



Dorchester Town Council

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10 November 2021

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held at The Recreation Pavilion, Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, DT1 2RY on **Monday 15 November 2021 at 7.00pm.**

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Public Attendance and Speaking at the Meeting

The meeting will be held on the basis that the Government's Covid restrictions remain in place. If you wish to attend it would be very helpful if you could **notify the clerk by 0900 on the morning of the meeting** so that we can include you in our arrangements to keep you and other participants safe.

The Chairman has discretion to allow members of the public to speak at the meeting. If you wish to speak please let the Clerk know when advising of your attendance. 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 interests where appropriate. A Member who declares any interest must leave the room. A Member who declares a registerable interest as a Council nominee to a partner organisation may first address the meeting as a member of the public.

Membership of the Committee

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

1. Apologies, Declarations of Interest & Signing of Minutes
To confirm that the Chair may sign Minutes of the meeting of 20 September 2021, adopted by Council on 27 September 2021.
2. Financial Update at 31 October 2021 A
3. Strategic & Operational Risk – Annual Report B
4. Revenue Budget 2022/23: Discretionary Core Grants and Special Items C
5. Corporate Plan Update D

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2021
FINANCIAL UPDATE AT 31 OCTOBER 2021

1. Financial Position

- Month 7 spend (Appendix 1) £16k under :
 - £20k under on Outdoor Events
 - £13k under on Outdoor Staff
 - New £13k grant to Citizens Advice
 - £9k over on Vehicles and Equipment
 - All other under and overspends net £5k under

- Cash Position

	£000	
Lloyds Bank Current Account	685	Nil interest
Payden Global	900	c. 0.60% return
National Savings and Investments	7	0.01% interest
CCLA Deposit Account	800	0.037% interest
Total Cash	2,392	(30 September £1,964k)

Notes:

- Second precept (£758k) received
- £150k transferred to Lloyds from CCLA Deposit
- £85k CIL receipts from Prison, Brewery Sq, London Rd and Barracks sites

- Debt over 30 days = £543, 7 debtors (31 October £1,798, 1 debtor).
- Payments list 1 September to 31 October 2021 on website. Supporting vouchers available from Financial Controller
 - **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £476,151.17 is approved.

2. Internal Audit Report 2021/22

- First Audit report, with officer responses, attached at Appendix 2
- **RECOMMENDED** that the audit report and officer response is noted

Nigel Hayes
 Financial Controller

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 31 OCTOBER 2021

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	735	430	418	-12
Capital Financing	39	39	37	-2
Other Payments	556	305	309	4
To Specific Reserves	309	309	309	0
Income	-122	-48	-54	-6
Net Budget	1,516	1,034	1,018	-16

By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-7	2	4	2
Parks & Open Spaces	104	75	72	-3
Cemeteries	-2	11	12	2
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	37	17	16	-0
Cultural & Twinning	71	32	23	-9
Municipal Buildings	257	181	182	1
Other Services	233	221	213	-8
Office Team	379	227	231	3
Outdoor Services	445	268	265	-4
Net Budget	1,516	1,034	1,018	-16

Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	30	0	0	0
Municipal Buildings	1,758	698	698	0
Parks Premises	0	0	11	11
Play Equipment	0	0	0	0
Public Realm	278	1	1	0
Vehicles & Equipment	20	20	18	-2
Dorchester West Ramp	10	0	0	0
Arts & Cultural	5	5	5	0
Christmas Lights	10	10	8	-2
Corporate Projects	0	0	0	0
Planning Advice	10	0	0	0
Climate Emergency	50	0	0	0
Treasury	5	0	0	0
Net Budget	2,176	734	741	7

Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants
2021/22 INTERNAL AUDIT OF DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL - DRAFT REPORT VISIT 1 OF 3: 27th OCTOBER 2021
Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Pr	Management Response	Resp Off	Due Date
3.1 – Amend date noted in minute 93	I reviewed the minutes to confirm that there was no unusual financial activity. I noted that minute 93 of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting of 26/04/21 referred in error to the meeting of 04/04/21 (it should have been 06/04/21). I recommend that minute 93 is amended at the next meeting of the Committee.	L	Agreed.	GW	30/11/21
7.1 – Amend sick pay records	I checked to see that the salaries paid agreed with the amounts (rates and hours) approved by Council. I found that staff pay rates agreed to contracts or a subsequent budget or pay award, and that hours agreed either to contracts or to timesheets (for staff paid variable hours). I did note that the sick pay paid to a member of staff appeared to be too high due to a processing error (which reduced the basic pay due by the same amount, with £nil effect on the net pay). I recommend that the error is corrected in the payroll system in order to ensure that any future sick pay calculations are unaffected by historic sick pay during this financial year.	L	Agreed.	NH	30/11/21

