. Collaborative Working

- Wherever appropriate, Dorset Council and Parish and Town Councils will explore opportunities for joint initiatives and shared services.
- Partnership working will be encouraged to improve local service delivery and community outcomes.
- A problem-solving approach will be adopted to address challenges collectively.
- Dorset Council will identify and pursue opportunities to devolve assets and certain services to Parish and Town Councils that are keen to take them on.
- Parish and Town Councils will assist Dorset Council to identify priority opportunities and collaborate with each other to facilitate widespread transfers of categories of assets and services.
- Dorset Council will work constructively with Parish and Town Councils to facilitate changes through Community Governance Reviews that strengthen democratic representation.



- Dorset Council and Parish and Town Councils will look to ensure through partnering that any future changes in local government structures have a minimal impact for the communities they jointly serve.
- Greater collaboration between neighbouring Parish and Town Councils will be encouraged to ensure best value asset management and service delivery.

5. Transparency and Accountability

- Decisions and actions will be made transparently, with clear explanations provided for major policy changes or service alterations.
- All parties subject to statement will uphold transparency in their own operations, ensuring local communities are informed and engaged.
- Mechanisms for feedback and review will be in place to assess the effectiveness of collaboration and address any issues constructively.

Conclusion

This statement represents a shared commitment to strengthening democratic representation and delivering better outcomes for Dorset's communities. By fostering mutual trust, engagement, and cooperation, Parish and Town Councils and Dorset Council can work together effectively to serve the needs of residents.

Note:

This draft statement has been co-authored by DAPTC Chief Executive, Neil Wedge and Graham Sansom one of the authors of the 'Fresh Start Report' published on 20 March 2025. It has been shared widely and will be issued for consultation with Parish and Town Councils across the Dorset Council area. Feedback has been gathered from officers of the larger parish and town councils in May 2025 and will be cascaded to all smaller parishes in June 2025 for feedback. The document will then be shared ahead of the 2025 DAPTC AGM where members will vote on the adoption of the document. Simultaneously, the draft document is being shared within the political and officer leadership at Dorset Council.

Minor changes have been made since 20 March 2025. Version dated 10 June 2025.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 JULY 2025

Financial Regulations & Standing Orders

1. *'Model versions of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are provided by NALC. Authorities should ensure that they are working from the latest model and that it has been appropriately adapted for their size and requirements. This should be annually reviewed and minuted'.*
2. In November 2024 Policy Committee reviewed the updated the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, and Council adopted them (copies available on DTC website). In March 2025 a new Procurement Act came into force. The following updates are proposed in order to comply with the new Act:

Financial Regulations:

To remove:

- 5.4** For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.

And to replace with:

- 5.4** *For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.*

Standing Orders:

To Remove:

17(c) A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).

To Remove:

18a(v) whether contracts with an estimated value below £25,000 due to special circumstance are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

To Replace With:

18a(v) whether contracts with an estimated value below £60,000 or due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.

To Remove:

18c(iii) the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a manner that is appropriate.

To Remove:

Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

To Replace With:

Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and, if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

3. Standing Orders have also been updated as follows to better reflect Code of Conduct requirements:

To Remove:**14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

a Upon notification by the Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.

b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chair of the Council of this fact, and the Chair shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 14(d).

c The Council may:

- i. Provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement.
- ii. Seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation to the matter.

D Upon notification by the District or unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

And replace with:

a Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.

4. Standing Order 19b has been updated from:
Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the chair of the Policy Committee or, if he/she/they are not available, the vice-chair of the Policy Committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the Policy Committee at its next meeting.

To:

Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Council's most senior member of staff shall notify the Assistant Town Clerk Corporate or the Assistant Town Clerk Outdoor Services who shall in turn notify the chair of the Policy Committee or, if they are not available, the vice-chair of the Policy Committee of absence occasioned by illness or other reason.

5. The language used in both documents has been changed to gender-neutral terms; 'he/she/they', have been replaced with 'they'.
6. The updated draft Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are available on the Dorchester Town Council website.
7. It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the draft Financial Regulations and Standing Orders be adopted.

