

# **DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

**17th MAY, 2011**

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 17th May, 2011:

**PRESENT** The Mayor (L.M. Phillips) and Councillors R.M. Biggs, T.C.N. Harries, G.M. Jones, Trevor Jones (Chairman), P.G. Mann and D.S. Roberts.

**APOLOGY** for absence was received from Councillor V.J. Allan.

57. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors G.M. Jones and D.S. Roberts who were attending their first meeting of this Committee since their election on 5th May, 2011.

58. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22nd March, 2011, adopted by Council on 29th March, 2011, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

59. **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 29th March, 2011.

60. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 1st April to 30th April, 2011.

61. **ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11**

The Committee considered a draft of the Annual Report for 2010-11 which was required to be published by 30th June, 2011.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

That, subject to the removal of the word 'disabled' in the second paragraph of the second page as proposed by the Management Committee at Minute 75, the draft Annual Report for 2010-11 as now submitted be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

62. **PERFORMANCE AND POLICY PLAN 2010-11 – MONITORING REPORT**

Arising from the consideration of this report it was

## **RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That the Town Clerk be requested to arrange for an item to discuss the aspiration to create a perimeter footpath around the town to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Poundbury Inter-Authority Working Group.
- (2) That the Management Committee be requested to consider during the next review of the Plan whether it is realistic to incorporate a target dealing with the reduction of the allotments waiting list.
- (3) That this Committee records its opinion that statistics on the use of the pavilion at Weymouth Avenue Recreation Ground and the Borough Gardens House should be included in future versions of the Plan.

### 63. **HIGHWAY AMENITY GRASS CUTTING**

The Committee noted that a number of complaints had been received about the overgrown state of highway amenity areas, particularly in the town centre, following the reduction in the frequency of cuts from 17 per annum to 9 per annum by Dorset County Council. The Committee also noted that the County Council proposed to further reduce the number of cuts to 6 per annum in 2012.

Following discussion during which the Town Clerk reported that the outdoor staff were able to deal with some additional cutting in the town centre of areas already falling within the Council's responsibility it was

## **RECOMMENDED**

That, in view of the highly visible nature of highway amenity areas around the Junction, on Acland Road near its junction with South Walks and adjacent to the skatepark on Maumbury Road and at Maumbury Cross, the Dorset County Council be requested to transfer responsibility for the cutting of these highway verges to this Council along with a sum equal to the cost associated with the cutting of these areas under the County Council's regime.

### 64. **DORSET COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE**

The Committee noted an invitation for the Council to attend a meeting on 24th May, 2011 in the Corn Exchange to discuss proposed changes within the Library Service as part of the County Council's economies.

65. **PARISH TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES**

The Committee considered a suggested revision of the Council's approved scale of Parish Travelling and Subsistence Allowances incorporating modifications based on the latest recommendations of West Dorset District Council's Parish Remuneration Panel and the increase of the 'tax-neutral' mileage rate from 40p per mile to 45p per mile by HMRC with effect from 6th April, 2011.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

That the revised scale of Parish Travelling and Subsistence Allowances as now submitted and reproduced at Appendix I be approved.

66. **FUTURE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND**

The Committee received and noted a copy of Legal Briefing L02-11 issued by the National Association of Local Councils on the changes to the standards regime proposed in the Localism Bill. The Town Clerk suggested that further guidance was likely to be issued when the precise nature of the changes made following the enactment of the Bill was known.

67. **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

It was

**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.

68. **BAD DEBTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Financial Service Provider on the circumstances in which a bad debt of £3,290.59 had arisen and it was

**RESOLVED**

That the debt of £3,290.59 identified in the report now submitted be written-off.

Chairman

## **PARISH TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE**

### **Application**

Notwithstanding anything within the Regulations the Parish Travelling and Subsistence Allowance shall only be payable in respect of attendances at approved duties outside the town boundary.

### **Travelling Allowances**

- (1) The rate for travel by a councillor's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of his or her family or otherwise provided for his or her use shall be paid at the rate of:
  - (a) for the use of a motor car of all cylinder capacities      The amount per mile determined from time to time by HMRC as being a true reimbursement of costs incurred and, therefore, tax-neutral
  - (b) for the use of a motor cycle of all cylinder capacities      60% of the sum referred to in (a) above
- (2) The rate for travel by taxi shall not exceed the actual fare paid and any reasonable gratuity and must be supported by a receipt.
- (3) Bus fares, rail fares (Standard Class only), ferry fares, tolls and parking fees will be reimbursed at actual cost.

### **Subsistence Allowances**

#### ***Meals***

- (1) Subsistence allowances for meals will only be paid when a councillor is required to undertake an approved duty more than five miles from Dorchester. Breakfast can only be claimed for if a councillor needs to leave Dorchester prior to 7.00am; thereafter up to three meals per day can be claimed at intervals of five hours or more if meals are not otherwise provided.
- (2) The amount which claimed for a particular meal is the lower of the actual cost and the following maximum allowances:

Breakfast	£5.30
Lunch	£8.18
Dinner	£13.35
Dinner (in London)	£19.25

#### ***Accommodation***

- (1) A councillor who necessarily stays overnight in a hotel will, on production of a receipt, be able to claim the reasonable cost of bed and breakfast accommodation. If the cost exceeds £105.01 per night in London or £52.51 per night elsewhere written justification of the costs involved will be required. Such justification might include personal safety if cheaper hotels are located in areas regarded as less safe than town centres or proximity to a meeting location.
- (2) A councillor who stays overnight with friends or family will be entitled to claim £26.28 per night.