

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council held in the Council Chamber

27 January 2025

Present: The Mayor (Councillor R. Potter) and Councillors R. Biggs, S. Biles, A. Canning, P. Farmer, L. Fry, J. Germodo, W. Gibbons, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, G. Jones, S. Jones, D. Leaper, V. Lloyd-Jones, R. Major, K. Reid, M. Rennie, R. Ricardo and D. Taylor.

Apologies: Councillor F. Kent-Ledger.

In Attendance:

Police Sergeant Ian Schofield
Claire Meyers, The GAP project

48. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor D. Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of being a Trustee of The Gap project.

49. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 November 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

50. **Police Matters**

The Council welcomed Dorchester's temporary Neighbourhood Police Sergeant, Ian Schofield, to the meeting. Sergeant Schofield updated Members on the crime statistics and initiatives for Dorchester over the past two months. He also responded to Members detailed questions.

51. **Presentations, Communications and Motions**

The Council received a presentation from Councillor David Taylor and Claire Meyer in respect of the GAP project at Lubbecke Way. The representatives updated the Council on progress and asked that if any Member knew of any group that might benefit from attending to let them know. The representatives then responded to Members detailed questions.

The Mayor reported on the many events that he had attended over the past two months including the Holocaust Memorial event and the Gladiators exhibition at the Dorset Museum.

The Mayor also reported on a visit to the site of the Gorge Café fire, and whilst recognising the issues, expressed his desire that a walkway be opened up as soon as possible.

The Town Clerk reported the following upcoming events:-

- Honorary Citizens Ceremony – Sunday 9 February 2025, partners were invited, please RSVP.
- The Mayor would be leading a Covid moment of reflection from the Bandstand in the Borough Gardens at noon on Sunday 9 March 2025.
- The informal Annual Town Meeting would be held in the Corn Exchange on Friday 9 May 2025 between 11.00am and 1.00pm.
- The Leader of Dorset Council, would be available to speak with Council on Monday 31 March 2025, in the Council Chamber at 6.00pm (Full Council would then commence at 7.00pm).

No motions had been submitted.

52. **Planning and Environment Committee – 2 December 2024**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 2 December 2024 be adopted.

53. **Planning and Environment Committee – 8 January 2025**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 8 January 2025 be adopted.

54. **Management Committee – 13 January 2025**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 13 January 2025 be adopted.

55. **Policy Committee – 20 January 2025**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

(1) That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025-26, as set out in the Appendices 1 to 4 of these Minutes, be adopted, to include: -

- A Council Tax Band D charge of £214.54, an increase of £4.21 (2%)
- A precept of £1,822,939, an increase of 5.5%

(2) That the Calendar of Meetings 2025-26, as set out in Appendix 5 to these Minutes, be agreed.

(3) That the informal Annual Town Meeting be held between 11.00am and 1.00pm on Friday 9 May 2025.

(4) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 20 January 2025 be adopted.

56. **Update from the Dorset Council**

Dorset Councillors updated the Council on the following matters:-

- Dorset Council would learn some good lessons in respect of the Gorge Café fire, particularly in relation to a more pro-active response.
- No response had been received from Government from Dorset Council's devolution submission.
- It was hoped that the Beryl bike scheme would continue in Dorchester.
- Dorchester Family Hub was open based in the Library. Some signposting was required.
- Councillor L. Fry was starting to work with 1610 Sports Centre but communication was not easy.

Members noted that nighttime parking charges might be introduced across the County and felt that if that was to happen it was even more important that the Fairfield car park be provided with suitable lighting and requested the Town Clerk to write to Dorset Council urging progress on this matter

Council rose at 8.23pm.