Nigel Hayes
Responsible Financial Officer

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 JULY 2025

19 NORTH SQUARE OFFICES

1. The Council wishes to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and as a part of its strategy it agreed to terminate the gas supply to the North Square offices and introduce air source heat pumps and solar panels.
2. With the support and a grant from Low Carbon Dorset the air source heat pumps were installed in 2024. Unfortunately planning permission was refused for the installation of the solar panels.
3. The Council appealed this decision to the Planning Inspectorate. The outcome of that appeal has now been received and the Planning Inspector has upheld the decision to refuse planning permission, a copy of the decision letter is attached.
4. The offices are in need of some external decoration and roof work. This was planned to be undertaken at the same time as the solar installation.
5. The maintenance work required to be undertaken includes minor repairs to the roof and guttering, painting the front of the building and repairs to the wooden window frames.
6. Members are asked to:
 - (a) note the outcome of the planning appeal, and
 - (b) confirm that the maintenance proposed above be carried out as soon as possible, to be funded from the office maintenance reserve.

Steve Newman
Town Clerk

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 May 2025

by J J Evans BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/Y/24/3354626

19 North Square, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1JF

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Nigel Hayes of Dorchester Town Council against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/LBC/2024/03197.
 - The works proposed are the installation of 13 solar PV panels on roof of 19 North Square. 6 on the west facing roof and 7 on the east facing roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024, and comments of the main parties have been sought. Consideration has been given to those received in reaching the appeal decision.
3. 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 North Square are grade II listed buildings in the Dorchester Conservation Area. As required by Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), special regard has been paid to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Main Issue

4. The main issue for this case is whether the solar panels would preserve a listed building or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and linked to that whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

5. 19 North Square (No 19) is a mid-terraced building within a long row of buildings that front the public highway. Positioned within an area that comprises a mix of uses that includes residential properties, No 19 is currently occupied by the Town Council. To the rear of the property there is a shared area of parking and communal uses that is accessed via an undercroft from Friary Lane.
 6. The property is one of several listed buildings that form a consecutive group that curves around one side of the square. No 19 abuts the footway and is an early
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nineteenth century building with a high-quality, historic appearance. The front elevation has a rusticated stucco ground floor with brick walls, contrast brick detailing above the sash windows, and a pair of round-headed doorways under fanlights. The visual focus of the building is its frontage, with the roof having a modest subservience to the elegance of the front elevation, and this and its construction of the building from historic materials are such that it makes a positive contribution to the area. The rear of the building also has an ordered appearance, again with decorative brickwork emphasising the windows and a recessive roofscape. These features are all part of the special architectural and historic interest of this listed building, as is its position within a row of similarly elegant, historic buildings.

7. No 19 is part of a long row of high-quality historic buildings that define the eastern side of the square. Many of these buildings are three-storey, and they also have mannered frontages. Some are constructed of brick with contrasting brick detailing, and most have shallow, slate pitched roofs. Taken as a whole, this consecutive linear group of listed buildings gives an attractive, imposingly elegant definition to the street scene. Given their similarity of heights, materials and styles, they form a cohesive, harmonious visual group in which no one building dominates, with each building complementing and contributing to the setting of those nearby.
8. This terrace also positively contributes towards the character and appearance of the conservation area. North Square historically formed a secondary commercial centre to the town that functioned as a marketplace. The presence and importance of a secondary commercial centre demonstrates the functional and social historic importance of the town within the area, and this importance is reflected in the prolific number of high quality commercial, community and residential buildings present, including those around and near to North Square. Many of these buildings front the public footways and the long rows of high-quality, historic buildings is a distinct element of the character and appearance of the conservation area.
9. Solar panels would be installed upon both the front and rear facing roof-slopes of the building. Those to the front would be positioned to one side, leaving some of the historic roof-scape visible. Despite this clustered positioning, the panels would appear as a dominating and incongruous addition upon this historic building, and their striking impact would be conspicuously apparent from long distances away when viewed from Colliton Street. Whilst a suggestion has been made that the panels should be black in colour, this would not mitigate the harmful impact of such a large area of the roof being covered by shiny, reflective panels with an overtly modern appearance.
10. This harm would be particularly noticeable as the panels would make a strident contrast to the weathered roof materials found upon the host building and those nearby. The panels would be intrusively conspicuous, eroding the recessive nature of the roof, and their dominance would make them unacceptably prominent, thereby impacting upon the special interest of this listed building. They would also be a harsh and intrusive interruption of the visual cohesion of the combined roofscape created by this row of listed buildings, and would also detract from the contribution the terrace makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

