

Dorchester Town Council

Policy Committee

17 November 2025

Present: The Mayor (Councillor A. Canning) and Councillors R. Biggs, S. Biles (Chair), J. Germodo, G. Jones, V. Lloyd-Jones, K. Reid and D. Taylor.

In Attendance

Councillors W. Gibbons, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper and M. Rennie.

Mr R. Hattersley in respect of Minute No. 26.

Apologies: Councillor R. Ricardo.

24. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2025, adopted by Council on 29 September 2025, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

25. Declaration of Interests

Councillors J. Germodo and D. Taylor declared an interest in respect of Minute No. 29, Keep106 Community Radio, and left the room during its consideration.

26. Community Hub

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Rob Hattersley regarding a proposal for a townwide community hub. The idea was at the planning stage and he explained the needs that a hub could address, identifying gaps in provision and filling them, functions that could be included and next steps in developing the project.

It was noted that there was a community meeting to be held in the Town Hall at 4.00pm on Thursday 11 December 2025.

The Committee thanked Mr Hattersley for attending the meeting.

27. Finance Update

Members considered a report by the Finance Officer which updated them on the financial position of the Council as at end of October 2025, the amount of earmarked reserves as at the end of October 2025, the level of debt over 30 days and gave details of the payments list from 1 September 2025 to 31 October 2025.

Resolved

- (1) That the payments list, totalling £336,183.55 be approved.

- (2) That the remainder of the report be noted.

28. **Strategic and Operational Risk Registers**

Members considered a report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) relating to the Council's Risk Registers.

The Committee reviewed each of the high level risks included in the report. Members agreed to include risks related to the Town Council taking over operation of the Markets and some modifications to the wording of risks MAR001, MAR003 and OTH010.

Recommended

- (1) That, subject to the amendments above, the assessed high level strategic and operational risks be approved.
- (2) That the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers, as a whole, be approved.
- (3) That the Risk Management Plan be agreed.

29. **Keep 106 Community Radio Funding Request**

Members were reminded that the Committee had previously agreed an annual grant of £10,000 to Keep 106. The grant was in recognition of the provision of PA equipment at a number of Council and Community events plus technical advice to the Council. The Committee considered correspondence from Keep 106 requesting an increase in its annual grant.

Resolved

That an annual grant of £15,000 be awarded to Keep 106 Community Radio for three years as from 2026-27. The grant to be uplifted with CPI. Keep 106 to be advised to also increase its revenue by being more pro-active in regard to selling its services and advertising.

30. **Municipal Buildings Clock Tower**

Members considered a report by the Town Clerk on work potentially required internally and externally to the Municipal Buildings clock tower.

Resolved

- (1) That Crickmay Stark Architects be appointed to draw up tender documents and undertake a tender process for the potential works set out in the report.

- (2) That the Policy Committee, at its meeting to be held in March 2026, consider the evaluation of the tenders received and agree the extent of the works to be carried out.

31. **Town Centre Working Group**

The Committee received the notes of the meeting of the Town Centre Working Group held on 3 November 2025.

Members requested that the scaffolding hording around the site of the old Gorge Café be enhanced to brighten the area and encourage shoppers to explore the whole of South Street.

32. **Community Land Trust – Old Tennis Court Site – Legal Agreements**

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on progress with the affordable housing project on the old tennis court site. It was confirmed that, to date, there were no amendments required to the Legal Agreements. Should any urgent amendments come forward following the meeting it was proposed that delegated authority to make a decision on them be given to the Town Clerk following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Resolved

That the Town Clerk, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, be authorised to agree on any urgent minor amendments to the legal agreements, that might come forward in respect of the affordable housing project on the old tennis court site.

33. **Concession Agreement to Operate the Markets**

The Committee considered the draft Concession Agreement to the Council for the operation of the Dorchester markets. The Agreement had been approved, subject to some minor amendments made by the Informal Dorchester Joint Markets Panel at its meeting held on 13 November 2025.

Recommended

That the Concession Agreement to the Council to operate Dorchester markets be agreed.

34. **Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

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 press representatives be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

35. **Staffing Matters**

(a) Markets and Communications Officer

Members considered a report by the Town Clerk, and it was

Resolved

That the previously agreed new part time trainee Market Officer post have its hours increased from 18.5 hours per week to 37 hours per week and redesignated to Markets & Communications Officer. Subject to final assessment of the job grade, the Council's staffing budget to be increased accordingly when the Council sets its 2026-27 budget.

(b) Town Clerk

The Committee considered a report by the Town Clerk on a proposed timescale and arrangements for the appointment of a new Town Clerk following the retirement of the present Town Clerk in August 2026.

Resolved

- (1) That 'Council HR and Governance Support' be appointed to support the recruitment of a new Town Clerk.
- (2) That a balanced Appointments Panel with a membership of five be established. Membership of the Panel to be agreed at the January 2026 Council meeting following the receipt of expressions of interest and advice from the Council's recruitment advisors (once appointed).
- (3) That the Appointments Panel be authorised to make all the necessary arrangements for the appointment of a new Town Clerk and to make a recommendation for appointment to a future Full Council meeting.

Chair.....