Areas covered:

1. Proper book-keeping
2. Payments
3. Risk Management
4. Petty Cash
5. Payroll
6. Bank Reconciliation
7. Exemption (confirm not covered as the Council has an external audit last year)
8. Transparency (confirm not applicable as the Council is over £25k)
9. Public Rights
10. Publication

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2021****STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTERS – ANNUAL REPORT**

1. The Council manages its risks through a process that concludes in an annual risk review report presented to Policy Committee. The Council’s adopted Risk Management Policy, which details the methodology used to assess the risks being faced by the Council, is attached at Appendix 1.
2. The Council’s Risk Registers currently hold nine risks classified as ‘high’ and ninety risks classified as ‘medium’, as assessed in accordance with the Council’s adopted Risk Policy. The whole register is available from the Deputy Town Clerk.
3. Following comments made by the Committee last year one high level risk relating to the reputational damage to the Council should it not play its part in any co-ordinated response to the longer term impact of Covid 19 lockdowns (Risk No- S053A) has been added to the Strategic Register.
4. This past year has again, unfortunately, been one dominated by the coronavirus pandemic and various Government imposed restrictions. This has however enabled the Council to push ahead with the essential roof and climate emergency works to the Municipal Buildings. The future relationship with Dorchester Arts has also been clarified.
5. The risk registers have been amended to take into account 3 above and can be found in Appendix 2. Members are invited to review these and the remaining high strategic and operational risks included within the appendix.
6. As well as reviewing the highest risks the Committee is asked to identify any new risks it feels should be included within the Registers, with an appropriate score. In this regard Members may wish to include an additional risk for this year only in respect of the appointment of a new Town Clerk.
8. It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**
 - i) That the assessed high level strategic and operation risks be approved.
 - ii) That any new risks identified at the Committee be included within the registers.
 - iii) That the strategic, operational and opportunity risk registers, as a whole, be approved.

Steve Newman
Deputy Town Clerk

1. INTRODUCTION

Risk can be defined as the 'uncertainty of an outcome', primarily relating to a negative threat to business plans or activities. The effective management of risk is a key issue for the success of any organisation or activity, for in many cases it is only by taking risks that progress is made. The importance is to understand the risks that are inherent in a decision. A structured approach to risk management can achieve this by enabling the decision to be made against a background of better information about the potential outcome of a particular course of action. The Town Council has adopted a structured approach to Risk Management.

2. AUDIENCE

This Policy is intended as the primary guidance to the Council and senior management but is made available to all employees.

3. STAKEHOLDERS

It is important to involve stakeholders in the risk management process as this will give access to the widest possible range of views about the potential threats and opportunities affecting the Council and its services. A stakeholder in this context is an organisation or individual who can affect, or is affected by decisions of the Council. Stakeholders will change depending on whether the risk is project-related or more general, but Councillors and senior management will always be involved.

4. AIMS & BENEFITS

The aim of this policy is to develop an awareness of the benefits of risk management within the Council. It also encourages everyone involved to adopt an open and structured approach to risk management. The Council hopes that effective risk management will help to deliver –

- Increased certainty and fewer surprises.
- Better management of threats to cost, time and performance, leading to improved service delivery.
- Better grasping of opportunities to improve our services.
- More effective management of change.
- Better management at all levels through improved decision making.
- Clear ownership and accountability for risk and its management.
- Better value for money for the Council Taxpayer.
- Easier achievement of Key Performance Indicators by enabling effort to be targeted.

5. PROCESS

The overall process for the management of risk is set out at Annex A.

6. OWNERSHIP

The Risk Policy is owned by the Council and implemented through the offices of the Town Clerk.

7. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Each risk will be assessed in terms of its probability of occurrence and the potential impact on the Council. The following are the criteria by which each risk will be assessed:

Probability of Occurrence:

Category	Probability	Possible Indicators
Almost Certain (4)	>90% ¹	Frequent Occurrence
Likely (3)	>60%	Regular Occurrence
Possible (2)	>10%	Occasional Occurrence
Unlikely (1)	<10%	Has Never Occurred

¹Risks that are almost certain to happen should be addressed as an issue

Evaluation of Impact:

Impact on Performance	Risk Threat
Major (4)	Financial Impact >£25,000 Fatality / disabling injuries to public or staff / Adverse national media attention / external intervention / total service disruption / extensive legal action against the Council
Serious (3)	Financial Impact >£15,000 Adverse local media attention / extensive public complaints / adverse comments by regulators or auditors / significant service disruption / failure to meet key performance targets / service disruptions / injuries to public or staff / legal action against the Council
Significant (2)	Financial Impact >£5,000 Adverse service user complaints / service disruption / minor injuries and near misses to staff and public
Minor (1)	Financial impact less than £5,000 / isolated complaints / minor service disruption

Priority Ranking:

The ranking of an individual risk is calculated by a simple combination of its probability and impact.

Risk Matrix:

The risk, using the above impact and likelihood ratings, can then be plotted onto the risk matrix and its classification identified:

8 – 16 = High Risk 3-6 = Medium Risk 1-2 = Low Risk

Probability	4	4	8	12	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Risk management is only considered to be truly embedded when it functions as part of the Councils day to day operations. In order for this to be achieved it is vital that clarity exists to determine the various roles and responsibilities of individuals involved throughout the Council in the risk management process.

To ensure that this level of clarity exists, the Council has established a structure that depicts how Members, Officers and the various Committees, Panels and individuals contribute to the overall risk management process.

Organisational Structure and Summary of Key Roles

Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor annual report on risk management activity (via Policy Committee) • Certification of the Council's annual Statement on Internal Control
Policy Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve risk management policy and strategy and related documents • Approve content of risk registers and proposed risk mitigation plans and monitor implementation via regular monitoring reports • Monitor annual report on risk management activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General oversight of the Councils risk management process • Receiving regular reports to review/scrutinise/challenge current and proposed risk management procedures and processes • Give initial consideration to the annual report on the Councils risk management activity • To recommend a risk management framework, strategy and process • Identify, analyse and prioritise risks • Determine responsibilities and actions to control risks • Monitor progress on managing risks against action plans • Review implementation of the of the risk management framework, strategy and process

Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Members and external stakeholders on the framework, strategy and process • Provide advice and support on risk management matters • Maintain the risk management policy, strategy and framework • Produce an annual report on overall risk management activity • Identifying, analysing and prioritising risks • Determining risk management action plans and delegating responsibility for control • Monitoring progress on the management of risks
Staff and other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining awareness of risks, their impact and costs and feeding these into the formal risk management process • Controlling risks in their every-day work • Monitoring progress in managing job related risks

9. RISK REGISTERS

The Council will maintain computer based Strategic and Operational Risk Registers which will be developed further so as to link in with the Council’s other corporate documents such as the Performance and Policy Plan.

ANNEX A

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

RISK IDENTIFICATION

Risks and opportunities may be identified at any stage and should be included in the Risk Register. Nevertheless, in order to capture as many of the risks and opportunities facing an activity or project methods used for identification could include:

- Brainstorming sessions with individuals, committees or panels and various levels of management. It will be important to include as many stakeholders as possible in these sessions.
- Check lists.
- Questionnaires.
- Learning from other projects, councils and auditors.

As risks are identified they will be recorded in the Risk Register. Each risk must be described in terms of the source of the risk, the consequences if it happens and the effect it would have on the Council’s activities or project as the case may be.

RISK OWNERSHIP

Once a risk has been identified, it will be given an owner who is the person best able to manage the risk. The owner will be responsible for all aspects of the management of the risk or opportunity.

RISK EVALUATION

Each risk will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation rules laid down within this Plan. This information will be entered in the Risk Register and will enable prioritisation of the risks within a certain area.

