



# Dorchester Town Council

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11 March 2015

**Agenda** for the meeting of the **Policy Committee** which will be held in the **Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dorchester** on **Tuesday 17 March 2015** at **7.00pm**.

Adrian Stuart  
Town Clerk

## Public 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 ask the Chairman before the meeting starts. We ask speakers to confine their comments to the matter in hand and to be as brief as is reasonably possible.

## Member Code of Conduct: Declaration of Interests

Members are reminded that it is their responsibility to disclose pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests where appropriate.

A Member who declares a pecuniary interest must leave the room unless a suitable dispensation has been granted.

A Member who declares a non-pecuniary interest may take part in the meeting and vote.

## Membership of the Committee

Councillors V. Allan, R. Biggs, A. Canning, T. Harries, G. Jones, T. Jones, D. Roberts, and The Mayor ex-officio.

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Minutes

To read, confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2015 (adopted by Council on 27 January 2015).

### 3. Finance & Performance Report

**A**

### 4. Refurbishing the Town Walks

**B**

### 5. Opportunities to provide Apprenticeships

**C**

### 6. Empty Residential Properties in Dorchester

**D**

**7. Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel - 28 January 2015** **E**

**8. Arrangements for the new Council** **F**

**8. Any Other Business**

**9. 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”.

**10. Outstanding Debts over 30 days – Update** **Separate document**

**11. Revisions to the Fairfield Market Agreement** **Separate document**

## DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

## Policy Committee – 17 March 2015

## Finance &amp; Performance Report at 28 February 2015

**1. Summary of Current Position**

- At end of month 11 underspend v. profile is £81,000 (Appendix 1)
- Per Audit recommendation, a summary of the main variations is included at Appendix 2
- Likely underspend of c. £85,000- £90,000 at year end, primarily Staff & Supply savings

**2. Cash Position at 28 February 2015**

- |                                  |            |                            |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| • Lloyds Bank (2 accounts)       | £368,000   | 0.30% interest             |
| • National Savings & Investments | £755,000   | 0.75% interest             |
| <br>                             |            |                            |
| Total Cash                       | £1,123,000 | (At 31 Dec was £1,231,000) |
- **RECOMMENDED** that £145,000 is transferred to NS&I account

**3. Reserves & Balances**

- Spending on Specific Reserves is still within the profile anticipated
- New tractor purchased to be purchased in March 2015, £18,000, £2,000 below budget
- General Reserve likely to be £40,000 more than £541,000 identified in 2015/16 MTFS adopted in January 2015, around £380,000 more than required for routine purposes

**4. Debtors**

- Debts outstanding over 30 days at 28 February is £3,981 (31 December £1,714)
- An update will be provided at the meeting
- **RECOMMENDED** that the corporate Bad Debt provision (£3,796 at 1 January 2015) is adjusted to provide 100% cover for all invoices over 30 days at 31 March 2015
- Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society loan made in March - £30,000

**5. Audit Recommendations**

- 4 days of audit completed, 2 days left plus year end work
- New auditor, new Financial Controller, many new systems – audit has been thorough
- 15 recommendations, 10 accepted, 5 not accepted by officers
- Recommendations from interim reports, with management responses, at Appendix 3

**6. Treasury Management Advice**

- Notes of discussions about engaging a Treasury Advisor (Appendix 4)
- Thusfar have indicated that Dorchester Town Council remains interested in joining a consortium to procure a quality, suitably priced advice service

Adrian Stuart  
Town Clerk

## MANAGEMENT REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2015

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Employees	665	611	566 -	44
Premises	148	142	136 -	7
Supplies & Transport	342	296	262 -	34
Capital Financing	89	70	70	-
To Specific Reserves	115	115	111 -	3
Income	- 216 -	188 -	181	7
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>1,046</b>	<b>964 -</b>	<b>81</b>

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	- 4 -	4 -	6 -	1
Parks & Open Spaces	158	136	116 -	20
Cemeteries	8	8 -	3 -	11
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	35	32	29 -	4
Cultural & Twinning	43	42	41 -	1
Municipal Buildings	89	84	83 -	1
Other Services	46	42	38 -	4
Office Team	355	326	307 -	20
Outdoor Services	412	382	359 -	22
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>1,048</b>	<b>965 -</b>	<b>83</b>

