



Dorchester Town Council

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15 March 2022

Agenda for the meeting of the **Policy Committee**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at **THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, HIGH EAST STREET, DORCHESTER** on **MONDAY 21 MARCH 2022** at **7.00pm**.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

Public Attendance and Speaking at the Meeting

The meeting will be held at a time when the risk associated with Covid 19 is still significant. 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 Chair 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 (Chair).

1. Apologies, Declarations of Interest & Signing of Minutes
To confirm that the Chair may sign Minutes of the meetings of 13 December 2021 and 17 January 2022, adopted by Council on 24 January 2022.
2. Financial Update at 28 February 2022 A
3. Corporate Plan Update at 28 February 2022 B
4. Municipal Buildings Works Update C
5. Member Allowances 2022/23 and Beyond D
7. Tourism Provision E

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2022
FINANCIAL UPDATE AT 28 FEBRUARY 2022

1. Financial Position

- Month 11 spend (Appendix 1) £36K under
 - £19k under on Outdoor Events
 - £25k under on Outdoor Staff
 - £5k extra BG Kiosk and Tennis income
 - One-off £13k grant to Citizens Advice
 - £6k over on Vehicles and Equipment
 - £4k less BG House income due to closure
 - All other under and overspends net £5k under
- **RECOMMENDED** that all surplus funds above the £100,000 General Reserve target at 31 March 2022 are transferred to the Municipal Buildings Reserve

• Cash Position	£000	
Lloyds Bank Current Account	177	0.00% interest
Payden Global	900	c. 0.60% return
National Savings and Investments	7	0.01% interest
CCLA Deposit Account	850	0.37% interest
Total Cash	1,934	(31 December £2,322k)

Note:

- Transfers will be made from Payden/CCLA to Lloyds in March/April to pay for Municipal Buildings works
- Debt over 30 days = £0, 0 debtors (31 December £0, 0 debtors).
- Payments list 1 January to 28 February 2022 on website. Supporting vouchers available from Financial Controller
 - **RECOMMENDED** that the Payments list, totalling £506,311.26 is approved.

2. Internal Audit Report

- 2nd Audit report plus officer comments at Appendix 2.
- **RECOMMENDED** that Audit report and officer comments are noted

3. Pay Award

- Nat. Joint Council notified agreed pay award of 1.75% for 2021/22 on 28 February 2022
- Backdated payment to staff made in March payslips, cost £7,200, £3,000 over budget
- Members Allowances will also increase by 1.75% backdated to the 1 April 2021
- Negotiations will now commence on Pay Award for 2022/23

4. Lloyds Bank Authorisations

- The table below shows the current Invoice Authorising and Bank Account BACs payment process in full

Action	Responsible
Signing to approve invoices	C. Dallison (majority) and any other officer
Signing to authorise invoices	A. Stuart or S. Newman
Entering invoices on Sage	C. Horlock or N. Hayes
Dual signatory authorisation	Councillors: M. Rennie, S. Jones, D. Taylor, R. Potter, T. Harries
Entering payments on Lloyds	N. Hayes or C. Horlock
Dual authorisation on Lloyds	A. Stuart and S. Newman

- In order for a BACS payment to leave the Lloyds Bank account one officer has to set it up and two further officers have to authorise payment - “Division of duty”
- In anticipation of the departure of the current Clerk it is **RECOMMENDED** that Emma Scott is temporarily added to the system as an additional Dual Authoriser
- Once the new team structure has been determined and all posts filled the role of second Dual Authoriser will be reviewed

Nigel Hayes
Financial Controller

MANAGEMENT REPORT AT 28 FEBRUARY 2022

By Spend Type	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Staff	735	674	639	-35
Capital Financing	39	37	37	-0
Other Payments	556	469	466	-2
To Specific Reserves	309	309	309	0
Income	-122	-116	-115	1
Net Budget	1,516	1,372	1,336	-36
By Service	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Allotments	-7	-7	-5	2
Parks & Open Spaces	104	97	94	-3
Cemeteries	-2	-1	-1	0
Corp. & Dem. Manage.	37	28	28	-1
Cultural & Twinning	71	69	50	-19
Municipal Buildings	257	204	211	7
Other Services	233	224	215	-9
Office Team	379	349	352	3
Outdoor Services	445	410	392	-17
Net Budget	1,516	1,372	1,336	-36
Earmarked Reserves with budgeted Expenditure In Year	Budget £000	Profile £000	Actual £000	-Under/Over £000
Cemeteries	30	30	0	-30
Municipal Buildings	1,758	1,500	985	-515
Parks Premises	0	0	16	16
Play Equipment	0	0	8	8
Public Realm	278	278	1	-277
Vehicles & Equipment	20	20	22	2
Dorchester West Ramp	10	10	10	0
Arts & Cultural	5	5	5	0
Christmas Lights	10	10	10	0
Corporate Projects	0	0	0	0
Planning Advice	10	10	6	-4
Climate Emergency	50	50	0	-50
Treasury	5	0	0	0
Net Budget	2,176	1,913	1,063	-850

Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants
2021/22 INTERNAL AUDIT OF DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL - FINAL REPORT VISIT 2 OF 3: 28th JANUARY 2022
Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Pr	Management Response	Resp Off	Due Date
2.1 – Check and approve revised payments lists totals	<p>I checked to see that a sample of payments in the cashbook were supported by invoices, authorised and minuted. I found that invoices or other paperwork were held to support all payments, that 39/40 had been properly authorised (due to remote working arrangements, some payments were authorised retrospectively at the month-end, and this affected one sample which will be checked at the next visit).</p> <p>I found that 36/40 samples had been minuted for approval: 2/40 related to payments made into an investment holding, and the Council has previously disagreed with a recommendation that such payments be listed (on the basis that they are not payments made to a third party). 2/40 samples are due to be listed on the next payments list to be minuted for approval by Council.</p> <p>I did note that there were casting errors on two of the payments lists approved by Council to date. The list presented to Policy Committee on 19/07/21 double-counted most of the April payments and the April total, which inflated the list total from £779k to £1.3m. The list presented on 15/11/21 didn't include in the total one of the payments listed, meaning that the total was £18 lower than it should have been.</p> <p>I recommend that the formula in the payments lists are double-checked prior to approval, to ensure that the correct value of payments is minuted for approval by Council, and that Policy Committee minutes the amended total that should have been approved in relation to both lists.</p>	M	Agreed	NH	28/01/22
2.2 – Separate code for agency staff costs	<p>I checked to see that payments are correctly coded. I found that 37/40 payments were correctly coded, but that 3 payments relating to the provision of agency staff had been coded to salaries (as that is where the related budget was held, and the agency staff were covering staff shortages). The Practitioner's Guide requires that agency staff costs are reported as part of other payments. The Finance Officer has confirmed that he will set up a new code for Agency Staff with a zero budget, which will both separate out the cost for the annual return, and ensure agency costs have greater visibility.</p> <p>I recommend that agency staff costs are coded separately as planned.</p>	L	Agreed	NH	28/01/22
5.1	<p>I checked to see that a sample of income was properly recorded, promptly banked, that all income was collected, that prices agreed with those charged by the Council and that VAT output tax was correctly treated.</p> <p>I found no issues with 12/13 samples, but noted that one sample (relating to a net rebate of electricity) had been posted as one total instead of 3 credit notes and 4 invoices, and that the net/VAT split had not been calculated correctly. The net receipt shown in the Council's accounts was £1,471.50, but it should have been £1,329.83, an error of £141.67.</p>	M	Agreed, although there is an oddity on the bills from SSE with different VAT rates for invoices and credits.	NH	28/01/22

	I recommend that the individual invoices and credit notes are posted to the Council's accounts in order to ensure that there is a full audit trail of VAT transactions declared and filed as part of the Council's VAT return, and to ensure that net and VAT figures are correctly calculated; and that this entry is corrected accordingly.				
5.2	I found that a number of recent memorial applications were held loose on the front of the memorial application file. This increase the risk that applications could be lost. I recommend that all applications are properly and securely filed.	L	Agreed	JH / SN	28/01/22

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2022
CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE

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

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	Decision not to proceed made at Council Nov 21	-
	Poundbury Cemetery	Preliminary evaluation Nov 21	Need to discuss options with Duchy	😊
	Other Sites	New site identified Jan 22	Management Cttee agreed to consider possible site Jan 22	😊
Community Culture Health & Wellbeing				
Understand residents needs	Residents feedback	Comments received Apr 21	Completed.	-
	Review Community Register of Projects	New Register of Projects Dec 21	Delays continue due to focus on specific project work and difficulties holding meetings. Due Jun 22	😊
Maintain and adapt our services	Programme of Revenue Projects	Special Items in Budget Jan 21	Completed	-
	The Great Field	Support infrastructure Dec 21	Play Equipment due to open Easter 22 Heads of Terms to Man. Cttee Mar 22	😊
	Kings Road & Lubbecke Way Open Spaces Project	GAP Project at Lubbecke Way Oct 21	Pathways under construction. Awaiting s106 funding release	😊

