



Dorchester Town Council

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15 July 2020

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held via the Zoom video conferencing platform on **Monday 20 July 2020 at 7.00pm**.

You will be able to join the meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81589103452>

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 **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 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

Mayor R. Biggs and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford (Chairman) and G. Jones.

1. Apologies, Declarations of Interest & Signing of Minutes
To confirm that the Chair may sign Minutes of the meeting of 11 May 2020, adopted by Council on 18 May 2020, at the next available opportunity.
2. Financial Update A
3. Response to the Covid 19 crisis. B
4. Municipal Buildings Projects C
5. Climate Emergency Projects Update D

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 20 JULY 2020

FINANCIAL UPDATE

1. Financial Position

- Month 3 spend (Appendix 1) £16k below profile
 - General underspends (£22k) plus non-replacement of Outdoor staff (£12k)
 - Offset by impact of Covid 19 to date (£18k) being £12k lost room hire and £6k preparing cemeteries for increased burials (ultimately not required)

- Cash Position

	£000	
Lloyds Bank	383	Nil interest
Payden Global	1,000	c. 0.70% return
National Savings and Investments	1,000	0.70% interest
Total Cash	2,383	(1 Apr £1,894k)

 - £290k transferred from Lloyds to NS&I 18 May 2020 following receipt of precept
 - Opening CCLA Deposit Account for surplus cash, yield only 0.25% but AAA rated

- Debt over 30 days = £6,024, 4 debtors – mainly Dorset Council (1 Apr £2,749 2 debtors)
- Payments list 1 May – 30 Jun 20 on website. Supporting vouchers available from Financial Controller. **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £190,302.02 is approved

2. Implications of Covid 19 Lockdown on the 2020/21 Revenue Budget

- Overall it is anticipated that there will be no need to use the General Reserve
- There are existing and future potential income losses
 - Buildings hire - £48k (100% of budget)
 - Markets - £15k (50% of budget)
- Very few additional operational costs
 - £6k preparing cemeteries for increased burials (shoring and digger hire)
 - £9k possible support to Dorchester Arts in lieu of Corn Exchange hires
- There are some savings
 - Events budgets will not be required (£16k)
 - Reduced staff overtime (£8k)
 - Delayed recruitment to vacant staff posts (£20k)
- The net impact of Covid 19 could be as much as £34k, hopefully lower
- Due to reallocation of tasks, return on investments and general underspends it is anticipated that more than £34k will be saved on general budget items
- Covid 19 related Grants and support to community groups (c. £4k) to date and town centre reopening (£4-£9k) will be met from last year's underspend (which was £29k)
- The Council has received nil support from Government during the lockdown, but may submit requests for Statutory Sick Pay.

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MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 30 JUNE 2020

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	858	308	294	-14
Capital Financing	41	17	17	0
Other Payments	561	225	210	-15
To Specific Reserves	216	216	216	0
Income	-177	-43	-30	13
Net Budget	1,499	724	708	-16

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-6	0	-0	-0
Parks & Open Spaces	123	38	34	-4
Cemeteries	-3	17	22	5
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	37	9	7	-2
Cultural & Twinning	35	4	3	-1
Municipal Buildings	270	218	223	4
Other Services	231	202	199	-3
Office Team	376	111	110	-2
Outdoor Services	438	124	110	-13
Net Budget	1,499	724	708	-16

Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Play Equipment	25	0	2	2
Parks Premises	0	0	0	0
Municipal Buildings	24	0	1	1
Vehicles and Equipment	0	0	0	0
Cemeteries	30	0	0	0
Public Realm	250	10	7	-3
Art & Cultural	0	0	0	0
Heritage Tourism PM	35	5	5	0
Dorchester West Ramp	10	0	0	0
Climate Emergency	20	0	0	0
Christmas Lights	8	0	0	0
Planning Advice	10	0	0	0
Corporate Projects	0	0	4	4
Net Budget	412	15	19	4

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 20 JULY 2020****RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 CRISIS****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report covers a number of non-operational issues related to the Covid 19 crisis. For information on the Council's operational response for its own service delivery during the crisis see the Management Committee agenda of 13 July 2020.