Mayor

APPENDIX 1

	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Budget	6 Months	Budget
	£	£	£	£
CORPORATE & DEMOCRATIC				
Members Allowance	23,412	24,440	11,748	24,440
Members Training & Travel	27	2,500	470	500
Civic & Ceremonial Expenses	1,246	1,000	1,260	1,500
Mayoral Expenses	10,365	13,107	4,313	13,369
Town Crier	600	600	300	600
New Town Crier Expenses		5,000	4,598	0
Election Costs	6,353	15,000		0
Entertaining & Gifts	17	420	307	428
Youth Council & Democracy Day	629	1,000	1,838	1,000
Office Team	219,462	244,257	118,139	257,365
Met by Precept on Taxpayer	262,111	307,324	142,973	299,202
OTHER SERVICES				
Tourism Development	8,618	8,000	5,410	8,160
Sawmills rent	8,600	8,600	4,300	8,600
To Public Realm Reserve	10,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
To Arts & Cultural Reserve - DBC	20,000	0		0
Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee	3,130	3,000	3,000	3,000
Citizens Advice	8,471	9,065	8,793	9,246
Dorchester Youth & Community Centre	21,200	21,200	10,600	28,000
Dorchester Ballet Club	0	0	10,894	
Apprenticeships	14,807	12,000	3,708	0
Videographer	551	5,500	1,335	2,000
Footfall Counter				3,400
Debt Charges	16,752	16,104	7,000	15,457
Staff - Tourism/Community/Assistant	108,956	126,068	60,975	160,780
Total Expenditure	221,084	214,537	121,015	243,643
Treasury Interest	-94,005	-50,000	-50,305	-65,000
Sawmills rent recharged	-4,300	-4,300	0	-4,300
Market Income	-25,978	-25,000	-25,698	-26,000
Total Income	-124,283	-79,300	-76,003	-95,300
Met by Precept on Taxpayer	96,801	135,237	45,012	148,343

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Budget	6 Months	Budget
	£	£	£	£
OFFICES TEAM				
Salaries	291,564	318,853	147,615	356,773
Employers National Insurance	28,323	32,523	14,264	45,266
Employers Superannuation	64,144	70,148	32,647	78,490
Training Courses	8,309	8,000	6,283	9,000
Travel & Subsistence	1,356	3,000	1,189	3,000
Subscriptions (Professional Bodies)	3,155	3,800	2,298	3,800
Cleaning Materials	564	750	101	500
Rates	5,614	5,614	5,614	5,614
Electricity	4,404	4,500	2,056	4,500
Gas			-227	0
Water	381	550	336	600
Repairs & Maintenance	4,531	3,400	906	3,400
Financial Services inc Audit, Bank & Sage	7,921	8,843	6,170	9,020
Employment Law and H & S	3,701	3,800	3,907	4,000
Legal & Professional Fees, Advertising	1,279	500	656	500
Insurance	32,466	35,000	21,321	40,000
Stationery & Equipment	1,156	1,000	1,385	1,200
Newsletter	4,804	5,415	2,218	5,415
IT, Printing & Copying	9,627	12,000	632	12,000
New Website	3,000	0	0	0
Mobile Phones	1,925	2,000	793	600
Photocopier Charges	907	600	501	0
Postage	950	600	402	600
Total Expenditure	480,082	520,896	251,069	584,278
Recharge to Dorchester Markets Panel	-1,688	-1,800	0	-1,800
Net Expenditure recharged to Services	478,394	519,096	251,069	582,478
Recharged to				
Corporate & Democratic Management	219,462	244,257	118,139	257,365
Allotments	11,878	12,924	6,251	16,307
Development	108,956	126,068	60,975	160,780
Cemeteries	42,521	45,654	22,081	50,477
Parks & Open Spaces	61,111	56,156	27,161	60,117
Municipal Buildings	19,319	17,565	8,496	19,252
Cultural Activity & Twinning	15,154	16,472	7,967	18,181
	478,401	519,096	251,069	582,478