11. The panels to the rear would wrap around the sides and bottom of an existing flat-roofed dormer and would be positioned lower down the roof than those on the front elevation. The impact of the panels would be more immediate rather than long distance due to the presence of other tall buildings along Friary Lane. Nevertheless, they would still harmfully draw the eye when viewed from the lane, and like those on the front elevation they would appear as a modern, alien addition to the building that would interrupt the visual cohesion of the historic roofscapes and the contribution they make to the conservation area.
 12. The appellant has pointed out that there are permitted development rights for solar panels on non-listed buildings and has provided other examples of panels that impact upon the historic environment. Irrespective of national policy to encourage sustainable energy forms, solar panels cannot be installed on listed buildings as permitted development, thereby limiting the weight of such a comparison. Of the other examples cited, those on the listed Corn Exchange are positioned on the rear of the building, being on a shallow roof which is partially screened by other roofs, all of which serves to minimise their visual impact. As regards those on the Whetstones houses, this is a complex of modern residential buildings within the conservation area and near to a variety of designated heritage assets. However, these houses are positioned within an area that does not have the same tight grain of contiguous historic buildings as is the case with the appeal property. Given these differences neither comparison forms a binding precedent for allowing the appeal.
 13. The appellant has requested consideration of a split decision in that the works could be separated into two discrete elements. Although development plan policies are not determinative in listed building cases, they have been referred to by the main parties, and so have been taken into account as material considerations in the determination of the appeal. The installation of solar panels would accord with the requirements of Policy ENV13 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) (LP) in seeking to achieve high standards of environmental performance, and help towards achieving a net zero target as advised in the Council's Planning for Climate Change Interim Guidance and Position Statement (2023). Historic England's Advice Note 18 – Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency, advises that solar panels may be acceptable on roof slopes of less prominence even if visible.
 14. However, both this advice note and the supporting text to LP Policy ENV13 advises that historic fabric should not be irreversibly damaged and that the building should be able to take the loading from the panels. Although the appellant considers the works would be reversible, how this would be achieved and has not been demonstrated, nor what the impact of the panels on the historic fabric would be. Given the findings above along with the ambiguities concerning the impact of the scheme on the historic fabric and structural integrity of the building, conditions would not overcome this uncertainty, and a split decision would not be appropriate.
 15. The Framework requires that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation. For the reasons given above the works would have a harmful impact upon the special interest of the listed building, upon the setting of those nearby and also upon the character and appearance of the conservation area. These harms would be less than substantial as the scheme would affect only part of the building, the settings of the nearby listed buildings, and the conservation
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area, although such harms would be of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, the Framework advises that where development would lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the works.

16. The installation of the panels would result in improved energy efficiency for the building, reducing its carbon footprint and reliance upon fossil fuels, with an associated financial saving. Such public benefits would be important, and in accordance with the Framework's requirements to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings. Whilst the Framework gives significant weight to such objectives, the Framework also requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. In this case the harm to the special interest of the listed building, including the uncertainties regarding the impact upon its fabric and structural integrity, the harm to the settings of those nearby, and the harm to the conservation area, would be considerable, and would outweigh the weight that would occur from the public benefits.
17. For these reasons the works would fail to preserve a listed building and its special interest and the settings of those nearby, nor would the works preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. The works would conflict with the Act and the Framework, and with the requirements of LP Policy ENV4, as it requires, amongst other things, that development should conserve the significance of designated heritage assets. There would also be conflict with LP Policies COM11 and ENV10 as these require, amongst other things, that proposals for generating heat or electricity from renewable energy sources should satisfactorily assimilate any adverse impacts upon the townscape or areas of historic interest, and that development should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness.
18. The decision notice refers to Policy E2 of the Dorset Local Plan. Although the Council has confirmed this policy was referred to in error, the appellant contends that the Council attributed weight to this policy. However, the Dorset Plan is at an early stage of preparation having been through an options consultation, and is some time away from being adopted, thereby significantly limiting the weight that can be attached to this policy.

Other Matters

19. The Council has suggested an alternative position for the panels upon the rear extension to the building, but the consideration of any such alternatives would be for the parties to consider outside of the appeal.
20. Finally, the appellant's concerns regarding the Council's handling of the application fall to be pursued by other means separate from the appeal process.