		Park ideas developed	Mar 22	Prelim. discussions with DC re s106/CIL and EA re bridge. Tree planting completed	-
Municipal Buildings	Refurbish Municipal Buildings	Phase 1-4 works completed	Jan 22	Ph1 (Roof) completed Ph2/3 (Biomass/Offices) commenced, due Jun 22, Ph4 (Corn Ex) completed	☺ ☺
	Work with Dorchester Arts to develop use of the site	Operating Agreement signed	Sep 21	Lease signed. First review meeting due Jun 22	☺ -
The Environment					
Climate Emergency Programme	Municipal Buildings	Phase 1 – 4 works completed	Jan 22	Ph2(Biomass) commenced, due Jun 22	☺
	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipt purchased	Mar 22	No new purchases made	-
	Partner Programme	Identify new partner project	Mar 22	Major grant rec'd from Forestry Commission for Tree Planting in Kings Road, completed	☺
Local Economy Transport and Parking					
Tourism	Implement Tourism Development Strategy	App launched	Jun 21	Completed	-
		Website launched	Sep 21	Completed Dec 21	☺
		Front Desk training	Dec 21	Training package under development	☺
	Opportunities to improve Markets	Present options to Panel	Jan 22	Monthly Fairs supported by Markets Panel Feb 22. To be developed	☺
Future Growth of Dorchester					
Local Plan DOR13	Respond to Local Plan consultations	Response to Options	Mar 21	Completed	☺ -

		Monitor next phase	Mar 22	Dorset Council consultation delayed	
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	Awaiting pre-app discussions with DC and budget review by FERIA	☹️
		Develop Plan for Masterplan	Aug 21	Completed	-
		Consult on Masterplan ideas	Jan 22	Partner consultation due for completion Apr 22. Report back to P&E	😊
Internal Governance Arrangements					
Communications	Improve use of Social Media	Develop Social Media Policy	Oct 21	Delayed by other projects. Social media presence stepped up	☹️
MTFS	Ability to respond to new threats and opportunities	Review MTFS	Jan 22	Review completed. MTFS remains in strong position	😊

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2022****MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS WORKS AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH DORCHESTER ARTS - UPDATE**

1. This report provides an update based on Minute 2020/15 which commenced the works project in July 2020, plus Minute 2020/30b-f at Council in November 2020 which extended the project and introduced the transfer of the management of the building to Dorchester Arts. This report builds on update reports to Policy Committee on 15 March 2021 and 20 September 2021.

**Main Contract Works (Phases 1,2 & 3) – Budget £1,800k Main Contractor Hammonds
Original Target Dates Mar 2021 (Ph 1) and Dec 2021 (Ph 2 & 3)**

2. Roof repairs to the Council Chamber, Corn Exchange and Apse (Ph1)
 - Substantially completed Oct 21, 6 months behind schedule
 - The small roof on lean to at the front of the car park will be replaced once all scaffolding is removed from site
 - The budget, including significant contingencies and fees, totalled £550k. Latest projection is £592k, £42k above the budget, including an allowance for costs resulting from delays in the contract
 - Main Roof works have taken much longer than anticipated due to problems uncovered with the Apse metal frame structure and due to disruption to the supply of materials and skilled labour during the pandemic
 - While sufficient contingency existed for most of the additional works the time taken to complete the works, which required scaffold to remain on site, has had a major knock on for the Extension works (Ph 2). The Council is currently in negotiation with the contractor regarding responsibility for the time delays and a sum has been included in the latest estimate for the additional costs
3. The Rear Extension (Ph2) and Internal Conversion (Ph 3)
 - Now due for completion Jun 22, 6 months late
 - Latest estimate is £1,219k, £1k below the original budget – masks variations and decisions on non-essential items
 - Works to the Extension (Ph2) to provide for the biomass boiler system and first floor office extension, were delayed due to scaffolding necessary for Ph1
 - These works were also remodelled to take account of the needs of the wood chip store and the delivery system to the boiler, which required deeper foundations and wall strengthening; these in turn have delayed the project and resulted in a claim for contractor costs. Work is now progressing well
 - Internal Conversion (Ph3) works, to remodel the existing building to create upstairs offices and meeting rooms and downstairs multi-purpose space for performer changing, food preparation, meetings and disabled facilities, all under a new roof were progressing well, but were delayed by work on the new roof, which was in turn complicated by the poor quality of the original structure. With roof works now 90% complete the internal fit out has recommenced