2. SUPPORT FOR THE ECONOMY

- 2.1. The Town Council's officers have been working with Dorchester's Chamber and BID, and with Dorset Council, to support the reopening of the town centre and, where requested, other retail spaces.
- 2.2. The parties have collectively launched the Shop Local, Shop Safe, Shop Dorch campaign, the first phase of which will cost £13,000. Of this £4,000 will be met by the BID and a request for a grant award from the national Reopening High Streets Fund managed by Dorset Council has been made; the remainder will fall to the Town Council.
- 2.3. Dorset Council have also allocated money from their £335,000 RoHS Fund allocation to provide street marking and street information signage, street dressing stickers and are also supporting communications activity. A significant sum has been reserved for temporary reuse of road spaces across the county, some of which may be seen in Trinity Street. Our staff have liaised closely with the Highways team on a number of highways reuse issues, particularly related to sitting out licencing.
- 2.4. In a related exercise we are gathering information relating to the numbers of retail businesses reopening or remaining closed; we also have a clearer picture related to the number of empty properties. A Footfall counting exercise started in July and will continue throughout the summer.

3. COMMUNITY

- 3.1. The Council has continued to provide support, where requested, by community groups. It is fair to say that most of the groups are self-sufficient and that, beyond the involvement of the Community Development Officer, demands have been light. A number of Town Council staff continue to provide technical and practical support for initiatives being delivered by community groups.
- 3.2. Preliminary conversations are happening with Community Group leaders to understand what might be needed to assist a recovery. Recurring themes are support for young people, including work-related support, and concerns about job losses. We are talking with key groups about what support we might be able to offer in relation to young people.
- 3.3. The Management Committee received a short report to consider a commemorative tree planting at Kings Road, currently scheduled for December. Both the Deputy Town Clerk and

Community Development Officer are involved in discussions regarding other commemorative events.

4. CULTURAL ACTIVITY

- 4.1. Unsurprisingly one of the most noticeable gaps in the current activity of the town is the lack of a cultural offer to encourage residents to gather together and interact, or to enjoy the town's heritage and community spirit. There is currently no clear plan to change this, although we are talking to Dorchester Arts, Museums and others about their plans. The first steps are likely to be made by more commercial venues.
- 4.2. Contact with local cultural and tourism venues suggests that reopening has started with accommodation providers, but that not all museums and attractions will be open in time for the summer holiday season.

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DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 20 JULY 2020

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS PROJECTS

Reroofing

1. The Council has been preparing to replace the roofs of the Corn Exchange, the Council Chamber and the Dressing Rooms for four years, and had gradually been building up reserves to pay for the first phase of the works (the Corn Exchange) in 2021.
2. Once lockdown had become a reality officers held informal discussions with Dorchester Arts about their views on the need to close again in 2021 for the reroofing works. As a result of discussions, and also noting the biomass and offices projects, work was accelerated to identify the costs of roof repairs across the whole site. A Quantity Surveyor reported back in early July.
3. Management Committee considered the issue of remaining closed at its meeting last week and have recommended that the building remains closed while roof repairs are undertaken. The cost of reroofing all of the building, excluding the Town Hall which is judged sound, is as follows:

	£000
Corn Exchange main roof	210
Corn Exchange apse and associated roofs	185
Council Chamber roof	210
Dressing Rooms roof	215
Total Cost	820

4. The Council currently holds £240,000 in a Reserve for reroofing, to which it adds £60,000 a year. The plan was to undertake parts of the roofing works over a 10 year period, commissioning new works every 3 – 4 years. To complete all the works above the Council would need to continue adding £60,000 to reserves for the next 10 years, at which point the roof should be resolved for the next 20 – 40 years.
5. There are obvious economic and disruption benefits of undertaking the works in bigger parcels. The optimum solution would be to complete the Corn Exchange, apse and Council Chamber works as one parcel (£605,000), treating the Dressing Room works as a separate parcel related to the Biomass and Offices project. The Council would need to consider borrowing to undertake works in one contract or in larger parcels.

Heating the Municipal Buildings - Biomass

6. The key decision required to implement our Climate Emergency commitment is the implementation of a space-hungry biomass solution for the Municipal Buildings. Council reserved an initial £170,000 for the project in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 budget and also began exploring grant options.

7. There are two options for the creation of space for provision of a biomass plant (boiler room, hot water storage and wood chip store) on the site: -
- The “Do Minimum” approach (£250,000) - Integrating much of the biomass infrastructure into the rear of the existing building, but constructing a new woodchip store in the car park, attached to the north wall of the building.
 - The “Offices over Biomass” option (£460,000 for biomass, plus £520,000 for offices) – Extending the north wall out into the car park, creating new spaces for biomass infrastructure, and extra space upstairs which, coupled with the existing dressing rooms, could provide new offices for Town Council and/or partner staff. The ground floor spaces surrounding the kitchen would be reorganised to provide a multi-functional space. The merits of each scheme are as follows:

Factor	Do Minimum	Offices over Biomass
Delivers Biomass?	Yes – space for our scheme	Yes – would provide add’l capacity for partner buildings
Building Operations	Removes storage and back office capacity	Requires remodelling of kitchen to provide multi-use facilities (Dressing Rooms, Food prep, Meeting Room)
Other Opportunities	None	Allows TC to relocate from 19NS Frees up Magistrates Room
Appearance	Further reduces quality of rear of building	Tidies up rear of building
Finance	Low cost solution	Expensive solution Allows capital receipt from 19 North Square Op. savings @ N. Sq = £15kpa
Car Park	Minimal impact	Potential loss of 3-5 spaces

8. In addition to Biomass the climate emergency programme also includes proposals for
- Solar panels on the east/west facing roof of the Corn Exchange (£30,000) – a pre-app request has been made to the Dorset Council
 - Solar panels or tiles on the south facing roof of the Town Hall (uncosted at present) - a pre-app request has been made to the Dorset Council
 - Full conversion to LED lighting (£10,000) – an initial appraisal has been undertaken, which will lead to a phased implementation (some elements will be delivered as part of the biomass project or any future conversion programme)
 - Roof and Heating Insulation (£5,000) – elements will be introduced as part of the biomass and re-roofing projects
 - Roof-mounted recirculation fans (uncosted) – to be implemented on completion of the roofing project
9. Over time the “Offices over Biomass” solution presents significantly more benefits and flexibility in exchange for a greater up front investment. There is potential to claim a Low Carbon Dorset grant, some of which would subsequently be repaid from Renewable Heat

Incentive payments. The total £500,000 climate emergency investment would be funded as follows:

- Reserves already set aside - £170,000
- Potential Low Carbon Dorset grant (some offset v. future RHI payments) - £100,000
- Renewable Heat Incentive annual payments – confident of £230,000 over 20 years

The Council would need to consider borrowing to undertake these works.

The Extension - Offices and Kitchens

10. The rear extension to the building currently provides poor quality dressing room, kitchen, storage and back office spaces. At present they cost a significant sum to maintain and enjoy very limited use.
11. The two-storey Biomass option provides an opportunity for the Council to consider the use of the upper rear of the building for offices and to convert the lower spaces that are dominated by the kitchen space into a multi-use space for meetings, food preparation at events and changing rooms. As such the spaces would have greater potential to meet the Council's needs as well as those of community partners and hirers.
12. The QS has costed conversion of these spaces into offices and meeting rooms at £520,000, although this has not been tested and the officer view is that it should be possible to reduce the cost. The cost of this element could be recovered over time by the disposal of 19 North Square for housing and reduced running costs. These would take time to accumulate and the Council would again need to consider borrowing to undertake the conversion works if it decided to proceed.

Summary

13. The above projects total either £1.1 Million or £1.8 Million, covering
 - Roofing works that will need to be done at some point - £820k
 - In order to meet the Council's Climate Emergency commitment through Biomass
 - Either a small rear extension and compromised existing space at £250k
 - Or a much bigger space, capable of supporting more flexible uses at £460k
 - If the bigger space is chosen an opportunity to rethink of the use of the rear extension
 - Either Do Nothing at £Nil, but accept the space doesn't meet any useful purpose
 - Or transformation of the space into offices and improved multi use space at £520k, with the potential to generate a receipt and ongoing savings at 19 North Square
14. The Council currently has £400k in Reserves for Municipal Buildings projects. It also has £500k in its Corporate Projects Fund but has other projects it may wish to support. Borrowing is an option and it is reasonable to assume that, over time, the Council could match the cost of servicing new debt associated with either of the above options by a combination of ongoing contributions to reserves, new income from Renewable Heat Incentive, grant from Low Carbon Dorset, capital receipt and savings in running costs from the disposal of 19 North Square.