RISK PLANNING

Once each risk has been identified and evaluated actions for dealing with it will be developed. These are known as risk responses and fall into one of four areas:

- Terminate: An action that allows the risk to be avoided.
- Treat: An action that will reduce the impact and/or the probability of a risk.
- Transfer: Is there a stakeholder or another organisation better able to manage the risk?
- Tolerate: Accept the consequences if the risk occurs.

The Risk Register will identify the option selected to deal with each risk together with any actions that might be required.

Once the risk responses have been developed the risk owner must then decide which option to adopt. In reaching decisions as to which response should be used, a cost/benefit comparison should be made. For mitigation activities attracting significant cost (> £5,000) results will need to be recorded. It may be that external help is required to help decide the appropriate course of action, in which case the risk owner should record the date by which a decision must be made and the potential consequences if the decision is not taken by that date.

Following the decision to adopt a particular risk response, the owner must ensure that:

- The secondary risks associated with implementing the risk response are assessed and recorded.
- Where one exists the project plan is updated to include the activities associated with the risk response.
- Entries are made in the fields on the risk register detailing the predicted probability and impact evaluation, once the response activities are completed.
- A fallback/contingency plan is developed to address the consequences of the risk happening despite the response activities.

Risk owners must monitor the progress and success of their chosen response to risk on a regular basis. They should review all their risks and provide an evaluation of probability and impact on a regular basis.

REVIEW

The highest priority risks are to be reviewed by the Policy Committee. Risk monitoring will be regularly reported to the Policy Committee.

The effectiveness of the process will be reviewed by the Policy Committee periodically.

STRATEGIC RISKS SCORED 'HIGH'

Appendix 2

Risk	Risk No	Responsible Officer	Impact and Effect of Deliverables	Probability	Impact	Total	Controls in Place	Risk response	Notes
Significant re-organisation of Local Government in Dorset The future direction of Dorset Council	S047	TC	Pressure on the TC to take on additional services or fund services/ voluntary organisations, reduced partnership working, loss of DC staff with experience and knowledge of issue important to Dorchester resulting in significant financial and political implications.	4	3	12	Members to be kept informed. The TC to have as much input as possible into any consultations. Robust Corporate Plan to be put in place. Financial provision to be put in place. Relationships with new / changed officers to be cultivated.	Treat / Monitor	This risk also presents an opportunity to the Council to impact on services not previously within its remit.
Poor future management of the Market operation post LGR in April 2019	S050	TC	Reduced income, poor visitor experience, reputational damage	2	4	8	Representation on Markets Panel, negotiations to take place with Dorset Council in respect of future management.	Treat / Monitor	
The Climate Emergency <i>(This risk replaces the 'Climate Change' risk (SO25) which was previously on the register)</i>	S051	TC	Being ill prepared for weather related incidents/changes – TC facilities not equipped to cope. Reputational damage if the Council does not fulfil its carbon neutral, plastic free and biodiversity pledges.	2	4	8	Biodiversity plan approved. Plastic Free Town declaration, emerging Climate Emergency Plan in progress. Action already being undertaken – move to electric vehicles and tools, ground source heating at Weymouth	Treat / Monitor	

							Ave Pav, Solar Panels at the depot, Biomass boiler and a package of other carbon reduction measures are presently being installed at the Municipal Buildings. Biodiversity and tree planting being undertaken.		
The Town Council extending its service offer into wholly new activities	S052	TC	Providing a poor service, financing significantly higher than anticipated, service failing resulting in significant financial damage and reputational damage	2	4	8	Members to carefully consider detailed costed action / business plans prior to entering into any new service – robustness of plans to be tested by an independent specialist if felt necessary	Treat / Monitor	
Covid-19 or other pandemic	S053	TC	The Town Council not being able function due to absence of staff, significant pressure points on particular key services, not in a position to support the community, staff not equipped to be able to work from home, democratic process unable to function, possible financial implications through loss of income or the need to spend outside of the agreed budget resulting in a moribund Council with significant reputational damage	4	2	8	Specific Risk Assessments for revised working practices and Covid safe environments. Laptops with cloud licences purchased to replace existing PC's. Zoom licences purchased. Phone system allows call forward to mobiles. Relationships built with other organisations to help with key functions such as grave digging. Most office functions now able to be completed remotely.	Treat / Monitor	NOTE the legislation that allowed for virtual Council meetings has now ended which means the Council is back to face to face meetings.

The reputational damage to the Council should it not play its part in any co-ordinated response to the longer term impact of Covid 19 lockdowns	S053 A	TC	The Town Council's reputation severely reduced in the eyes of the electorate resulting in complaints regarding lack of action and ineffectiveness in the face of any emerging Covid 19 lockdown impacts.	2	4	8	The Town Clerk to identify any emerging issues and action that might be taken. The Council to work in partnership with other organisations to respond to any emerging issues.	Treat / Monitor	
The future use and management relationship (with Dorchester Arts) of the Municipal Buildings	S054	TC	Confusion over responsibilities for buildings maintenance / staff, lack of opportunity for public hire, ongoing sustainability of Dorchester Arts	4	2	8	The Council has been fully involved with and approved agreements in respect of the lease, maintenance, staff provision and financial support.	Treat / Monitor	Note – although a risk this is also a fantastic opportunity to maximise the use of the building and to create a fit for purpose and vibrant arts and cultural hub at the northern end of town. DA has also secured funding for improvements to the front end of the building and theatre infrastructure.

OPERATIONAL RISKS SCORED 'HIGH'

Other

Serious incident at Council run outside event	OTH 010	TC	Loss of life/injury to public/staff. External criticism. Negative local and national press coverage. Increased insurance premiums.	2	4	8	PLI. Risk assess prior to event. Take note of 'purple book guidance'.	Treat/ Monitor	Note – due to Covid-19 there were only a limited number of larger events during 2021
Failure to insure or secure (where appropriate) public art/civic assets	OTH 011	TC	Loss or damage. Significant unexpected expenditure. Criticism for lack of care/civic pride. Loss of irreplaceable public art.	2	4	8	Assets identified and those in the ownership of the Council to be insured or the Council self-insures - Council decision. Additional security measures to some assets. Annual review of insurances and three yearly assessments of re-build costs.	Treat/ Monitor	

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2021

REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23 –DISCRETIONARY CORE GRANTS AND SPECIAL ITEMS

1. The 2022/23 Budget and MTFs will be presented to the January cycle of meetings. This report covers two areas of the budget where members may wish to give an early indication of their views and where the views of key partners might need to be sought.

DISCRETIONARY CORE GRANTS

2. The Council currently makes contributions to the core running costs of three partners (Dorchester Arts, Dorchester Cricket Club, Dorchester Youth and Community Centre), and has also been approached by Citizens Advice relating to a service that they are looking to mainstream. An approach has also been made in respect of heritage initiatives and events supported by the Heritage Joint Committee being mainstreamed.
3. **Dorchester Arts** – From 2022/23 for a minimum period of 5 years, following the refurbishment of the Municipal Buildings, Dorchester Arts will manage the building in line with the management agreement discussed at the last meeting. The financial arrangement is as follows:-
 - DA will receive a Buildings grant of £7,000 (the difference between past Income & Expenditure on the Municipal Buildings)
 - DA will also benefit from an in kind and cash Town Hall Keeper grant (being the provision of 2.5 fte staff plus overtime) - any unused budget for Town Hall Keepers and their overtime will be transferred to DA
 - Core Running costs – the Town Council will make no cash contribution towards the core running cost of Dorchester Arts (historically it paid c. £9,000 pa when Dorchester Arts occupied The Grove building and exchanged an equivalent amount for free hires when DA moved into the Municipal Buildings)
4. **Dorchester Cricket Club** – 2022/23 marks the end of regular financial support for the Club. The Club took on the Weymouth Avenue Recreation Pavilion in 2016, then a year later took on maintenance of the pitch and cricket infrastructure, receiving a £10,000 grant in year 1, reducing by £2,000 a year during each of the next five years as the Club developed new revenue streams. The Council also made a major investment in climate works at the Pavilion in 2020 to help to significantly reduce the Club's heating and lighting costs.

The Club continues to work closely with the Council and staff will continue to offer practical advice and help source grant funding to allow the Club to develop its offer. The Council continues to meet the annual rental charge for the Recreation Ground.
5. **Dorchester Youth and Community Centre** – Management of the Youth Centre transferred from Dorset County Council (net cost c. £90,000 pa) to a Trust in August 2016. This Council offered support as follows:
 - For the first 3 years, up to 50% of all costs, max. £30,000 pa
 - From year 4, up to 33% of all costs, max £20,000 pa (indexed to CPI)

DYCC has now been operating for 5 years and have approached the Clerk seeking clarification over the level of financial commitment it can expect from the Council over the next phase of its operation and development.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy assumes that funding will continue at the current level, but no firm decision regarding long term funding was taken in 2016; at that time the priority was very much to safeguard the short term future of DYCC.

It is **RECOMMENDED**

- That a review of the Council's relationship with DYCC is commenced, to report back to Policy Committee (three Members not associated with DYCC should be appointed to conduct the review)
- That until the review has been completed the Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to include grant support at the current level

6. **Citizens Advice** – The Council has not traditionally provided financial support to CA, but responded to a time critical request earlier this year to support a specific initiative relating to an enhanced Employment Advice service with a grant of £13,500. At the time it was agreed that the Council would consider a longer term commitment beyond April 2022 as part of its budget setting process.

The Clerk has since sought information from other towns and parishes in Dorset regarding their support for CA. Ten towns responded and all gave annual grants to their local general CA service, ranging from £1,000 to £10,000 pa. It should be noted that historically West Dorset CAs enjoyed significantly higher support than CAs elsewhere in the county, thus the need to approach West Dorset towns was much reduced; that position has changed slightly, both because CAs generally and particularly the Dorchester CA have merged their arrangements and also following the review of Discretionary Grants by Dorset Council, which did not reduce or increase overall funding to CAs but may alter the allocations to individual CAs over time.

There are several options open to the Council

- Provide no ongoing support to the CA service – it is likely that the Employment Advice initiative will be reabsorbed back into mainstream CA activity and may be reduced as a consequence
- Continue to provide support to a dedicated Employment Advice service – early information was that enquiries had increased significantly due to Covid and were very much Dorchester focused, hence our support. Should the Committee wish to pursue this option further more information will be required from the Central Area CA to establish whether service use is still skewed towards Dorchester residents
- Join other Town Councils in providing regular support to the local CA core service, where there is well established evidence of need from residents of Dorchester. Should this be the preferred approach the Committee will need to identify a suitable amount

The Committee's preferred way forward is sought so that CA can be advised and an appropriate amount can included in next year's budget.

7. **Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee** – a request has been received on behalf of the Committee for consideration of the reinstatement of a historic annual contribution of £3,000 a year to enable the Committee to deliver project type improvements to the town's heritage interpretation, plus the mainstreaming of grant support for heritage related events at £8,500 a year.

Historically DHJC enjoyed significant grant support from the three Councils servicing the town, although annual support ended over a decade ago, with the Town Council being the last regular donor. Since annual contributions ended DHJC has continued to deliver its remit from a sizeable legacy fund, but this has now been exhausted. As a result DHJC is no longer able to

deliver new minor heritage projects or maintain past investments (e.g. in Information boards), without applying for one off Town Council grant or external grant support, which is often focused on the donor's priorities rather than those of the town.

In recent years DHJC became a prime sponsor of two new and popular events, Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair and the Heritage Open Day. Both events require funds for management, promotion and road closures, and also for heritage related activities. Both events have thus far been delivered using one off grants from the Town Council and the Heritage Committee (whose funding is now exhausted) and from commercial sponsors.

DHJC would need an annual grant of c. £3,000 to maintain its current spending patterns on heritage interpretation and the two heritage events would require up to c. £8,500 a year from the Town Council to go ahead. Without Town Council support it is highly unlikely that either programme will continue; there is clear evidence that Town Council support is matched by other donors and commercial sponsors.

Options available to the Town Council are therefore

- Continue to base support on one off grants only – this would create uncertainty and time delays in both interpretation and event programmes but might still allow them to go ahead
- Agree an annual contribution to DHJC to cover the Interpretation programme at £3,000, and to support the two events at £8,500 a year (this funding could be directed to the event organisers, there is no obvious need to route it via DHJC). Work is separately being undertaken on opportunities to streamline, and reduce the cost of, holding events in the town centre, which might enable the Events contribution to be reduced over time

The Committee's preferred way forward is sought so that an appropriate amount can be included in next year's budget.