- Planning approval has been granted for solar panels on the roof of the Corn Exchange (a grade 2* listed structure) and a decision is awaited on an application to allow solar panels on the roof of the extension

Theatre Improvements (Phase 4) – Budget £250k from s106 Target Date Sep 21

4. These works covered Corn Exchange Sound/AV/Lighting and Raked seating, plus ancillary works
 - Completed in January 2022, four months late, due to delays associated with the Corn Exchange roof, which in turn required internal scaffolding
 - Additional works (£10k) were undertaken to improve ventilation and secure the lighting bar in the apse
 - As a result the replacement programme for LED theatre lighting could not commence. A new plan to start replacing the theatre lighting is being developed, including applications for grant funding
 - The total cost of the completed works is £250k, which has been funded by s106 money received from Dorset Council

Front of House Improvements (Phase 5) – Budget £500k from Town Council & s106

5. These works envisaged reconfiguring the front of the building, relocating toilets away from the prime space, probably into the bar area. This allows non-original walls to be removed to open up the front of the building for community use and improve visitor experience and dwell time ahead of evening events.
6. The opportunity has been taken to introduce 3 toilet cubicles in the multi-use space at the rear of the building. These will be available for daytime users of the multi-use space and visitors to performance events in the Corn Exchange. This work reduces the number of toilets that will need to be provided at the front of the building. Dorset Council will release s106 to meet this early cost.
7. Having engaged professional support to explore the potential to open up access into the basement area, which is currently used for general storage and as a gas boiler room, Dorchester Arts have concluded that in the short term it would be difficult to make a business case for the works, with a longer term case being dependent on the growth of use of the building. Work on this option has therefore been suspended.
8. With the priority now being to increase use of the building, and with any front of house works inevitably resulting in a new closure of the building, it is anticipated that no further works will take place at the front of the building until 2024. This will, however, provide more time to evaluate what the optimal use of front of the building might be, based on emerging usage patterns.

Opportunity Wins – Budget £110,000

9. In March 2021 Council approved a budget primarily for incidental opportunity building works deemed possible while the builder is on site. A final list of the works commissioned is included in the Summary below.
10. Several opportunities to improve the overall building functionality are still under discussion but may require additional funding, hence the request to transfer 2021/22 revenue savings to the Municipal Buildings Reserve.

Overall Budget and Funding

11. At £2,709k, the latest estimate for all works is £49k above all approved budgets. Only one element of works relating to future Front of House works, is still very much an estimate; all other elements are procured and are now relatively straightforward to predict. The

primary reason for the over spend is the delays caused by the works being more complex than initially expected, and being carried out during the Covid period.

12. In overall terms the project is six months late. This is due to a mix of Covid, issues discovered once the roofs had been removed, changes to building design to accommodate an improved layout for Biomass, additional works associated with the theatre works, and the initial timetable being set to meet tight deadlines forced by the Government RHI funding programme (which has subsequently been extended twice due to Covid).
13. However, through collaboration with an excellent contractor the building reopened for regular users in October and for events from December, so the time delay ultimately has had limited impact on public service delivery. A full programme of arts events using the theatre investment commenced in January, Beerex took place in February and in March, while building works continued at the rear, and significant numbers of visitors were able to view Mars in the Corn Exchange.
14. Given that only two years ago, in March 2020, as Covid lockdown happened, the reroofing works were scheduled for summer 2022 (main Corn Exchange roof only), officers were getting to grips with what might be required to install biomass to heat the building, there was no planning application in place for an extension and no plan to move offices, there was no procurement exercise planned and limited funds in place, and partners were still digesting the news that The Maltings was not to happen, the outcomes achieved are a testament to the strong collaborative approach adopted by the main and many sub-contractors with our professional advisors and our partner Dorchester Arts.
15. The Funding arrangements for the project have improved as a result of the project delay and because of additional annual and one off contributions to Reserves at both the beginning and end of financial years. As a result of these it is now anticipated that the long term debt will be c. £400k, compared to £900k predicted in June 2020. A more detailed report will be submitted regarding long term debt in September 2022, once the majority of payments have been made on the project.
16. When debt repayments commence Council will be in a position to discharge it without needing to put up Council Tax, by altering the following budgets
 - 19 North Square Maintenance and Utilities budgets - £15k reduction pa
 - RHI income - £5-£10k pa related to power generated by the biomass boiler
 - Contributions to Municipal Buildings Reserve – up to £60k lower pa, depending on how Council wishes to prepare for the next, inevitable, capital investment in the building