Specific Reserves	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	5	0	0	0
Municipal Buildings	20	0	0	0
Play Equipment	10	10	11	1
Vehicles & Equipment	20	0	0	0
Dorchester Festival	5	5	5	-
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>

**KEY BUDGET VARIATIONS**

Service	Reason for Budget Variation	Likely Full Year Variation £	Will it reoccur in 2015/16?
<b>Employees</b>			
Office Team	Staff not at top of Grade	- 8,900	Part
Outdoor Services	Head gardener not appointed	- 11,200	Yes
Outdoor Services	Reserve Park Keeper not appointed	- 7,500	No
Outdoor Services	Pensions not claimed	- 6,800	Part
All Staff`	National Insurance Rates overprovided-	- 10,800	No
		- <b>45,200</b>	
<b>Supplies &amp; Transport</b>			
Parks & Opens Spaces	Maintenance budgets underspent	- 12,000	Unlikely
Parks & Opens Spaces	Skatepark Fence Repairs cost less	- 3,800	No
Cemeteries	Grass Cutting	- 7,500	No
		- <b>23,300</b>	
<b>Income</b>			
Municipal Buildings	Hirings below budget, but higher than in 2013/14	5,000	Possible
Other Services	Fairfield Market Income below budget	5,000	Unlikely
Other Services	Treasury Income higher rate and more core cash to invest	- 4,000	Yes
		<b>6,000</b>	
Total of Key Variations		- 62,500	
All other Variations		- 22,500	
Likely Underspend in Year		- <b>85,000</b>	

INTERIM AUDIT REPORT AT 28 FEBRUARY 2015					
No	Detail	Priority	Management Response	By	Due Date
7.1 **	Payroll testing revealed overtime payments (paid at normal hourly rates) made to staff are coded inconsistently. <b>Recommended</b> that Management review current coding to see if it provides sufficient management information to enable them to run the business.	L	Would have a limited benefit due to other controls in place, we will keep this under review.	NH	30/09/15
7.2	Pension contribution rates for 1 officer is inconsistent with the rates for other employees on the same salary. <b>Recommended</b> that the employees and employers rates for that officer are checked with the County Pension Fund staff to ensure correct rates are being applied	L	Checked, correct rates are being applied.	NH	22/01/15
9.1	The NSI bank statement contains out of date contact details, increasing the risk of fraud or error. <b>Recommended</b> that Council review the contact details on its accounts, providing updated details where necessary to ensure that third parties only accept instructions from the proper officer.	H	Agreed	NH	22/01/15
9.2	There is 10p difference between the NSI investment account as at 30 November 2014, and the Sage system. <b>Recommended</b> that the difference be resolved.	L	Resolved	NH	22/01/15
9.3	Bank reconciliation for November 2014 contains 2 uncleared cheques older than 6 months, and are still on the reconciliations as at 9 January 2015. <b>Recommended</b> these cheques be written back.	L	Resolved, and new process in place to keep under review.	NH	22/01/15
4.1	Policy Committee's bi-monthly budget monitoring contains a summary of the Council's current financial position and a high-level comparison of spend v. profile, in addition to summary information on the Council's cash balances, reserves and debtors. <b>Recommended</b> that the report be amended to include breakdown of key variances to clarify reasons for over or underspends.	L	Agreed - this will be included in Appendix 2.	NH	31/03/15
5.1	The Council's precept and council tax supports grants have been coded to its General Fund (on the Balance Sheet). These amounts should be shown in the income & expenditure section of the accounts, coded to Precept and CTSG.	H	Agreed	NH	31/03/15