SPECIAL ITEMS

8. The Council's budget includes a line for Special Items, with c. £19,000 being allocated across 3 – 5 distinct projects each year. The projects will typically be a mix of minor open space landscaping works, highways activities and time related events such as national celebrations and twinning anniversaries.
9. The process requires the officer team to identify a series of relatively low value projects, four months ahead of a financial year beginning, then deliver them against the routine dynamic work environment that exists on a £1.5 Million budget. Projects are sometimes delivered before the year has begun or after the year has ended and the end cost is often very different (either higher or lower) than the original estimate because of unforeseen costs or by taking advantage of opportunities. Some approved projects do not go ahead. In practice, with current budget levels, Committee and management arrangements the Special Items process is no longer relevant.
11. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Budget is prepared on the basis that
 - From 2022/23 onwards the practice of budgeting for Special Items is discontinued
 - £7,000 is added to the Parks and Open Spaces Maintenance budget, which the Management Committee might divert to Cemeteries from time to time
 - £12,000 is added to the Partner Events and Sponsorship budget

12. The Partner Events and Sponsorship Budget would consequently be in a strong position to support additional requests such as those at 6. and 7. above on either a one off or regular basis.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2021****CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE**

1. A progress report on the agreed Corporate Plan milestones is attached at Appendix 1.

Development or Disposal of 19 North Square

2. Council previously confirmed it wished to investigate the potential for developing 19 North Square for affordable housing, as an alternative to a simple disposal of the site as a single market priced dwelling.
3. Appendix 2 highlights the financial equation
 - A market based disposal is likely to generate £350,000 and would be relatively straightforward
 - An option based on 3 x 1 bed flats was tested and is judged to be unviable, assuming the Council wishes to achieve a receipt at £300,000, the figure assumed in the funding model for the Municipal Buildings
 - An option based on 5 flats of various sizes is on the margins of viability based on a £300,000 receipt. The Architect notes recognise that two of the properties might be unacceptable to the planning authority
4. The current timetable for the Municipal Buildings works indicates that 19 North Square will not be available for disposal until June 2022. At present it is not at all clear whether the 5 x flat option is either financially viable or acceptable in planning terms, but there is time to look at potential funding sources and possibly test the ideas through a pre-application request before a final decision is taken. This will however, involve additional officer time and cost.
5. The Committee's further instruction is sought.

Cornhill Project

6. The Cornhill project has reached the stage where the designers have generated ideas that have been well received. However the above ground element of the proposals would cost significantly more than the budget set aside for them, and it is not clear to the designer what formal process they need to go through should the Council wish to pursue the design further.
7. It has been agreed that the next steps are to resolve uncertainty regarding the planning process by submitting a pre-application advice request; and to fully cost the whole scheme in readiness for either implementation or a redesign based on removing some of the above ground elements. The outcome of these exercises will be reported to the Committee when they are available.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

HIGH LEVEL FOCUS OF THE CORPORATE PLAN – 2021/22 MILESTONES

APPENDIX 1

High Level Focus	Projects	Milestone	Current Progress	😊😊😊
Affordable Housing				
Deliver sites	Tennis Courts	Planning Application agreed Jul 21	Awaiting DC decision	😊
	19 North Square	Feasibility Study rec'd Sep 21	See Appendix 2	😊
	Poundbury Cemetery	Preliminary evaluation Nov 21	Need to discuss options with Duchy	😊
	Other Sites	New site identified Jan 22	Management Cttee considering site	😊
Community Culture Health & Wellbeing				
Understand residents needs	Residents feedback	Comments received Apr 21	Received, now evaluating	😊
	Review Community Register of Projects	New Register of Projects Dec 21	Delayed due to focus on specific project work and difficulties holding meetings	😊
Maintain and adapt our services	Programme of Revenue Projects	Special Items in Budget Jan 21	2021/22 Completed	😊
	The Great Field	Support infrastructure Dec 21	Significant progress on Play equipment. First draft of lease received	😊
	Kings Road & Lubbecke Way Open Spaces Project	GAP Project at Lubbecke Way Oct 21	Hardstanding completed. Lease discussions nearing completion	😊
		Park ideas developed Mar 22	-	-
Municipal Buildings	Refurbish Municipal Buildings	Phase 1-4 works completed Jan 22	Ph1 (Roof) completed	😊
			Ph2/3 (Biomass/Offices) commenced, due Jan 22, Ph4 (Corn Ex) due Nov 21	😊
	Work with Dorchester Arts to develop use of the site	Operating Agreement signed Sep 21	Final draft approved by TFG. Lease with DA solicitors	😊
		First review meeting Mar 22		-