Conclusion

21. The works would fail to preserve a listed building and its special interest, would harm the settings of those nearby, nor preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Thus, for the reasons given above, and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

J J Evans

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 21st JULY 2025

DORCHESTER 'SHOPFRONT OF THE SEASON' AWARD SCHEME

1. The Town Centre Working Group, established by Policy Committee, has continued to explore ways to support the high street and contribute to the town's economic viability.
2. One idea that has emerged is to celebrate high quality and innovative shop fronts which contribute to the attractiveness of the town centre through an awards scheme. Following partnership working with the Dorchester Business Improvement District, the attached proposal (**Appendix A**) has been developed by the council's Tourism Development Officer.
3. The aim of the scheme is to engage the community in celebrating local businesses with well-design and attractive shopfronts that are an asset to both the town centre economy and the Conservation Area. The public will be encouraged to nominate their favourite shopfront and a small panel of judges comprising representatives from the council and the BID will select winner each season. The winning business will receive a small cash prize and widespread recognition.
4. The proposed scheme would be run as a one-year pilot project in order to assess public and business interest, and the impact on staff workloads.
5. The scheme would identify one winner following a judging process undertaken in partnership with the BID – and it is proposed that the council's judges comprise the Mayor and the chair of the Town Centre Working Group, along with a representative.
6. There would be a cash prize for the winner of each seasonal round of the scheme, and it is anticipated that the council would contribute up to £200 to each prize and that this would be matched by the Dorchester BID and perhaps other partners. There would also need to be a budget allocation for promotional material. So it is expected that a maximum of £1,500 would need to be allocated from the council's town centre budget across 2025-2026.
7. This proposal is being considered in detail by the Town Centre Working Group at its meeting on 21 July 2025, and the Group members can provide the Committee with a verbal update on its discussion.
8. **Recommendation:** It is recommended that the committee agree the attached proposal for the *Dorchester Shopfront of the Season* awards scheme.

Tony Hurley
Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)



Dorchester Shopfront of the Season Awards Proposal

A proposal for Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID to work in partnership, through the Dorchester Town Centre Action Group, to run a seasonal award scheme that celebrates the best business frontages in the [Dorchester BID area](#).

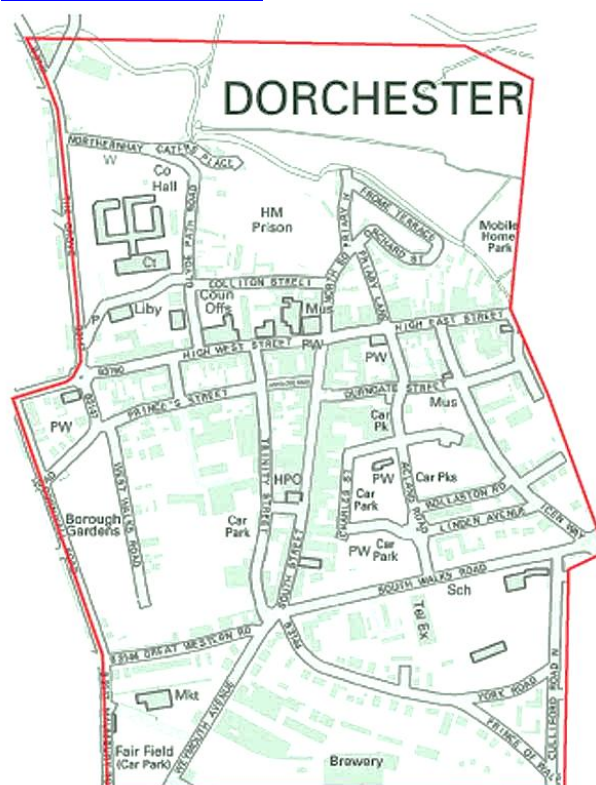


Figure 1 Dorchester BID Area Map

It is hoped that this award scheme will praise businesses that have ensured their business fits the heritage setting; is accessible, inclusive, inviting and well maintained; and has a creative and attractive window display.

It is also hoped that this award stimulates other businesses to do more to improve their business frontages because high quality and well-maintained buildings make an area feel more welcoming to local residents and visitors, improve the area's image, contribute towards a stronger sense of identity, and encourage higher footfall.

A seasonal award is most realistic in terms of capacity. If we do it too frequently then it will lose its value. Once a year is too infrequent. Seasonally means we can do consistent social media around the topic throughout the year.

- Spring Bloom Frontage Awards – Launch February – Award April

- Summer Radiance Frontage Awards – launch June – Award August
- Autumn Charm Frontage Awards – Launch Sept – Award October
- Winter Wonder Frontage Awards – Launch November – Award December

Proposal to start this year with an Autumn award and run for one year as a pilot.

Judging and Criteria

Step one – public nomination online via google forms and through a form and post box at the Dorchester Town Council Post Box reception. Google forms has been used previously to gather votes for the Sunflower Shopfront Competition and received 499 responses - [DSoS 2024 - Google Forms](#)
Public will be told that we are looking for their nominations of business frontages that are:

- Sympathetic to the heritage setting/conservation area
- Accessible and inclusive
- Inviting and welcoming
- Well maintained
- Attractive and distinctive window display

The five most businesses with the highest number of public nominations will then be announced as finalists.

A judging panel will then visit the five finalists and decide the winner based on the same criteria as the public used for their nominations. Proposed judging panel to include:

- Mayor of Dorchester – Cllr Andy Canning
- Chair of Dorchester BID – Neil Strudwick
- Chair of Town Centre Action Group – Cllr Les Fry

Scope

It is proposed that the award covers businesses in the Dorchester BID area. All types of businesses with a frontage can be nominated, including chains.

- Retail ☒
- Food and Drink ☒
- Services (bank, estate agents etc.) ☒
- Personal services (hairdressers, nail bars etc.) ☒

Prize

One winner and five finalists each season. The proposed prize is:

Winner:

- Press release issued by Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID celebrating winner
- Social media coverage by Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID celebrating winner
- In the printed Dorchester Town Council newsletter
- Blog on Discover Dorchester
- Feature in Discover Dorchester Enewsletter
- Printed Certificate
- Dated digital logo for download to be used by winner on their social media and website
- Winner to be announced by Town Crier in town centre cry
- Cash prize (50:50 split between Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID)

- Guest judge for the next seasonal awards

Finalists:

- Press release issued by Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID
- Social media coverage by Dorchester Town Council and Dorchester BID
- Printed Certificate
- Dated digital logo for download to be used by finalists on their social media and website

Branding

The following logo is suggested for use when promoting the award and on any prizes. The year and season can be changed each time.

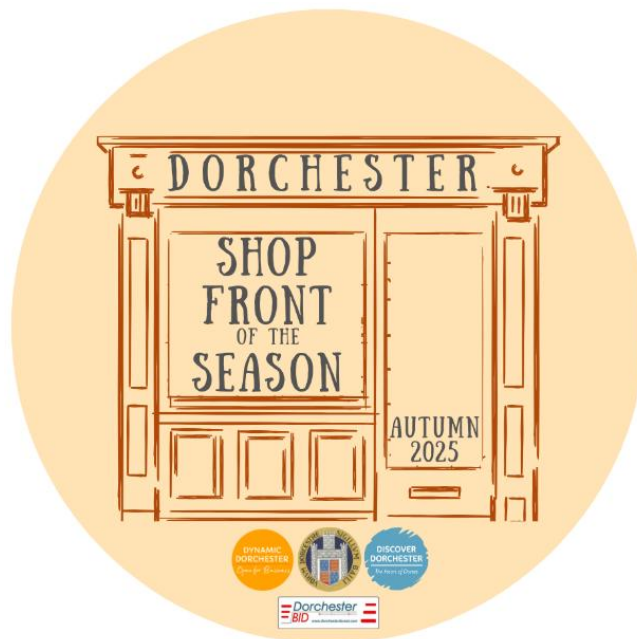


Figure 2 Proposed logo

Suggested timeline for the Autumn season of the pilot project

Dorchester Shopfront of the Season - Autumn 2025 Business Frontage Award

Month	Week beginning	Tasks
August	4 th Aug	Press release announcing new awards coming soon and page set up on Dynamic Dorchester section of Discover Dorchester website.
September	1 st Sept	Launch – photo shoot with judges and town crier cry. Nominations online open and printed forms at Town Council Offices. Social media posts and press release.
	29 th Sept	Deadline for nominations. Top 5 announced as finalists.
October	6 th Oct	Judges visit and judge.
	13 th Oct	
	20 th Oct	Announcement of winner and presentation of prize. Social media and press release. Presentation by judges. Town Crier cry.
	27 th Oct	
November	3 rd Nov	Announcement of Winter 2025 Shopfront of the Season.

*Proposal compiled by Matilda Manley, Tourism Development Officer. Dorchester Town Council.
17.07.2025*