	<b>Recommended</b> that a journal be posted to correct the balances.				
5.2 **	Some income received in year has been coded against related lines of the expenditure in the accounts. It is both a fundamental accounting policy and a requirement of the annual return that income and expenditure are shown gross in the accounts. <b>Recommended</b> that income coded against expenditure in year is re-analysed and posted to an income account in order to ensure that the annual return can be completed properly at the year end.	H	Understand the comment, but in order to improve budget monitoring reports we will instead adjust the figures from the accounts for the annual return.	NH	30/04/15
6.1	The Council changed the way it operates petty cash in the year. Instead of a separate petty cash float the Council has moved to a system of making petty cash payments out of cash receipts. In theory there is a greater risk of fraud and error where the petty cash and cash income systems are mixed in this way. However, staff have designed and operate a form to record all cash receipts, and any amounts of petty cash paid out and this appears to be operating effectively to maintain a good audit trail on both income and limited petty cash expenditure. A number of recommendations are made to improve the audit trail of this system further: <b>Recommended</b> that boxes are included on the form to record the net banking, the date of banking, and paying-in slip reference.	H	Agreed, changes have been implemented.	NH	04/03/15
6.2	<b>Recommended</b> that cash receipts and payments sheets are sequentially numbered to reduce the possibility of receipts being missed.	M	Agreed, changes implemented.	NH	04/03/15
6.3	Although the petty cash float is counted weekly, this count is not currently recorded. <b>Recommended</b> that an independent officer count and record the Petty Cash float, to evidence the amount of petty cash held.	M	Agreed	NH	04/03/15
6.4 **	Of 19 transactions sampled, four related to monthly contributions to refreshments for visitors to the offices and were unsupported by any receipt. One amount of £3 was claimed in October 2014, but the supporting receipt was only for £2. <b>Recommended</b> that reimbursement of petty cash expenditure is	M	Not agreed. There are circumstances, e.g. tea and coffee, contributions, car parking charges, where this doesn't	AS	04/03/15

	made only on the production of a valid receipt.		work. Will look for an acceptable option		
6.6	None of the petty cash amounts paid out in the samples tested have yet been reported to Members. The first set (which total £95.68) were overlooked in error. <b>Recommended</b> that petty cash payments are reported to members regularly and within a couple of months of being incurred.	M	Agreed, will add a new section into the report for Management Committee.	NH	04/03/15
7.3 **	Whilst audit testing of employment contracts confirmed most staff have clear contracts of employment in place, there are some administrative measures which could be introduced to improve the audit trail. <b>Recommended</b> that a schedule be appended to the front of the file to record key dates (e.g. start of service with the council, pay scales and when grade changes have been agreed with the Council), and that the files be split into different sections (suggested sections include applications, pay awards, training and appraisals).	L	Not agreed. Most files are very small. No additional benefit for the work involved	SN	05/03/15
7.4 **	Some of the contracts of employment have not been signed by the members of staff to whom they relate. None of the contracts have been signed on behalf of the Council. <b>Recommended</b> that contracts are signed by both the staff member and a responsible officer on behalf of the Council in order to ensure that both parties are clear on their roles and responsibilities.	M	Not agreed. Covering letter, included in the file, is signed on behalf of the Council. Will resolve unsigned staff contracts.	SN	30/04/15

\*\* Items where we do not accept the full recommendation of the Internal Auditor



