

Dorchester Town Council

Policy Committee

17 March 2015

Present: Councillors V. Allan, R. Biggs, A. Canning, T. Harries, G. Jones, T. Jones (Chairman) and D. Roberts.

Apologies: Mayor P.G. Mann

In attendance: Councillors R. Potter and M. Rennie

39. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2015, adopted by Council on 27 January 2015, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

40. Finance & Performance Report

The Financial Controller presented a report covering the 11 months to 28 February 2015, identifying an underspend to date of £81,000 against the budget, leading to a likely underspend at the year end of £85 - £90,000.

It was noted that a loan of £30,000 had been made to Dorset County Museum on the terms approved in minute 11. The Committee also received Internal Audit recommendations up to 28 February 2015 and an update on investigations into the appointment of Treasury advisors. The Committee also received a tabled list of petty cash payments made during the period April – October 2014.

The Committee received additional audit recommendations relating to the final phase of internal audit work conducted in March 2015. Members of the Committee were invited to raise any questions relating to these recommendations at the Council meeting.

Resolved

- a) That £145,000 is transferred from the Lloyds Bank Account to the National Savings and Investment Account
- b) That the corporate Bad Debt provision is adjusted to provide 100% cover for all invoices over 30 days at 31 March 2015
- c) That the management response to the interim audit report is noted
- d) That the steps taken to date towards engaging a Treasury advisor are noted
- e) That the petty cash transactions list be approved and signed accordingly.

41. Refurbishing the Town Walks

The Town Clerk reported the outcome of the survey work carried out by Dorset County Council to identify the cost of refurbishing the Walks as a precursor to having them adopted, and explained the options available to the Town Council.

Members discussed the options available. A member raised a particular concern regarding flooding in the South Walks Road area, which the Town Clerk agreed to investigate.

Resolved

That further discussions take place with Dorset County Council Highways Team to better understand the options available to the Town Council, including an assessment of the likelihood of external funding, with a report to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee

42. Opportunities to provide Apprenticeships

The Town Clerk updated the Committee regarding discussions with West Dorset District Council on the potential to provide new apprenticeship opportunities to the community sector in Dorchester.

He identified a revised proposal that the Town Council and four community organisations could provide six placements covering a range of employment opportunities, identifying that the cost could be met from existing salary budgets. As part of the arrangement Dorchester Town Council would offer four grants of £1,500 each to Dorchester Arts, Dorset County Museum, Dorchester CAB and Age UK Dorset to assist them to provide an apprentice.

Resolved

That the Council provides four grants of £1,500 each to community organisations, to employ an apprentice in 2015/16, noting that this may qualify as s137 expenditure.

43. Empty Residential Properties in Dorchester

In support of a target in the Corporate Plan the Town Clerk provided information on the steps taken by West Dorset District Council to return empty properties into residential use. A specific concern was raised regarding a property that had been empty for a long period in Fordington. The Committee noted the overall approach taken and the outcomes achieved to date.

44. Dorchester Markets Joint Informal Panel – 28 January 2015

The minutes of the meeting were received and noted.

45. **Arrangements for the new Council**

The Committee received a report covering the calendar for 2015/16 meetings, and proposals for induction and training of Councillors.

In response to questions the Town Clerk confirmed that the Member Information Pack would be refreshed and made available on line, and that the Democracy workshop would incorporate training relating to diversity and equalities, and developing relationships with partners.

Members considered the draft calendar of meetings and agreed to bring forward the July meeting of Policy Committee to June to avoid a four month gap between Committee meetings.

Recommended

That the revised draft Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16 be adopted

46. **Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

Resolved

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

47. **Outstanding Debts over 30 days**

The Financial Controller updated the Committee on all debts outstanding for longer than 30 days, outlining the circumstances of a debt to be written off, and the latest position regarding an outstanding debt relating to the Bar Franchise. In answer to a question he outlined the current action being taken to recover a debt relating to a wayleave.

Resolved

That a debt of £142 be written off.

48. **Revisions to the Fairfield Market agreement**

The Town Clerk outlined the final heads of terms for the revised Market agreement. Members discussed the terms, and noted the impact that increased trading might have on parking income at Lower Fairfield.

Resolved

That the revised Heads of Terms for Fairfield Market be approved

Chairman

REVISED DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2015-16

	2015								2016				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
COUNCIL, MAYOR MAKING AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING	18 MM 19		21		29		24		26		29 ATM		23 MM 24
POLICY & MAYORAL SELECTION		23			22		17		19 MS		22 MS		17
MANAGEMENT	5	16			15		10		12		15		10
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		1 29		3	7	5	2 30		4	1	7	4	Tue 3
MARKETS JOINT PANEL		17							TBC (2.15pm)				
<i>BANK HOLIDAYS</i>	<i>4, 25</i>			<i>31</i>				<i>25,28</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>25,28</i>		<i>2,30</i>

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