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Budget	6 Month	Budget
	£	£	£	£
Parks & Open Spaces	665,348	724,429	406,908	807,390
Allotments	17,492	22,598	17,760	28,477
Municipal Buildings	427,558	400,308	345,617	382,509
Cemeteries	44,555	55,855	39,074	67,898
Cultural & Twinning Activities	77,328	80,019	44,142	89,029
Corporate & Democratic	262,111	307,324	142,973	299,202
Other Services	96,801	135,237	45,012	148,343
Operational Budget	1,591,193	1,725,770	1,041,487	1,822,848
Precept	1,668,507	1,726,115	1,726,115	1,822,939
Transfer to General Reserves	77,314	345	684,628	91
Subjective Analysis of Revenue				
Employees	893,690	965,728		1,069,658
External Payments	549,695	597,503		610,536
Transfers to Earmarked	365,100	345,600		343,582
Capital Financing Costs	16,752	16,104		15,457
Income	-234,045	-199,166		-216,385
Transfer from Earmarked	0	0		0
Operational Budget	1,591,193	1,725,769	0	1,822,848
General Reserve				
Opening Balance at 1 April	132,065	177,000		100,000
Transfer from Ops Budget	77,000	345		91
To Corporate Projects Reserve	32,065	77,000		0
Closing Balance at 31 March	177,000	100,345		100,091
Earmarked Reserves				
Opening Balance at 1 April	1,304,510	1,379,688		1,157,365
Transfer from Revenue	434,165	345,600		343,582
Other Income & Transfers	35,371	0		0
Expenditure from Reserves	285,661	386,087		512,422
Closing Balance 31 March	1,488,384	1,339,201		988,525
All Reserves held at year end	1,665,383	1,439,546		1,088,615
Tax Base	8,091.30	8,206.70		8,497.10
Band D Charge	206.21	210.33		214.54
O/s PWLB Debt at 31 March	70,000	42,000		28,000

Medium Term Financial Strategy	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
	Actual	Budget	Budget	Forecast	Forecast
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Revenue Budget					
Employees	894	966	1,070	1,091	1,113
External Payments	550	598	611	623	635
Transfers to Earmarked	365	346	344	353	360
Capital Financing Costs	17	16	15	15	16
Income	-234	-199	-216	-221	-225
Operational Budget	1,591	1,726	1,823	1,862	1,899
Precept	1,669	1,726	1,823	1,859	1,897
Transfer to General Reserves	77	0	0	-2	-2
General Reserve					
Opening Balance at 1 April	132	177	100	100	100
Transfer from/to Operational Budget	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to Corporate Projects Reserve	32	77	0	0	0
Closing Balance at 31 March	100	100	100	100	100
Earmarked Reserves					
Opening Balance at 1 April	1,305	1,488	1,157	989	1,042
Transfers/Payments in to Reserves	470	1,068	344	353	360
Payments/Transfers out from Reserves	286	1,399	512	400	200
Closing Balance 31 March	1,488	1,157	989	942	1,202
All Reserves held at year end	1,588	1,257	1,089	1,042	1,302
Corporate Project Unallocated at Year End	755	755	505	255	255
Outstanding Debt at Year End	£k	56	42	28	14
Council Tax	£k	206	210	215	219
Tax Base		8,091	8,207	8,497	8,497

Notes

1. Precept assumes Council Tax rises @ 2.00% from 2026/27, no Tax Base growth
2. Any operational surplus and CIL receipts credited to Corporate Projects Reserve to pay for the front of house works.
3. 26/27 includes a contribution to a new earmarked reserve for Election Costs, £3k a year.
4. Best estimate of new or transferred services, driven by cuts in other tiers
5. Earmarked Reserves expenditure reflects best available knowledge
6. General Reserve set at £100k
7. Further limited savings may be identified in budgets during review processes

RESERVES	Cttee	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Reason for holding Reserve
		Mar 24 £	24/25 £	24/25 £	Mar 25 £	25/26 £	25/26 £	Mar 26 £	
Earmarked Reserves Infrastructure & Equipment									
Cemeteries	Man	87,326	6,100	93,000	426	10,000	0	10,426	Buildings/infrastructure
MB Repairs & Maintenance	Man	49,653	12,500	50,192	11,961	20,000	0	31,961	Building works/refurb
MB Front of House works	Man	238,167	587,000	825,167	0	0	0	0	
Parks Premises	Man	12,789	9,000	11,735	10,054	19,000	0	29,054	Buildings/infrastructure refurb.
Play Equipment	Man	18,715	11,000	0	29,715	1,000	0	30,715	Equipment replacement
Great Field Reserve	Man	0	2,000	0	2,000	2,500	0	4,500	
Tree Reserve	Man	8,598	20,000	20,000	8,598	20,000	10,000	18,598	Tree Works
Tennis Courts Reserve	Man	7,000	0	0	7,000	0	0	7,000	
19 North Square Refurb	Pol	11,000	0	0	11,000	0	11,000	0	
Public Realm	Pol	435,310	5,000	5,000	435,310	5,000	200,000	240,310	Infrastructure refurb
Vehicles & Equipment	Man	97,007	20,000	60,000	57,007	22,000	40,000	39,007	Fleet & equipment replacement
Cultural									
Arts & Culture	Man	42,933	11,335	54,268	0	0	0	0	
Christmas Lights	Man	4,420	0	0	4,420	0	0	4,420	Replace lights
DTC Website & IT	Man	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	£3k DTC Website, £4,651.87 IT
Tourist Information	Pol	5,599	0	4,207	1,392	0	1,392	0	TIC Replacement Projects
Miscellaneous Reserves									
Corporate Projects	Pol	385,165	369,794	239,000	515,958	244,082	250,000	510,040	Own or partner capital projects

Apprenticeship Reserve	Pol	16,565	0	0	16,565	0	0	0	16,565	
Planning Advice Reserve	Pol	18,499	0	20	18,479	0	0	0	18,479	Local Plan & other advice
Climate Emergency Reserve	Pol	25,609	13,790	25,909	13,490	0	0	0	13,490	Own or partner Climate projects
Graves In Perpetuity	Man	14,019	0	30	13,989	0	30	13,959		Maint. and flowers on 6 graves
Total Earmarked Reserves		1,488,374	1,067,519	1,398,528	1,157,365	343,582	512,422	988,525		
General Reserve	Pol	177,314	0	77,314	100,000	0	0	100,000		General Emergency Fund
Total Reserves		1,665,688	1,067,519	1,475,842	1,257,365	343,582	512,422	1,088,525		

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025-26

	2025												2026				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY				
COUNCIL	19 MM 20 (Tu)		28		29		24		26		30		18 MM 19 (Tu)				
POLICY	12		21		22		17		19		23 MS@ 1830		11				
MANAGEMENT	6 (Tu)		14		15		10		12		16		5 (Tu)				
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT	28 April	2	7	4	1	6	3	1	7 (Wed)	2	2	7 (Tu) & 27	-				
MARKETS JOINT PANEL	29 1400																
HERITAGE JOINT			22 (Tu) 17.30			14 (Tu) 17.30			20 (Tu) 17.30			14 (Tu) 17.30					
SITE VISITS		3 (Tu) 09.30			2 (Tu)												
CIVIC EVENTS	20 ATM 31 (Sat) Hardy 17.00						Remem Sunday 9						19 ATM				
BANK HOLIDAYS	5, 26			25				25, 26	1			3, 6	4, 25				

MM Mayor Making MS Mayoral Selection Committee
 ATM Formal Annual Town Meeting (it is proposed to hold an 'informal' ATM on a date to be agreed prior to the formal ATM)
 Meetings will ordinarily take place at 19.00 in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings.
 * The dates and timing of Markets Joint Panel meetings are still to be agreed.