Once the debt is repaid, possibly as soon as within 6 years, the Council's budget will be permanently reduced, the direct consequence of putting more money into the Municipal Buildings Reserve up front over the last few years.

Dorchester Arts Lease and Partnership Agreement

17. At its meeting of 21 January the Task Group, made up of Town Council members and DA trustees, agreed to sign off the lease and partnership agreement. In practice these had been operational since 1 October, when the building was reopened under Dorchester Arts management. The final documents, which were fully in line with the Heads of Terms previously approved by Council in November 2020, have now been signed off.
18. The Task Group will meet once more, at Thomas Hardy School in April/May to see the works being undertaken there and understand their impact for arts delivery in the town

and their relationship to the Dorchester Arts business plan. At this point the work of the Task Group will finish.

19. In May Members will be invited to express an interest in a new group to be created to monitor performance against the Partnership Agreement and lease that the two parties have signed.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY BUDGET FOR THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME

		Jun 20 £000	Mar 21 £000	Mar 22 £000	Diff v M21 £000
1	Roofs – Council Chamber, Corn Exchange & Apse	610	550	592	+42
2 & 3	Extension & Internal Remodelling (approx. split) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomass system and building to house biomass • Offices - extension & remodelling Dressing Room • Remodelling Ground Floor Kitchen & Storage areas • Reroof Extension • Improvements to Electrics & Single Supply • Energy Measures (Solar, Heat Recovery, Destrat Fans) • Corn Exchange Basic Decoration 	460 300 180 210 - 40 -	370 310 150 250 50 70 20		-1
-	Replacement Lift	30	30	35	+5
4	Theatre Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting, Sound, AV • Raked Seating • Other Works (Ventilation, Hatch, Beam, Blinds etc) 		150 70 30 250	155 65 30 250	0
5	Front of House Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foyer • Bar • Toilets (Mar 22 – 3 toilets added to rear of building) 			473 27 500	0
-	Opportunity Wins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Decoration specification • Asbestos Removal in wider building • Electrical Upgrades/LEDs/Door entry/EV charging/Wifi • Fire Officer recommended improvements/Other 			30 15 46 22 113	+3
	TOTAL March 22 v. March 21	1,830	2,660	2,709	+49
	Funded by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTC Reserve (inc 22/23 Top Up agreed in Jan 22) • Opportunity Wins Budget • Borrowing (offset by 19NS rev (-£15k)/lower Reserves contributions (-£50k) & savings/RHI (-£10k) = -£75k pa) • DC s106 • DTC Borrowing prior to sale of 19 NS • Low Carbon Dorset Grant TOTAL	430 0 900 0 300 200 1,830	850 110 700 500 300 200 2,660	1,200 110 403 500 300 196 2,709	+350 0 -297 0 0 -4 +49
		No FoH, Theatre or Opps			

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2022****MEMBER ALLOWANCES**

1. Dorchester Town Council pays an annual allowance to its councillors. The allowance currently paid is £1,090 pa (pay award pending), linked to that used historically at West Dorset District Council; the Town Council last reviewed the allowance at the time of the 2019 elections.
2. In 2019 Dorset Council established the Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations to introduce a consistent approach to the payment of allowances across the county. At the time Dorset Council recognised the potential for change in the role of parish councillors as a result of delegation and other service changes, and while it published preliminary findings, it was agreed that the Panel would review its work after a period of time.

