

# Dorchester Town Council

## Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

28 September 2020

The meeting was conducted using Zoom videoconferencing.

Present: Mayor R. Biggs and Councillors, B. Armstrong-Marshall, S. Biles, A. Chisholm, L. Fry, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford, G. Jones, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper, R. Major, R. Potter, M. Rennie, R. Ricardo and D. Taylor.

Apologies: Councillors A. Canning, T. Harries and A. Lyall.

Present: Richard Brown and Zoey Ingarfield of the A National Park for Dorset team.

### 18. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27 July 2020 were confirmed and will be signed by the Mayor as a correct record at the next opportunity.

### 19. Presentations, Communications, Questions and Motions

Richard Brown and Zoey Ingarfield gave a short presentation on behalf of the "A National Park for Dorset" team. In response to Member comments and questions across a range of issues they provided views regarding democratic representation, the strategic and development planning processes, affordable housing, tourism and the wider benefits to the Dorchester economy, the likelihood of Dorchester's inclusion in the park boundary and the experiences of towns in other National Park areas.

#### Resolved

That the Town Clerk be invited to prepare a report to the next meeting of the Policy Committee considering the impacts of a National Park for Dorset on Dorchester.

The Mayor passed on thanks received from the Lord Lieutenant to the townspeople and the Town Council for the support offered during the recent Covid 19 lockdown. The Mayor also thanked those involved in the recent virtual Heritage Open Day. He advised of his attendance at an opening event for the Kings Arms Hotel, which will employ over 30 staff, and at a socially distanced event hosted by Weldmar Hospicecare.

The Town Clerk confirmed discussions were taking place regarding plans for Remembrance Sunday.

### 20. Planning and Environment Committee – 3 August 2020

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 3 August 2020 be adopted.

### 21. Planning and Environment Committee – 7 September 2020

With one minor amendment it was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

In response to questions the Chairman confirmed that an update would be provided regarding minute 28 Dorchester South Station, and that the CPRE document would be taken account of in formulating the response to the Government White Paper on Planning at the next meeting of the Committee.

A Member thanked the Chairman and Committee Clerk for the time invested in the response to the first Government consultation document.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 7 September 2020 be adopted.

**22. Management Committee – 14 September 2020**

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

A Member provided a further update regarding Minute 10 Bowling Alley Walks wall, noting a further time delay due to the need to source specialist bricks.

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 14 September 2020 be adopted.

**23. Policy Committee – 21 September 2020**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted, with one recommendations for Council decision.

A Member raised a question regarding inviting the Dorchester BID to seek accreditation to evidence its effectiveness.

A Member noted that a recent Dorset Council Local Planning document did not include a vision for the town. The Clerk agreed to follow this item up.

A Member advocated that the Town Council determine its position on development to the north of the town in advance of the Dorset Council Local Plan consultation exercise in Spring 2021.

A Member reflected on the need for a wider vision for the town, developed with the community.

**Resolved**

- a) That the proposed redraft (Appendix 1 to the Minutes) is adopted as a new High Level Focus for the Corporate Plan, and that the document is issued for consultation
- b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 21 September 2020 be adopted

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

Councillor Rennie reconfirmed arrangements for informing the Dorset Council regarding rough sleeping. She also confirmed the distribution of car boot grants taken place and responded to a question regarding the lack of meetings of the Markets Informal Joint Panel.

Councillor Fry highlighted the outcome of the Dorset County Hospital Car Park planning application. He also reported issues with a recent meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Biggs provided an update regarding the Joint Archive service, as well as representation on the Fire Authority.

The Clerk highlighted that Dorset Council were now proceeding with the review of the Voluntary Grant scheme, which included funds provided to, among others, Citizens Advice, Dorchester Arts and the Dorset County Museum.

Mayor

Council rose at 8.30 pm.

At the conclusion of the meeting a Member asked that the Public Question time be restored. The Clerk confirmed receipt of a question from a resident regarding works at the Municipal Buildings. The Chairman of Policy Committee would circulate a written response to all present.

**REVISED HIGH LEVEL FOCUS OF THE CORPORATE PLAN**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- Focus resources and effort into working with key partners on a programme of unlocking and developing sites across the town for affordable housing

**COMMUNITY, CULTURE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

- Working with other agencies and community partners, develop our understanding of the general needs of our community and the specific needs of vulnerable groups, in particular as a result of changes brought about by the Covid 19 pandemic
- Maintain and, where appropriate, adapt the Council's Community, Sports, Cultural and Health & Wellbeing service delivery to meet the requirements of the town's residents and visitors, either directly or working with local partners
- Resolve the future of the Municipal Buildings to make a relevant and environmentally efficient contribution to the town's community

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

- In response to the declared Climate Emergency, proactively support practical steps to reduce the impact that the Council and the town's community has on its environment
- Focusing in particular on the Town Centre, introduce sustainable practices to assist the town's community and key partners to improve the town's appearance

**LOCAL ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND PARKING**

- Working with other agencies and business representatives, develop our understanding of how the town's economy can be strengthened and reshaped, with a particular focus on supporting recovery of the town centre following the Covid 19 pandemic
- Working initially with the town's Heritage and Tourism sectors, develop a holistic strategy to maximise the benefits of tourism to the town
- Work with Dorset Council to agree and implement a Transport and Parking strategy that resolves the competing demands of residents, workers and visitors to the town

**FUTURE GROWTH OF DORCHESTER**

- Develop the Town's existing response to the pressure for development of new housing emerging through the Local Plan process

**GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

- Ensure that the Council's governance, communication and administration arrangements remain relevant to the needs of the town and are delivered efficiently and effectively
- Ensure that the Town Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy recognises the direct and indirect impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic