

Dorchester Town Council

Policy Committee

19 July 2021

Present: Councillors R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, J. Hewitt, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford (Chair) and G. Jones

Apologies: Councillor B. Armstrong-Marshall and T. Harries.

Attending: Councillors S. Jones, D. Leaper, R. Potter and M. Rennie.

1. **Minutes and Declarations of Interest**

The Minutes of the Committee of 15 March 2021, adopted by Council on 22 March 2021, were taken as read and signed.

2. **Financial Update at 30 June 2021**

The Committee received the Financial Controller's report on the month 3 financial position, noting actual spending in line with budget. Questions were asked regarding an outstanding debt for verge cutting and an above profile expenditure on Culture and Twinning.

Resolved

That the Payments list, totalling £1,300,960.45, is approved

3. **Governance Issues**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk covering a number of governance issues. A question was asked regarding the availability of the online Register of Interests and Members also considered the process for extending the boundaries of the town, should it be appropriate to do so, at a future date.

The Committee considered the timescale for the appointment of a new Clerk, including the implications of an unsuccessful first interview process.

Members considered feedback from an internal exercise to identify areas of activity that might need additional Committee time, phrasing a number of recommendations to respond to the feedback.

The Committee considered the benefits of submitting a bid for city status as part of the 2022 Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Recommended to Council

- a) That the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct, as previously circulated, is adopted
- b) That the Financial Regulations, as previously circulated, are adopted
- c) That the appointment of an external advisor to support the recruitment of a new Town Clerk, is delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Policy Committee

- d) That the following additions are made to the Council's committee arrangements to take account of recent Member feedback
- Comments regarding the local economy are considered during the town centre master planning workshop, to be programmed in August
 - The Planning and Environment Committee to consider an audit of Environmental issues prior to considering how additional Member time might be allocated to environmental issues
 - On the granting of the lease to Dorchester Arts, a new Group is established to monitor the partnership agreement relating to the operation of the Municipal Buildings, reporting to the Management Committee
 - The current Site Visit programme is strengthened to ensure all properties are visited on a risk-based approach, and that an additional programme of ward focused visits are introduced
- e) That the Council prepares to submit a bid for new city status as part of the 2022 Platinum Jubilee celebrations

4. **Corporate Plan Update**

The Clerk reported on progress relating to the new Corporate Plan, highlighting issues relating to the availability of statistics from the 2021 census, which would prevent the finalisation of the Corporate Plan until 2022.

The Clerk identified that, while awaiting the final Corporate Plan, a new set of milestones would be used to monitor progress on the High Level Aims in the draft Corporate Plan during 2021/22. The Committee considered the milestones, focusing in particular on the lack of the determination of the planning application for the tennis court site. The Clerk was instructed to write to the Dorset Council on this issue.

5. **Dorchester Science Fair and Mars**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding a request for funding support to present Luke Jerram's "Mars" at the Corn Exchange in March 2022.

Resolved

That £3,000 is released from the Arts and Culture Reserve towards the Mars project.

Chairman