

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

18th SEPTEMBER, 2012

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 18th September, 2012:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor A.J. Canning) and Councillors V.J. Allan, R.M. Biggs, T.C.N. Harries, G.M. Jones, Trevor Jones (Chairman), P.G. Mann and D.S. Roberts.

In attendance:
Councillor M.E. Rennie

13. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17th July, 2012, adopted by Council on 24th July, 2012, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

14. **RESOURCES PANEL – 10th SEPTEMBER, 2012**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Panel held on 10th September, 2012 (for Minutes see Appendices I to III).

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Minutes of the Resources Panel held on 10th September, 2012 be adopted.

15. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 31st August, 2012.

With the consent of the Chairman a member of the public asked two detailed questions of the Financial Services Provider who furnished preliminary answers to him and undertook to provide complete answers in writing when full information was available.

16. **LOCALISING SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX**

The Committee considered extracts from a consultation paper on this matter on which comments were invited by 9th October, 2012. The consultation paper proposed that the Council Tax Base used to calculate the Band D charges arising from the issue of precepts by local precepting authorities should not be reduced as a consequence of the localisation of council tax benefits. The consultation paper also proposed that a similar approach should be adopted in respect of Special Expenses identified under Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

It was

RESOLVED

That the proposals set out in the consultation paper be supported and that the Town Clerk be authorised to respond to it accordingly.

17. **SELECTION PROCEDURES**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk on the Council's present arrangements for the selection of the Mayor, appointments of committees and panels and appointments to outside bodies, and considered whether any changes were necessary to them.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Town Clerk be requested to draft suitable amendments to Standing Orders to enshrine the requirement for appointments to committees to maintain appropriate political balance taking account of the overall political composition of the Council for consideration at the next meeting of this Committee.
- (2) That all Members be encouraged to express interest in representing the Council on outside bodies in the run-up to the annual selection process.

18. **WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL – HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW**

The Committee considered an invitation from West Dorset District Council for this Council to appoint a Member to attend a workshop on 19th October, 2012 as part of the District Council's review of its housing strategy and it was

RECOMMENDED

That Councillor P.G. Mann be appointed to represent the Council at the workshop.

19. **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.

20. **NATIONAL CYCLING NETWORK**

The Committee considered Planning and Environment Minute 24(c) and Management Minute 17, both of them dealing with the proposed designation of Bowling Alley Walk and South Walks as part of the National Cycling Network through Dorchester, in the light of the report of the Town Clerk on continuing delays in the proposed adoption by the Dorset County Council of the Walks as footways in accordance with Policy Minute 50 (2010-11).

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

That no further action towards the proposed designation be carried out or permitted until the matter of responsibility for the long-term maintenance of them has been resolved.

Chairman

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES PANEL

10th SEPTEMBER, 2012

At a Meeting of the Resources Panel held on 10th September, 2012:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor A.J. Canning) and Councillors T.C.N. Harries, S.C. Hosford, T. James, Trevor Jones (Chairman) and P.G. Mann.

In attendance:

Councillors V.J. Allan, E.S. Jones, A.J. Lyall, M.E. Rennie, R.B. Potter and D.S. Roberts.

1. **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.

2. **FUTURE STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Panel considered the report of the Town Clerk on the various considerations arising from the proposed retirement of himself and the Senior Administrative Assistant on 30th June, 2013 which had been prepared in accordance with Policy Minute 51(3) (2011-12).

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the proposed timetable for the recruitment of a replacement for the Town Clerk set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report be approved.
- (2) That the proposals for advertising the vacancy set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report be approved subject to an assessment of the relative benefits of advertising in Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal and that, in addition, the Town Clerk be requested to investigate the possibility of

also publicising it on appropriate local government websites in adjoining counties.

- (3) That the proposed Job Description for the post reproduced at Appendix II, which incorporates the amendments now agreed, be approved.
- (4) That the proposed Person Specification for the post reproduced at Appendix III, which incorporates the amendments now agreed, be approved.
- (5) That consideration of the need for and content of a relocation package in respect of the vacancy be deferred to the next meeting of the Panel.
- (6) That the appointment of a specialist adviser to support the Council through the recruitment process be approved in principle and that the Town Clerk be requested to obtain information from appropriately qualified and/or experienced individuals and/or firms for consideration at the next meeting of the Panel.
- (7) That the Town Clerk be requested to submit a draft Application Pack for consideration at the next meeting of the Panel.
- (8) That the Panel records its opinion that the interview panel should comprise no more than five members (including either Councillor Allan or Councillor Barrett) and that consideration of its composition be deferred to the next meeting of the Panel to enable expressions of interest from Members interested in being involved in the interviewing and/or shortlisting of candidates to be taken into account.
- (9) That the Panel records its opinion that the only other individual present at the interviews should be the specialist adviser referred to at (6) above and that arrangements should be made for all shortlisted candidates to make a presentation to all Members of Council on a topic to be agreed.

- (10) That the Town Clerk be authorised to have discussions with staff who will remain in the Council's employment about the reallocation of some or all of the duties of the Senior Administrative Assistant who will be leaving the Council's employment on 30th June, 2013, specifically including the power to agree consequential changes to salaries and/or working arrangements, and that this matter, including changes to Job Descriptions and the possible need to employ a dedicated part-time Committee Clerk to service the Planning and Environment Committee, perhaps initially on a short-term contract, be further considered by this Panel in the light of the outcome of those discussions.

- (11) That the Panel records its opinion that no move should be made to re-tender the Financial Services contract until 1st April, 2014 at the earliest.

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Name:

Post: Town Clerk and Proper Officer

Overall Responsibilities

The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications, required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its functions as a local authority are carried out and is expected to advise the Council on, and to assist in and contribute to, the formulation of overall policies and the strategic vision to be followed in respect of the Council's activities and in particular to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to constructively implement all decisions. The Town Clerk is accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its resources and will report to members as and when required. The Town Clerk is also the Responsible Financial Officer and bears ultimate responsibility for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances.

Specific Responsibilities

1. To act in all respects as the Council's Chief Administrative and Executive Officer and as Responsible Financial Officer as required by law or the Council's Standing Orders or administrative practice including the supervision, either direct or indirect, of all staff employed by the Council and to ensure the appropriate training and updating of skills to match their responsibilities and duties in the light of annual appraisals under the Council's personal achievement and development scheme and progress on the implementation of personal development plans where appropriate.
2. To ensure that statutory and other provisions governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed.
3. To ensure that the Council's obligations for risk management are properly discharged.
4. To assist the Council to define its high-level objectives and to monitor their achievement through the Council's performance management arrangements.
5. To prepare, in consultation with appropriate members, agendas for meetings of the Council and its various Committees, sub-committees, working groups and panels; to attend or be represented at all such meetings, to record attendances at and the decisions of those meetings and to implement those decisions in accordance with the Council's policy.
6. To study reports and other data on the activities of the Council and on matters bearing on those activities. Where appropriate to discuss such matters with administrators and specialists in particular fields and to produce reports for circulation to and discussion by the Council.
7. To draw up both on his/her own initiative and as a result of suggestions by Councillors proposals for consideration by the Council and to advise on practicability and likely effects of specific courses of action.

8. To ensure that the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Delegation Scheme are regularly reviewed and, in particular, to ensure that any changes required by changes in the law, guidance or best practice are implemented.
9. To recommend the Council to obtain external specialist advice when appropriate and to ensure that the advice so obtained is placed before the Council and/or its various Committees, sub-committees, working groups and panels to assist members in the decision making process.
10. To receive correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council and to deal with the correspondence or documents or bring such items to the attention of the Council. To prepare and issue correspondence as a result of the instructions or known policy of the Council.
11. To monitor the implemented policies of the Council to ensure they are achieving the desired result and where appropriate suggest modifications.
12. To supervise other members of staff either directly or indirectly in keeping with the policies of the Council and to ensure that all necessary activities in connection with the management of salaries, conditions of employment and work of other staff are carried out.
13. To ensure that the Council complies with health and safety legislation and to ensure the safety and well-being of those who visit or work in the facilities provided by the Council.
14. To act as the representative of the Council as required, liaising and building effective relationships with the public, other organisations and the press as appropriate.
15. To issue notices and prepare agendas and minutes for the Assembly of the Town Meetings; to attend the Assembly of the Town Meetings and to implement the decisions made at the Assembly that are agreed by the Council.
16. With appropriate specialist financial advice to assume overall responsibility for the finances of the Council including monitoring expenditure, cash and credit income and the preparation of estimates and final accounts and to ensure that all matters raised by internal and external auditors are dealt with.
17. To ensure that all necessary records for audit purposes and VAT are prepared.
18. To receive and report on invoices for goods and services to be paid for by the Council and to ensure such accounts are met. To issue invoices on behalf of the Council for goods and services and to ensure payment is received.
19. To sign and verify orders for goods and services.
20. To ensure that arrangements are in place for appropriate insurance cover for the Council's assets, and public and other liabilities.
21. To be responsible, either directly or indirectly, for the security and maintenance to an agreed standard of all buildings owned or tenanted by the Council.
22. To be responsible for the proper maintenance and safe custody of all Council records, deeds, documents, etc.
23. To administer and promote the use of the Municipal Buildings and other accommodation or facilities provided by the Council for the benefit of the public.