### Notes of discussions with Dorset Town Clerks regarding the appointment of a Treasury Advisor

1. In autumn 2014 a Town Council came to a Clerk Society meeting identifying their need, for Charitable Trust purposes, to retain the services of a treasury advisor, and asking whether other Councils had an interest in this subject.
2. 10 Councils expressed an interest, and an exercise was conducted identifying that collectively they had cash assets under management of c. £7.5M, which was growing rather than reducing. Additionally one Town Council, with cash reserves in excess of £5.0M, already retains a Treasury advisor.
3. It was noted that individually most Town Councils would struggle to justify the fees chargeable by the lead Treasury providers. It was agreed that a consortium approach be made to key providers to see if a mutually acceptable arrangement could be secured.
4. In February 8 Town Councils met with 2 Treasury advisors (Capita who provide a service to Dorset CC and Arlingclose who provide a service to West Dorset DC) to gain a greater understanding of the services that might be available. From discussions, these can be summarised as: -
  - Cash flow analysis – allowing the Council to identify the time frames over which it might invest parts of its cash reserve
  - Instrument and Counterparty advice – matching the Council with appropriate financial products operated by high quality providers interested in taking our cash within time and value restrictions that we might place on them
  - Policy documentation – formalising the Council’s approach to managing its cash
  - Information and Training – periodic opportunities to meet with the advisor and other Councils to understand latest good practice, well used products and to develop an understanding of risks and new opportunities
  - Bespoke pieces of work to assist a Council looking to manage the funding of capital schemes or renegotiations of debt (not part of the core element of a contract)
5. At the conclusion of the meeting both providers expressed an interest in working with a consortium of Town Councils to develop a model for our tier. Fee options differed between the two providers, but it was noted that this should not determine which advisor should be appointed. In agreeing to a consortium approach the suppliers placed the burden of allocating any fixed fee for the contract with the Councils.
6. Most Town Councils recognised that the benefit of an advisor extended beyond generating additional investment returns, with security of assets being paramount. Notwithstanding this it is difficult for Councils to increase their budget to take on this service.
7. There was no clear preferred supplier among the Councils present. It was agreed that a draft specification be drawn up, agreed by those interested in joining a consortium, and then submitted to formal tender.

**DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL****Policy Committee – 17 March 2015****Refurbishing the Town Walks**

1. The Town Council has previously considered the potential to transfer the Town Walks as adopted highways to Dorset County Council. At your March 2014 Committee you resolved:
  - a. That Dorset County Council's Highways Improvement Team be commissioned to undertake a survey, within a budget set by the Committee, to identify the works that would be needed to upgrade the Walks to an adoptable standard.
  - b. That a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the outcome of the survey and a way forward.
2. A comprehensive survey has now been completed, at a cost of £4,633 (agreed budget £5,000 from Walks Reserve), by the Highways Team, the outcome of which is as follows: -
  - a. The cost of upgrading the walks to adoptable highway standards is £347,000,
  - b. This figures excludes design fees, normally around 15-20% of the works costs
  - c. This cost excludes verges, trees, statues, steps, street furniture, and anything other than the pavement and the space underneath it
  - d. English Heritage have not yet been consulted
  - e. The estimates do include a 20% optimum bias, effectively a contingency
3. The cost is significantly more than was previously anticipated, with historic figures of £150,000 having previously been estimated. There are several options open to the Council
  - Continue to upgrade and then transfer the Walks as adopted highway, while retaining verges, trees, etc – significant funding would need to be earmarked to do this in one period
  - Upgrade and transfer specific stretches of the Walks over an extended period of time – significant funding would be required but not immediately, and it is believed that grants may become available for discrete pieces of work
  - Abandon the idea of transferring the Walks as adopted highway, and continue to provide an adequate maintenance regime focused primarily on safety criteria
4. If adopted, there is still no guarantee that the Walks would be adequately maintained in the long term, particularly as financial pressures on Dorset County Council become more acute. While in the short term there is every expectation that the roads would benefit from the investment required to get them adopted, over time it is reasonable to see them deteriorate
5. The financial case is unclear: -
  - In theory, spending over £350,000 once off should permanently remove our obligations to maintain the hard infrastructure on the Walks

- It is difficult to predict how much we would otherwise spend maintaining the hard infrastructure over the very long term. It would be a mix of response pothole and kerbing works and occasional resurfacing exercises
  - If, after adopting it, DCC are unable to maintain the Walks to a standard we are looking for there may still be pressure for the Town Council to step back in to fund maintenance and improvements. The Walks do fall within a definition of the highest class of footpaths that should be maintained as a priority as funding becomes restricted.
  - Adoption does not remove the obligation to maintain the soft landscaping on the Walks, which generally is the more expensive element
6. The Walks Reserve currently totals £45,000, with an additional £25,000 added each year.
  7. If the decision is taken to end the process of adoption a plan would be required to upgrade the current hard infrastructure, and to continue to maintain it to an adequate standard.
  - 8. It is recommended that further discussions take place with the report's authors to understand the options available to us and the likelihood of external funding.**