The Environment					
Climate Emergency Programme	Municipal Buildings	Phase 1 – 4 works completed	Jan 22	Ph2(Biomass) commenced, due Jan 22	☺
	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipt purchased	Mar 22	-	-
	Partner Programme	Identify new partner project	Mar 22	Major grant rec'd from Forestry Commission	☺
Local Economy Transport and Parking					
Tourism	Implement Tourism Development Strategy	App launched	Jun 21	Completed	☺
		Website launched	Sep 21	Now due late Nov 21	☺
		Front Desk training	Dec 21	Training package under development	☺
	Opportunities to improve Markets	Present options to Panel	Jan 22	Discuss ideas with TC Panel Dec 21	☺
Future Growth of Dorchester					
Local Plan DOR13	Respond to Local Plan consultations	Response to Options	Mar 21	Completed	☺
		Monitor next phase	Mar 22	-	-
Town Centre Masterplan - Improvements, Transport, Economy, Parking	Prepare the ground for a new master plan to be recognised as part of the Local Plan or as a separate Neighbourhood Plan	Finalise scheme for Cornhill	Dec 21	Appendix 3	☺
		Develop Plan for Masterplan	Aug 21	Second workshop Oct 21. Consult partners Dec 21	☺
		Consult on Masterplan ideas	Jan 22	-	-
Internal Governance Arrangements					
Communications	Improve use of Social Media	Develop Social Media Policy	Oct 21	First draft to Policy in Jan 22	☺
MTFS	Ability to respond to new threats and opportunities	Review MTFS	Jan 22	-	-

DEVELOPMENT OR DISPOSAL OF 19 NORTH SQUARE

- SPASE Architects appointed June 2021 to deliver Feasibility study with option to develop to Planning Application
- SPASE reported back September 2021 identifying four options (Sell as 1 unit, 3 units, 5 units, or 6 unit HMO). Invited to cost 3 and 5 unit options to allow viability to be tested
- SPASE have now reported back, presenting the following possible funding scenario:-

Option	Construction Cost £k	Total Cost £k	Cost per unit £k	Comment
Option 1 Conversion to 4/5 bed house	0	350	350	Straightforward Early release of cash No affordability
Option 2 3 x 1 bed flat	299	620	210	Not viable
Option 3 1 x 2 bed flat 2 x 1 bed flat 2 x Studio flat	381	701	Avg 140, say 200 2 x 150 2 x 100	Marginally viable Might deliver 5 affordable units

Building Value and other costs

- Option 1 would result in immediate disposal, with an expected early release £350k receipt net of fees
- Options 2 & 3 assume a capital receipt of £300k and £20k of other costs

Options

- Dispose of 19 North Square as a single unit, releasing c. £350k capital early to offset Municipal Buildings
- Develop 5 flat option further, evaluating transfer to a Housing provider and potential funding sources

CORNHILL PROJECT

- Feria Urbanism appointed Mar 2020 to undertake public consultation and outline design of the Cornhill space
- Feria conducted several consultation exercises, each COVID affected, during 2020 and 2021, each exercise generating good quality feedback
- Feria conducted further consultation in July 2021, in particular targeting key decision makers at Dorset Council
- Following the July meeting Feria and AS took stock of the project. AS noted the costs of the above ground works were significantly higher than the budgeted amount for seating and that ideas for the ground infrastructure might be problematic due to the cost of reinstatement following regular Utility provider interventions. Notwithstanding these comments AS encouraged Feria to continue to pursue the idea, acknowledging the potential for external funding. Feria expressed further concerns regarding the clarity of advice received from different Dorset Council teams
- Feria and AS met by Zoom in November 2021 and agreed the following strategy
 - Feria will fully cost the ground works and above ground works so that a decision can be taken regarding potential funding opportunities
 - Feria will request pre-app planning advice from Dorset Council, based on the July 2021 concept designs, to establish what permissions are required before proceeding to detail design