

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

20th SEPTEMBER, 2011

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 20th September, 2011:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor T. James) and Councillors R.M. Biggs, G.M. Jones, Trevor Jones (Chairman) and P.G. Mann.

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Councillors V.J. Allan, T.C.N. Harries and D.S. Roberts.

13. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19th July, 2011, adopted by Council on 26th July, 2011, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

14. **RESOURCES PANEL – 19th SEPTEMBER, 2011**

The Committee considered the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Panel held on 19th September, 2011 (for Minutes see Appendix I).

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Minutes of the Resources Panel held on 19th September, 2011 be approved so far as this Committee is concerned.

15. **MINUTE OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and noted Minute 15(c) of the Management Committee concerning the need to carry out external repair works to the Municipal Buildings.

16. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 31st August, 2011.

17. **POSSIBLE ECONOMIES**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on possible economies which might be considered as part of the budget-setting process for 2012-13.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the Town Clerk be requested to explain to the Dorchester Area Partnership and West Dorset District Council why the Council finds it necessary to withdraw its cash funding from the Partnership and on the circumstances in which it might be prepared to reinstate it but that the Council continues to accommodate the Community Partnership Development Worker and bear the incidental costs of such accommodation.
- (2) That the Town Clerk be requested to use his best endeavours to obtain the final report of the scrutiny exercise being undertaken by Weymouth and Portland Borough Council on CCTV for consideration at the next Meeting of this Committee.
- (3) That the other potential economies identified in the report be also considered at the next Meeting of this Committee.

18. **RENEWABLE ENERGY ON COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the practicalities of installing photo-voltaic panels on the roofs of Council-owned properties.

An initial assessment had revealed that the only property which had potential for such an installation was the western slope of the roof of Louds Mill Depot which would require the provision of special bracketry since the ridge of the roof was orientated north-south. The Town Clerk had obtained specialist advice which indicated that a 4kw system could be installed for approximately £14,000 and a 10kw system for approximately £35,000, both with pay-back periods of 10 – 12 years.

The Committee noted that the claimed carbon reduction benefits of solar energy did not take into account the carbon footprint of original manufacture, transportation from the country of origin and eventual disposal of the photo-voltaic panels.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

That no further action be taken in respect of this matter for the time being but that the issue be reconsidered in twelve months' time.

19. **WINTER MAINTENANCE**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on discussions which had taken place with representatives of the District and County Councils to agree a co-ordinated response to major snow events in future following the less than satisfactory experiences of the last two winters.

Despite initial assurances to the contrary the County Council had now indicated that it was not in a position to supply the Council with the winter maintenance equipment at no cost but was prepared to assist in procurement of the equipment required.

The report included a list of snow blades which could be fitted to certain of the Council's vehicles and mechanical gritters which could be used both for the areas for which the Council was responsible and for other areas in the public realm, the estimated cost of which was £6,500. The report also summarised the agreement which had been reached as to which areas would be treated by which authority and included an assessment template to enable future requests for the provision of grit bins to be judged against objective criteria.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the proposed co-ordinated approach to future major snow events set out in the report be noted and welcomed.
- (2) That, subject to the Dorset County Council agreeing to add St. George's Road to its gritting schedule to facilitate access to the Louds Mill Depot, the equipment referred to in the report be purchased and the necessary supplementary estimate of £6,500 be granted.
- (3) That the grit bin request assessment form now submitted be approved and used to determine future requests for grit bins.

20. **SUPERFAST BROADBAND IN DORSET**

The Committee considered a letter dated 31st August, 2011 from the Senior Economic Development Officer to Dorset County Council inviting town and parish councils to use their precepting powers to amass a fund to facilitate the provision of superfast broadband across the County.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That no action be taken on this matter.

21. **BUSINESS RATE RETENTION**

The Committee considered a consultation paper issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government on proposals to allow business rates collected locally to be retained locally.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Government be informed of this Council's strong assertion that a proportion of business rate income should be restored to town and parish councils in acknowledgement of the expenditure which they incur in support of the business community.

22. **BRIBERY ACT 2010**

The Committee received and noted a copy of Legal Briefing L07-11 issued by the National Association of Local Councils on the impact on town and parish councils of the Bribery Act 2010.

23. **STAFFING REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on the desirability of conducting a staffing review prior to his retirement. South West Councils had been used by the Council for similar such exercises in the past and they had confirmed their availability and indicated that the cost of undertaking the review was likely to be in the region of £2,100.

Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED

That South West Councils be engaged to conduct a staffing review on the basis set out in the report and that the Resources Panel be requested to formulate detailed terms of reference for it.

24. **DORSET MARTYRS MEMORIAL**

As an urgent item, the Town Clerk reported on the valuation of the Dorset Martyrs Memorial and the premium sought by the Council's insurers for providing all risk cover.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

That consideration of this matter be deferred to the next Meeting of this Committee and that, in the meantime, the Town Clerk be requested to undertake further investigations in an attempt to source the insurance cover required at a lower premium.

Chairman

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES PANEL

19th SEPTEMBER, 2011

At a Meeting of the Resources Panel held on 19th September, 2011:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor T. James) and Councillors S.C. Hosford, Trevor Jones (Chairman), P.G. Mann and R.B. Potter.

APOLOGY for absence was received from Councillor T.C.N. Harries.

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. **RESERVES AND BALANCES**

The Panel considered the report of the Financial Services Provider on the current level of the Council's earmarked and general reserves and discussed any action necessary arising from the report.

It was

RECOMMENDED

That the Financial Services Provider be requested to carry out the further investigations now identified and to submit a further report to a Meeting of this Panel to be held at 4.00pm on Tuesday, 11th October, 2011.