Adrian Stuart  
Town Clerk

## DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

## Policy Committee – 17 March 2015

## Opportunities to provide Apprenticeships

1. In January 2015 this Committee agreed to use anticipated salary budget underspends in 2015/16 to engage 3 one year apprentices at a total cost of £13,500.
2. Subsequent to the Committee a meeting was held with Dorset CC's Learning and Development Team and West Dorset DC's Economic Regeneration team. The meeting discussed a proposal for West Dorset DC and Dorchester TC to jointly fund 6 apprentices at the Town Council and four community organisations in the town.
3. The funding proposal is as follows:

Organisation	Apprenticeship	WDDC £000	DTC £000	Other £000
Dorchester TC	Parks – Horticulture	3,000	3,000	0
Dorchester TC	Office – Business Finance	3,000	3,000	0
Dorset County Museum	Office - Collections or Promotion (partnering with Keep Museum)	3,000	1,500	1,500
Dorchester CAB	Office – Administration	3,000	1,500	1,500
Age UK Dorset	Care/Catering or Office Administration	3,000	1,500	1,500
Dorchester Arts	Facilities Management or Promotion (partnering with Dorchester TC)	3,000	1,500	1,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>18,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>

4. The funding proposal requires
  - Management resources from the five organisations looking to appoint apprentices – all the organisations have been involved in similar schemes previously (Future Jobs Fund, apprenticeships, internships, work placements) and understand the time commitment required
  - The support of West Dorset DC – early indications are that funding is available, which is a very positive statement of their intention to support apprenticeships in the local economy
  - Other funding to come forward, probably from the National Apprenticeship Service or other similar funding agencies, supplemented by each organisations funding as necessary
  - Dorchester Town Council to convert £6,000 of the budget it had previously reserved for its own apprentices into grants for the organisations mentioned at para. 3 above

5. If all parties agree the proposal the plan will be delivered as follows:-
  - Each employer will develop a job description and person spec for their apprentice opportunity
  - A local provider (likely to be Kingston Maurward College or Yeovil College) will source appropriate training packages, advertise the apprenticeships, and long list candidates
  - Each employer will short list and if appropriate appoint a suitable apprentice, probably starting between May – July 2015
  - The apprentices will fulfil a one year apprenticeship, leading to a recognised qualification plus work experience, ending their role in summer 2016
6. As identified in January, while the local economy remains relatively buoyant and short term casual employment opportunities are available in the town, apprenticeships offer more specific experience towards obtaining a career and longer term employment. The variety of apprenticeships that the 5 organisations will hopefully be able to deliver make them collectively more attractive and marketable locally.
7. The Town Clerk wishes the Committee to note that he acts as a trustee of Age UK Dorset in a personal capacity.
8. It is recommended that, from the previously approved budget of £13,500, the sum of £6,000 is allocated to provide grants to community organisations that take part in the Apprenticeship scheme in 2015/16, noting that this may qualify as s137 expenditure in 2015/16.

Adrian Stuart  
Town Clerk

**DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL****Policy Committee – 17 March 2015****Empty Residential Properties in Dorchester****1. Introduction**

One of the Town Council's Corporate Plan aims, for completion by March 2016, is to understand what steps WDDC can take to reduce the number of empty homes in Dorchester, and to identify whether WDDC are actively promoting their reuse.

Our interest came from a discussion about the risk that properties in Dorchester might be being bought for investment purposes and left vacant, so serving no purpose in terms of meeting housing demand locally.

**2. Summary**

- WDDC have been proactive in encouraging owners of Empty Properties to bring them back into use.
- They have been doing this at no immediate cost to the Council Taxpayer, using New Homes Bonus to pay for an Empty Homes Officer shared with Weymouth & Portland Borough council
- The initiative has been successful in getting properties reclassified, and possibly for pushing property owners to act with regard to using or selling their properties, but of 76 properties where change has occurred only 5 appear to have been made available to the private rented sector
- WDDC have a clear policy in place, which they are actively using, to escalate action against property owners that are not managing their property appropriately
- In short, WDDC are actively engaging on empty properties in the area, but that engagement will make only a modest contribution to resolving housing issues identified in Dorchester

**3. Detail**

4. The figures below relate to the West Dorset area, unless otherwise identified. Dorchester represents about 20% of the properties in West Dorset.
5. In late 2013 WDDC appointed a shared Empty Homes officer post with WPBC, at a shared cost of £33,500 a year, with funding guaranteed for 3 years. Actions taken to date have generated New Homes Bonus of £63,000 a year, ultimately bringing over £370,000 of grant to the two council areas. The task of identifying new properties that produce NHB will, however, become more difficult over time.
6. WDDC Members worked with the Head of Housing Improvement to develop an Empty Homes policy, which was adopted in March 2013. The policy was based on the principle of "incremental intervention" seeking to publicise available support for the owners of empty properties as widely as possible, tailoring support to individual cases as circumstances

dictated and only resorting to the use of enforcement options if informal approaches proved unsuccessful and intervention was appropriate.

7. In September 2013 the officer began to review a list of 411 recorded long term empty properties plus others known to the Housing department, prioritising problem properties and those that had been empty for the longest time.
8. Interventions included advising on lettings, sales or renovations, putting owners in touch with agents, the explanation of available enforcement options or use of those powers, or on some occasions simply identifying that properties were in fact occupied, often as second homes. There is an existing on-going caseload of 90 properties which include properties expected to return to use as a result of both assistance and enforcement action.
9. Over 12 months 76 properties have been removed from the list, 21 as a direct result of intervention by the Empty Homes Officer, the rest largely through owner action. Of the 21, however, 14 were reclassified as second homes and 3 reclassified as occupied. Only 4 were released into the private rented sector.
10. The council's adopted policy allows for the provision of financial assistance. Two 'VAT' letters have been provided to enable owners to pay a reduced rate of VAT on improvement works, and one empty home loan has been agreed to refurbish an uninhabitable property.
11. Where necessary an explanation of the enforcement options available to the council has often proven to be successful. The Empty Homes Officer has served nine Section 16, 'Requisitions for Information' on property owners, which have triggered engagement. One Section 80 Environmental Protection Act 1990 Notice has been served on an empty property owner, which should result in the property being brought back into use.
12. The Housing Act 2004 provides WDDC power to apply for an Empty Dwelling Management Order, which effectively takes over management of a property. Formal notification of the intention to consider use of that power has been provided in one case, a property empty for 7 years and in a poor state of repair.

Adrian Stuart  
Town Clerk

Source material: Report to Policy Scrutiny Committee of West Dorset DC, 24 Nov 2014

**DORCHESTER MARKETS JOINT INFORMAL PANEL****NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2015****Present:**

**West Dorset District Council:** A Chisholm, I C Gardner, C Payne and N M Penfold (Chairman)

**Dorchester Town Council:** A Lyall and M E Rennie

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting)****West Dorset District Council:**

K Critchel (Democratic Services Officer), R Greene (Legal Services Manager - Property & Litigation), D Martin (Group Accountant), V Joynes (Interim Estates Surveyor) and G Northcote (Estates Manager)

**Dorchester Town Council:**

A Stuart (Town Clerk and Honorary Clerk of the Market).

**Apologies**

34. Apologies for absence were received from D Barrett, T M Frost , S J East, D T Jones, M Lawrence and S Hosford.

**Declarations of Interest**

35. There were no declarations of interest to report.

**Notes of the Last Meeting**

36. The notes of the meeting held on 25 June 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**Budget 2015/16**

37. The panel considered a report of the Group Accountant (WDDC) setting out the budget for 2015/16. Members were advised that the adjusted outturn for 2013/14 was £220 less than reported at the last meeting on 25 June 2014. The actual figures would be adjusted in 2014/15.
38. In response to questions, the Group Accountant confirmed that he was comfortable with the proposed figure for electricity and water. In respect of Repairs and Maintenance, members were reminded that a planned maintenance programme had been deferred awaiting the outcome of the new lease negotiations with the market operator. It was noted that any underspend during 2014/15 would be transferred into the Market Maintenance Reserve for use in future years.



39. It was proposed by Cllr M E Rennie seconded by Cllr I Gardener

### **Decision**

- (a) That the budget for 2015/16 as set out in paragraph 4 and appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (b) That any underspend on repairs and maintenance during 2014/15 be transferred into the Market Maintenance Reserve for use in future years

### **Market Management Report**

- 40. The panel considered a report which set out the Market Operators update covering the period 1 April 2014 to 14 December 2014.
- 41. Members were also informed of the current position regarding negotiations with Ensors on the proposed new lease and the lease renewal for Dukes Auctioneers.
- 42. In respect of the Cornhill Market Traders Co-operative, the panel were advised that the licence to operate the market was extended by one year. The Co-operative had reported their figures in a timely manner and fees had been paid to the panel in accordance with the terms of the licence. New traders had been introduced and there had been no direct complaints received during this trading period.
- 43. Members agreed that the Cornhill market had improved greatly; was tidy and members welcomed that new traders were being added to the market site. The panel acknowledged that the Co-operative had worked hard to develop the market and their progress was adding to the street scene. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to the Co-operative thanking them for their efforts.
- 44. In response to questions regarding the lease negotiations with Ensors, members were advised that only two minor issues were outstanding. In response to a question regarding the potential loss of car parking, members were reassured that the negotiations had not changed since the details were shared with the panel. It was noted that no further parking would be lost as a result of the discussions on the new lease.
- 45. In respect of the Farmers Market, the Chamber of Commerce had decided that they no longer were in the position to run either the once a month Saturday Dorset Farmers Market or the August Bank Holiday Continental Market, due to the departure of a key staff member at the Chamber.
- 46. The Estates Officer advised the panel that there had been some issues of concern raised following the last farmers market, held in South Street. These were mainly around safety on exiting the site at the end of trading. It was suggested that these issues needed to be addressed prior to a formal licence being issued.
- 47. The panel supported the amended proposal to review the Dorset Farmers Market on a month by month basis and asked that they be regularly updated on progress by email.

48. In response to a question regarding using the un-pedestrianised end of South Street, the Estates Manager agreed to look at this as part of the discussions with the farms market operator.
49. Members discussed the merits of continuing with the Continental Market now that the Chamber of Commerce was no longer prepared to manage it. France at Home, the market operator, was not keen to continue to hold the market on South Walks and as such any move back to South Street would require the co-operation of Dorset County Council highways. The panel were reminded that the market was transferred to South Walks due to the number of issues and problems caused by operating in South Street in the past.
50. It was noted that the income received by the panel for the 3 day event amounted to a total of £500 and members agreed that the two councils did not have the resources to manage the market for such a minimal return.
51. Members concurred that the market did bring vibrancy to the town over the August Bank Holiday, however in the current climate continuing to operate the market could not be justified. Nevertheless it was agreed that this decision would not preclude giving further consideration to the matter if a suitable volunteer or operator came forward in the future.
52. In response to a question regarding the coach parking at the Top 'O' Town, the Estates Manager agreed to research the current use and requirements; a report would be presented to the next meeting of the panel
53. It was proposed by Cllr I Gardner seconded by Cllr C Payne

### **Decision**

54. (a) That a letter be sent to the Cornhill Co-operative from the Chairman;
- (b) That officers licence the Dorset Farmers Market on a month by month basis, in order to review performance, prior to any decision to agree a long-term licence.
- (b) That members receive regular feedback on the performance of the Dorset Farmers Market by email;
- (c) That West Dorset District Council and Dorchester Town Council did not have the resources to continue to host and manage the Continental Market for the relatively negligible financial return; it was therefore proposed that the market be cancelled;
- (d) However this would not preclude giving appropriate consideration to any suitable volunteer or operator, who came forward to undertake the future management of a Continental Market in Dorchester.
- (e) That a report be brought back to the next meeting on the Coach parking facility at the Top O Town car park.

**Urgent items**

55. There were no urgent items to report

**Date of Next Meeting**

56. The next meeting of the Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel will be held on 17 June 2015 at 7.00pm

**Duration of the meeting:**

2.15pm – 3.10pm

Chairman .....

**DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Policy Committee – 17 March 2015**  
**Arrangements for the new Council**

1. Elections are to be held for a new Town Council on Thursday 7 May 2015. As they coincide with national and district elections it is understood that the results from the elections may not be known in the office until Monday 11 May.
2. Mayor making will take place on Monday 19 May, with the adjourned Council taking place on Tuesday 20. When these dates were fixed last year they took account of the bank holiday on the following Monday.

**Possible changes to meetings during the current calendar**

3. Management Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday 5 May, two days before the election. The Committee Administrator will invite the Committee to consider whether the meeting should be held.
4. Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 12 May. As there will be no properly constituted membership for this meeting it is proposed that it is cancelled.
5. Full Council would ordinarily appoint new Committees and Chairmen for the next municipal year. In order to achieve this it is proposed that a Selection Committee meets at 6.00pm on Tuesday 20 May to draft recommendations to go before Council.
6. In previous years Full Council has had a special meeting towards the end of June to consider the year end accounts. In 2014 the accounts were presented to Policy Committee for review and then on to Council during the May cycle. This year, with no Policy Committee scheduled in May, it is proposed that the accounts are presented only to Council at the May 2015 meeting.

**The 2015/16 Calendar and possible changes to standard dates in the July cycle**

7. A calendar for 2015/16 is attached, based on the normal cycle of meetings.
8. If either Management Committee or Policy Committee is cancelled in May 2015 there will be a gap of 4 months between Committees. The Committees may wish to consider whether the July 2015 meeting is brought forward by one month, creating a gap of 3 months between March and June and between June and September. There would be no change to the dates for Full Council meetings.

**Induction and Training for Members**

9. In May 2011 six new Councillors were elected to Council, a 30% change in membership. This level of change is typical under normal circumstances and needs to be planned for. Greater

change is always possible.

10. A number of practical issues will be addressed in the week commencing 11 May 2015, applicable to all Members: -

- Declarations of Office are to be signed
- Committee preferences will need to be submitted to allow Selection Committee to make recommendations to Council on 19 May
- Personal and contact information to be provided for administrative and payroll purposes
- Members Interests forms to be completed
- Individual Councillor Profiles for the Council website
- Agenda, electronic agenda, and postage preferences to be collated

11. A programme of induction is being developed, available to all Councillors, to take place during the first six weeks of the new municipal year, to include talks by staff on the following: -

- The role of the Town Council in the local government structure for Dorset – our Corporate Plan, the services we provide, recent operational issues and a Financial and Performance overview
- More detailed explanation of our main operational services – Parks and Pitches, Buildings, Cemeteries, Allotments, Events, etc including a tour of the town looking at the facilities we manage
- An overview of the Town, its economic, cultural and community activity, current developments in the town and how we seek to influence others to provide services and infrastructure
- How the Town Council currently operates its governance arrangements – Committees, Panels, Partnerships, Outside Bodies plus an introduction to our Website and how we provide Councillors with information

12. A programme of training is also being developed, some with the District Council and/or DAPTC, for delivery over the May - September period, to include the following:

- Code of Conduct
- Development Control and Planning Issues (compulsory for members who wish to serve on the Planning and Environment Committee)
- A Corporate and Financial Planning workshop
- A Democracy workshop

13. An important piece of work to be conducted by the new Council early this summer is to revise and then consult on a Corporate Plan. The induction and training processes will focus on supporting Councillors to carry out this work.

Adrian Stuart  
Town Clerk

Louise Dowell  
Member Support

**APPENDIX 1**

**DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2015-16**

	2015								2016				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
COUNCIL, MAYOR MAKING AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING	18 MM 19		21		29		24		26		29 ATM		23MM 24
POLICY & MAYORAL SELECTION			14		22		17		19 MS		22 MS		17
MANAGEMENT	5		7		15		10		12		15		10
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		1 29		3	7	5	2 30		4	1	7	4	3 Tue
MARKETS JOINT PANEL		17							TBC (2.15pm)				
<i>BANK HOLIDAYS</i>	<i>4, 25</i>			<i>31</i>				<i>25,28</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>25,28</i>		<i>2,30</i>

MM Mayor Making      ATM Annual Town Meeting      MS Mayoral Selection Committee      TBC Date to be confirmed