15. Of the two options
- Do Minimum (£1.1M) requires less outlay but restricts the future use of a building that will always belong to the town
 - The Offices over Biomass (£1.8M) requires significantly more outlay but presents much greater opportunities for the building to provide a useful purpose in the long term
16. It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Council develops an implementation programme to include
- Procurement of the reroofing of the Council Chamber, Corn Exchange and apse
 - To include discussions with users to keep the building closed to deliver these works at the earliest opportunity
 - The Offices over Biomass option, being
 - Submission of a planning application to Dorset Council for a two storey extension into the Car Park
 - The conversion of the upper space into offices, and the assumption that once completed, the Town Council will move into this space, possibly with other community partners
 - The conversion of the ground floor into a multi-use space, specifically meeting the needs of groups to meet, food preparation for casual hires and dressing room space for performers, as well as facilities for disabled staff and users
 - Preparation of a loan request for up to £1.4 Million from the Public Works Loan Board

Arts in Dorchester

17. Due to lockdown and furlough it has not been possible to hold detailed discussions with Dorchester Arts, either about the timing of roof repairs or the ambitions of Dorchester Arts to deliver a greater range of community activity and arts events from the building. An opportunity to hold discussions with Dorchester Arts is scheduled prior to the meeting.

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Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 20 JULY 2020****CLIMATE EMERGENCY PROJECTS****WEYMOUTH AVENUE PAVILION**

18. At the Recreation Pavilion a contractor, Bioheat, has been appointed to deliver the Ground Source Heat Project (Heat Pump, 2 x boreholes, heating system) at a cost of £43,000. Works are scheduled to start in August.
19. Bioheat will also install a water borehole, while investments will also be made in roof insulation and LED lighting. The total project cost is £53,000. A grant application has been approved by Low Carbon Dorset for £20,000, £9,000 of which would be repayable on receipt of future RHI payments. The Council will fund the remaining capital cost of £33,000 from its Climate Emergency Fund.
20. Net of LCD repayments, and based on annual heat delivery of 25,000kwh, the Council will receive RHI totalling £39,000 over the next 20 years, and will also receive a fee for use of the borehole from Dorchester CC. The Cricket Club will see its fuel bill fall by over £3,500 a year. Because of grant and RHI the project makes good financial sense.
21. It is anticipated that consumption will fall from 42,000kwh (electric and gas) to 11,000kwh (electric only), about 9.3t CO₂ a year. Roof based solar has been explored and rejected, both because of tree cover and the need to get Duchy permission, but also because solar generation is so poor in the winter.
22. The Clerk intends to contact Dorchester Bowls Club to offer the opportunity to visit the Weymouth Avenue site during construction to understand the project in more detail, as a precursor to considering the potential to develop a similar scheme at our Sandringham site.

WEYMOUTH AVENUE CEMETERY

23. Separately, at Weymouth Avenue Cemetery, officers have been grateful for advice from a local expert regarding options to provide renewable heat to warm the South Chapel during the winter period. At 11,000kwh a year the building generates 3.5tCO₂ and an electric bill of £1,200 a year. The sole purpose of the archaic electric heating tube system is to prevent damage to the building, it serves no other purpose.
24. The recommendation is for 4kw of solar panels at a cost of c. £4,000. However the payback is poor, as solar is generating most of its power in the summer, while our need for power is focused mainly on the winter. It is also clear that the heating system itself is time expired, so advice will be sought from a historic buildings specialist about what the most effective method for safeguarding the building might be.
25. A far more effective renewable source at the site would be a small 5kw wind turbine. Realistically the chance of obtaining planning permission for a turbine in an urban

environment is low, but this option will be investigated and considered before returning to the solar panel option. A second advantage of this option would be its capacity to provide power for the Pavilion ground source heat pump.

TREE PLANTING

26. The Council has previously supported Transition Town Dorchester to plant trees around the town. Our previous grants have been conditional on the group finding match funding, essentially to make sure that they are exploring a range of funding possibilities and the advice that goes with them.
27. A recent e-mail revealed that many local charity sources are being redirected to groups supporting the Covid 19 crisis. The group have applied for a trees pack from the Woodland Trust and are also considering an application to the Tree Council. They are concerned however, that if either of these sources are not successful or a decision delayed, they will lose momentum on plans to plant 900 saplings this winter, with a consequent knock on to volunteering.
28. The group report that they are successfully watering the early 2020 plantings and have a site at Castlefield ready for the winter 2020/21 planting season.
29. It is **RECOMMENDED** that a further award of grant of £500 is made to Transition Town Dorchester, with no requirement to match fund on this occasion.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk