

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

25 November 2019

Present: Mayor R. Biggs and Councillors, S. Biles L. Fry, T. Harries, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford, G. Jones, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, A. Lyall, R. Major, R. Potter, M. Rennie and R. Ricardo.

Apologies: Councillors, B. Armstrong-Marshall, A. Canning, A. Chisholm, D. Leaper and D. Taylor.

29. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 30 September 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

30. **Communications & Motions**

The Mayor thanked all those involved in supporting Remembrance Day and reported on his recent visit to the Guildhall in London for an event to celebrate the Rifles Regiment. He notified Council of Damers School's success in becoming the national SAS Plastic Free School Champion and agreed to write to the school.

31. **Planning and Environment Committee – 7 October 2019**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 7 October 2019 be adopted.

32. **Planning and Environment Committee – 4 November 2019**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 4 November 2019 be adopted.

33. **Management Committee – 11 November 2019**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

A Member commented on recent social media posts in relation to work carried out at another Council regarding minute 38.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 11 November 2019 be adopted.

34. **Policy Committee – 18 November 2019**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted and the Chairman highlighted two recommendations to Council. A Member spoke in support of the grant to the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair.

Resolved

- a) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy that underpins the new Corporate Plan should be built on the assumption that
 - i) The Council Tax charge will rise broadly in line with the annual inflation level affecting the Council's expenditure
 - ii) That no assumption is made for an increase in the tax base due to the increase in taxable properties in the town, nor for the general impacts that arise from such growth
 - iii) That the Town Council is open to the idea of taking on new debt for specific projects, either to improve its own service infrastructure, or to assist a partner to improve its infrastructure, or to secure an asset that might support the delivery of objectives included in the Corporate Plan, but would investigate and consider each project on its merits
 - iv) That, due to its continued maintenance of a number of alternative risk mitigation mechanisms the Town Council will operate with a General Reserve level of £100,000
- b) That, consistent with the Council's declaring of a Climate Emergency, alternative approaches for heating the Municipal Buildings are explored, including consideration of a biomass heating system, with a view to making a grant application to Low Carbon Dorset for a package of measures to significantly reduce energy use within the building.
- c) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 18 November 2019 be adopted.

35. **Update from Dorchester Ward Members of the Dorset Council**

Councillors Fry, S. Jones and Rennie identified a number of issues being progressed at the Dorset Council including a reconfirmation of the Article 4 direction relating to property frontages in Dorchester's conservation areas and updates on the work of the Executive Advisory Panels relating to Housing, Highways and the Local Plan, including a recent Local Plan workshop.

Council received a presentation by the Town Clerk using material received from the Dorset Council regarding its draft Corporate Plan. A local resident expressed views regarding the level of priority being given to the Climate Emergency and invited the Town Council to highlight the need for the Dorset Council to strengthen its commitment.

Council considered the draft Plan in detail, raising a list of issues, which are summarised at Appendix to these minutes.

Resolved

That Dorchester Town Council provides a detailed response to the consultation, covering the issues raised during the debate, to be drafted by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of Policy Committee and circulated to all Councillors prior to its submission during late December.

Mayor

Council rose at 8.30 pm.

At a Public Question Time following the meeting responses were provided to a resident regarding the Council's actions since its declaration of a Climate Emergency in May 2019, whether the Corporate Plan on the Council's website reflected its commitment to the Climate Emergency and whether the Council would extend its commitment to include an Ecological Emergency.

DORSET COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN
Comments by Dorchester Town Council

OVERVIEW

The Climate Emergency must be core to, and must be at the heart of all Council

4 years is too short, a 10 year strategy is needed

It is essential that the Corporate Plan is turned into real delivery

We are very keen to be constructively engaged with and we believe we have a lot to offer if DC wants to be genuinely open and flexible

The list of partners should also include neighbouring authorities and Dorset should engage with them actively

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Key Sectors

Recognise the needs of the county, include the Care sector as a key Economic Growth sector, and assist it to become a better paid career path

Taking advantage of our existing Cultural (Arts, Museums, Heritage) background there should be a much greater emphasis on a strategy to support this sector

Recognising a demographic time-bomb among local employers, Dorset's workforce needs to fit with the future needs of employers – not all of them will be high tech. Liaison with local education providers to promote local opportunities

Understand and respond to the needs of small business

Support apprenticeship opportunities with local companies

Lobby for reduction in Business Rates to support town centres

Procurement

Prioritise sustainable, environmentally conscious, local suppliers through the Procurement process

There needs to be a strong commitment to paying local suppliers as quickly as possible

Other

Greater emphasis on Sustainable Transport, including delivery of electric charging points

Dorset Council should actively support a coherent Commercial Recycling service

Focus on ethical investment in the Pension Fund

Rather than focusing on 5G, for most residents and businesses 3G/4G and decent phone coverage would be good enough

UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT

The County needs a Tree Planting strategy

There should be a programme of advice and support for managing grey water

SUITABLE HOUSING

The Housing Picture

Describe how the current Housing picture meets the needs of local people and plan any development to meet local needs

Affordable Housing

Greater commitment to delivering Affordable Housing. The Dorchester Prison site and London Road are both excellent examples of the failure of the planning system to deliver relevant affordable housing

Deliver affordable family homes that echo the positives that were achieved by the historic Council House model, there should be an added focus on the affordable rented sector

New Housing & Planning

Challenge Government regarding the excessive numbers of new properties imposed on Dorset through the Local Plan process

Lobby Government regarding the rebalancing of benefits between private developers and the community

Lobby Government to prioritise the needs of local people, not the national housing market, when delivering the local plan

New Housing & the Climate Emergency

New Housing must be sustainable and climate friendly

Ensure any grants schemes are climate friendly

We need to lobby Government regarding inclusion of Renewables as a core part of planning system

Existing Housing

There needs to be a focus on developing a process of supporting the changing of existing housing to meet climate targets

Develop a coherent plan to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels to heat Dorset's domestic properties

There should be a real focus on delivering solar on domestic properties, particularly through working with Housing Associations

STRONG HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

There needs to be much stronger support for Culture (Arts, Museums, Heritage)

Development of public transport which is relevant to workers and visitors

There needs to be a programme of support to allow local communities to innovate solutions to support Stronger Healthier Communities

There needs to be a recognition of the role played by Town and Parish Councils in delivering sports fields, play spaces, parks and leisure facilities to support the Stronger Healthier Communities agenda

There needs to be a clear strategy to support Youth services, including a recognition of the role of youth clubs

There should be support for the establishment of community energy and shared car schemes

STAYING SAFE AND WELL

The looked after children strategy should be based on provision within Dorset

If DC intends to focus on IT based contact systems it needs to be backed by a programme of improving access to basic IT infrastructure for those in need in rural areas

There needs to be more recognition of and visible support within the community for, those who are in fear of crime and cyber-crime

There needs to be a recognition of the potential for trafficking and modern slavery in a coastal county

AS

25 Nov 2019