24. To be the holder of the various premises licences required for the successful operation of the Council's activities and to obtain and maintain a Personal Licence under the Licensing Act 2003.
25. To ensure the satisfactory and efficient organisation of and to attend as and when required civic and related ceremonial or social functions including an annual programme of public entertainments.
26. To accompany and be part of civic delegations as required, whether to locations in the United Kingdom or to Dorchester's twin towns.
27. To act as Honorary Clerk to the Market and to attend meetings of the Dorchester Markets Joint Panel.
28. To prepare press releases about the activities or decisions of the Council and to be responsible for all routine contacts with representatives of the broadcasting and print media and to produce or ensure the production of four editions per year of *Dorchester News*.
29. To ensure the maintenance of the Council's website and to implement improvements to it identified as necessary or desirable.
30. To develop the image of the Council and to take advantage of opportunities and initiatives that arise locally, regionally and nationally.
31. To attend conferences, training courses or seminars as required by the Council.
32. To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council through a process of continual professional development.
33. To undertake such other responsibilities and functions as may be required from time to time by the Council and by the demands of day-to-day office routine and business commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of the post.

Date:

Signed

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL**PERSON SPECIFICATION****TOWN CLERK****Qualifications**

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) (which, for the avoidance of doubt, must include the module necessary to enable the Council to exercise the general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 or any successor legislation), or the Certificate in Local Policy, or a commitment to obtain one of these within 12 months; • Evidence of a commitment to continual professional development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated to degree level; • Appropriate management, administration or professional qualification.

Legal

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General knowledge of the law as it affects local councils; • Knowledge of current employment legislation; • Understanding of burial law and procedures or a commitment to achieve familiarity with this area of knowledge within 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of civic protocol.

Meetings

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical experience of servicing committees, including agenda preparation, report writing, minute taking, standing orders and financial regulations. • An understanding of local government democratic processes. 	

Personal Qualities

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to command the confidence of and build relationships with councillors, colleagues, other organisations and members of the public; • Ability to exercise sound judgement and lead by example in ensuring the highest standards of conduct and integrity; • Strong inter-personal skills and well-developed negotiating and mediating skills; • Confident about speaking in public; • Financial and commercial awareness with strong analytical skills and a creative approach to problem-solving; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of a leadership role within a complex organisation or business;

Communication Skills

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent oral and written communication skills, including an ability to relate to, and communicate with, councillors, staff, members of the public, press and external agencies and an ability to present complex information or concepts coherently and concisely; • Ability to operate with complete impartiality in a political environment; • Evidence of ability to give professional advice and information to councillors, staff and members of the public. 	

Information Technology

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in Microsoft Office suite; • Basic knowledge of website maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use graphic design software; • Interest in IT development; • European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

Management

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of ability to provide robust, empowering leadership to enable, motivate and develop the Council’s staff and foster a ‘can do’, high-achieving organisational culture; • Evidence of ability to prioritise work, set targets, achieve positive outcomes and delegate effectively; • Evidence of ability to organise and manage resources effectively; • Evidence of ability to maintain morale, trust and confidence throughout the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience of working as a Town or Parish Clerk or in a senior role at a principal local authority with a clear focus on outcomes.

Project Management

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to demonstrate a successful record of project delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of managing several projects at the same time with a range of values, time scales and criteria.

Other

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial numeracy to enable the understanding, creation and application of organisational budgets, accounts, forecasts, etc; • Preparedness to become a Personal Licence Holder for the purposes of the Licensing Act 2003, including undergoing any necessary training; • Respect for the civic traditions and heritage of a historic market town (including the wearing of ceremonial dress when required); • Willingness to work evenings and weekends as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical experience in local council accounting procedures, including closure of accounts for audit purposes; • Current driving licence and car owner.