Basic Allowance

3. The Panel has now undertaken a further review of the basic allowance, concluding as follows:
 - That, should a Council choose to pay an allowance, it should be linked to the size of its electorate. The Panel identified 6 levels based on electoral ranges. Dorchester fits into level 4, (10,001-20,000 electors) and the Panel recommended that the allowance for this level should be £668, being 5% of the allowance paid to Dorset Councillors
 - The Panel recognised, however, that a Council may take into account other factors than electorate size. The Panel view factors such as budget size, number and complexity of operations and breadth of commercial activity as relevant factors. The Panel anticipates that no Parish allowance would move beyond one level above its recommended level; in Dorchester's case level 5 (20,001-35,000 electors) being £1,069
 - Any allowance given should be indexed annually to that paid by Dorset Council
4. The Panel's recommendation are guidance rather than obligatory. Therefore Council has several options open to it, the outcome being implemented from the start of the next civic year
 - Use the Panel's recommended allowance of £668
 - Take account of the Panel's comments regarding factors other than electorate size, setting the allowance at £1,069 citing one or more specific factors
 - Maintain the current allowance of £1,090, indexed to pay inflation annually

5. Committee is invited to make a **RECOMMENDATION** to Council.

Other Allowances

6. The Panel makes two further recommendations
 - That mileage is paid out using the HMRC rate, plus a schedule of other secondary reimbursements – this is already in place with minor amendments
 - That the Council determines its position on a Chairman (of Council, i.e. our Mayor when fulfilling their Chair role) Allowance – if paid this should be no more than twice the basic allowance
7. The Council currently pays no specific Chairman's Allowance. Separate to this scheme of allowances the Council does retain a c. £12,000 budget to enable the Mayor to fulfil their duties. Part of this is paid direct to the Mayor, to be declared by them for tax purposes, the

remainder being retained to make payments on the Mayor's behalf. The Mayoral Expenses budget is not within the scope of the Panel's work.

8. Committee is invited to make a **RECOMMENDATION** from the following options
 - Make a conscious decision to pay no Chairman's Allowance
 - Make a Chairman's Allowance of double the Basic Allowance – reducing the Mayoral Expenses budget accordingly
9. The Town Clerk and Mayor's Secretary continue to refine the payment made direct to the Mayor to manage the incumbent Mayor's tax liability and minimise administration.

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**POLICY COMMITTEE – 21 MARCH 2022****TOURISM SERVICES**

1. In late 2021 Council considered its approach to the delivery of tourism services for the town. In part this was the conclusion of a piece of work which started in 2019 in response to a recognition that the town needed to exploit new tourism opportunities arising as a result of investment in tourism and heritage infrastructure; and in part it resulted from an expected reduction in Dorset Council’s spending on tourism services, including the TIC.
2. Council minute 2020/38, adopted 25 January 2021 resolved
 - a) That the Council implements the Tourism Development element of the (Heritage) Tourism Strategy and makes appropriate budget provision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2021/22 Revenue Budget for the first three years of the service
 - b) That should Dorset Council close the Dorchester Tourist Information Centre, the impacts be monitored and that a review of the need for a dedicated TIC service should be undertaken prior to the 2022 summer visitor season, once the new Tourism Service outlined at a) has been fully implemented
3. Dorset Council subsequently closed its TIC. With Dorchester BID the Council received a small amount of evidence/negative feedback regarding the impact of the closure. Much of this related to the sale of Charity Christmas card and other non-Tourist activity; little related to the needs of visitors to the town.
4. During 2021/22 the Tourism Development Partnership, supported by a new Council employed Tourism Development Officer, has made significant progress on delivery of the strategy developed by the Council:
 - Dorchester BID led a process to deliver a tourism app, which went live in May 2021 and has since had over 3,000 downloads
 - The Town Council led the development of a new tourism website which launched in December 2021
 - The first refreshed Tourist Information Point has opened at Dorchester Post Office, with a rollout of more TIPs planned
 - New leaflet literature and advert promotions are being delivered on a collaborative basis, while a programme of shop “wrapping” with tourism information has also started
 - New general and specific initiatives are being implemented including a Festival of Brewing (February 2022) and the Love Dorchester Like a Local photo promotion
5. To date it appears that any negative consequences of the loss of the TIC are being outweighed by the ongoing rollout of the new Tourism Strategy. It must be noted, however, that 2021 was an unusual year both because of the dampening effect of Covid but also the resultant staycation boom.

6. It is **RECOMMENDED** that either

- A further review of the impact of the closure of the TIC takes place in 12 months time, or alternatively
- That monitoring of the loss of the TIC is incorporated into the overall monitoring of the delivery of the Tourism Strategy

Adrian Stuart
Town Clerk