

Dorchester Town Council

Policy Committee

17 September 2019

- Present:** Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, F. Hogwood, and S. Hosford (Chair)
- Attending:** Councillors J. Hewitt and M. Rennie
- Apologies:** Councillor G. Jones

6. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee of 16 July 2019, adopted by Council on 23 July 2019, were taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7. Finance Update at 31 August 2019

The Committee received the Town Clerk's update covering the Revenue Out-turn for the Council's Month 5 spend in relation to the budget, cash, debtors and payments, as well as a short update related to NALC Model Financial Regulations.

A Member expressed appreciation for the role the Town Council was taking as banker and book-keeper for a number of local events. A question was asked regarding the response to reduced income from the Municipal Buildings.

Resolved

- a) That the Payments list, totalling £293,010.59 is approved.

The Committee noted that the external audit of the 2018/19 Annual Return had been completed with no amendments to the documents approved by Council on 21 May 2019.

Recommended to Council

- b) That the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2019 is approved and accepted.

The Committee considered a request from the Planning & Environment Committee related to the purchase of a Speed Indicator Device, in particular the implications for the management of the existing SID in Bridport Road, which presented two options on how to proceed.

Resolved

- c) That a Speed Indicator Device be purchased, funded by £4,500 to be taken from the General Reserve, and that the Planning & Environment Committee identify preferred sites to be submitted to the Dorset Council for their approval.

8. **Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024**

The Town Clerk provided an update related to the timetable for preparing the new Corporate Plan.

The Chairman requested that the Clerk pass on the thanks of the Town Council to Roger Goulding for his work facilitating the recent workshops. Members noted that a meeting was to be arranged to consider the output from the six themes considered at the meetings.

9. **Town Pump Area Refurbishment Project**

The Committee considered a report relating to the refurbishment of the town pump area, focusing particularly on the appointment of a project manager to engage with local stakeholders and the Dorset Council. Members considered a recommendation from the Clerk to invite a single contractor to make a submission to progress the project.

Resolved

That a contract for the project is advertised widely, and that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman take part in interviews for the appointment for a Project Manager.

10. **Free Parking Days**

The Town Clerk highlighted a submission from Dorchester BID in support of a request to the Dorset Council to receive free parking days in the run up to Christmas. The Town Clerk explained the background to the issue and alternative approaches to the Committee.

Resolved

- a) That the Town Clerk makes another approach to exchange free parking days for a £3,000 contribution to the Christmas Lights
- b) That if this request is rejected a request is made for free parking on Saturdays 30 Nov, 7, 14 & 21 December and Tues 24 December
- c) That further information is gathered about the benefits of free afternoon parking during the Christmas period for consideration in future years

11. **Community Development**

The Committee considered an update on the Council's Community Development function, covering the role of the postholder, recent and ongoing workloads and the opportunity to review future work in the context of the Corporate Plan and changes happening at the Dorset Council.

Resolved

That a Task and Finish Group of Councillors Chisholm, Harries, Hogwood, Hosford and G. Jones consider the following tasks and report back to the January Committee

- i. Initially to gain a greater understanding of how the Community Development service is delivered and how it manages the competing demands placed on the service
- ii. To understand how decisions of the Dorset Council are already impacting, and will increasingly impact, on the community sector in Dorchester and consider what options the Council might have to respond to this challenge
- iii. Consider how the ideas emerging from the Corporate Plan might be delivered by engaging with the Community sector

12. Commissioning Short Films

The Town Clerk provided a short report on the use of filmed material as a promotional resource.

A Member advised that both Arts University Bournemouth and the British Film Institute might play a role in delivering and funding short film material. Several Members noted the value of the filmed material gathered at this year's events.

Resolved

That a sum of £6,000 be submitted as a Special Item request for consideration during the 2020-21 Budget process to support the commissioning and production of film and management of filmed material.

13. Confidential Business

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 matter, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during its discussion

14. Staffing Issue

The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Town Clerk relating to the attendance of the Town Clerk at meetings of the Council and at civic events.

Resolved

- a) That the contract variation proposed in the report be approved
- b) That the Town Clerk be invited to confirm that no similar anomalies exist in relation to the contracts of employment of staff

Chairman