

## Dorchester Town Council

### Policy Committee

21 March 2022

**Present:** Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, A. Chisholm, T. Harries, J. Hewitt and S. Hosford (Chair).

**Apologies:** Councillors R. Biggs, F. Hogwood and G. Jones.

**Attending:** Councillors S. Jones and F. Kent-Ledger.

#### 21. Minutes and Declarations of Interest

The Minutes of the meetings of 13 December 2021 and 17 January 2022, adopted by Council on 24 January 2022, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### 22. Financial Update at 28 February 2022

The Committee received the Financial Controller's report on the month 11 financial position, noting actual spending £36,000 below the budget profile. The Clerk explained the use of a Treasury Reserve to reinstate investments to their original value, should it be necessary, when assets in the Payden Global Fund are sold.

The Committee considered the second internal audit report for the year, as well as an update on the national pay agreement and a request in relation to officer bank authorisations.

#### Resolved

- a) That all surplus funds above the £100,000 General Reserve target at 31 March 2022 are transferred to the Municipal Buildings Reserve
- b) That the Payments list, totalling £506,311.26, is approved
- c) That the 2<sup>nd</sup> Internal Audit report and officer response is noted
- d) That Emma Scott is temporarily added to the list of officers with authority to make payments using the Lloyds Bank software system

#### 23. Corporate Plan Update at 28 February 2022

The Committee considered an update report of the Town Clerk regarding project milestones in the Corporate Plan.

Members gave consideration to delays on the Tennis Courts site housing scheme, a potential housing site adjacent to Council-owned land, play equipment on the Great Field, the Lubbecke Way allotment site, the relationship between the Council's website and the new Tourism website, the Cornhill public realm project and progress on the development of a masterplan for the town centre.

#### Resolved

That the Corporate Plan Update be noted

#### 24. Municipal Buildings Works and the relationship with Dorchester Arts

The Clerk presented a detailed report on the works at the Municipal Buildings and the lease of the building to Dorchester Arts.

The Committee were advised that works were now due for completion in June 2022, that the current projected total cost was £49,000 above the approved £2.66 Million budget, that the likely level of debt required to finance the works, including the overspend, had reduced to c. £0.4 Million, that works to the front of house would not take place until summer 2024 and that the lease and partnership agreement had now been signed, bringing the work of the Municipal Buildings Task and Finish Group to a conclusion.

A Member highlighted the need to ensure a full process is put in place for appointments to the new Municipal Buildings Monitoring Group.

Recognising the positive outcomes that had thus far been delivered on a very complex scheme, the Committee expressed its appreciation of the work of all participants working on the project.

**Resolved**

That the report of the Town Clerk be noted.

**25. Member Allowances 2022/23**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk regarding the work of an Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by Dorset Council to offer guidance on the level of Basic and Other Allowances received by Councillors.

Members considered the merits and weaknesses of three different options for the Basic Allowance, in particular noting the Panel's comments regarding the factors which the Panel recognised as justification for any move away from a basic allowance based solely on electorate.

The Committee also considered the work required related to the role of the Chairman of the Council and also noted the more significant workload required by the Chairman in their civic role as Mayor, for which a specific budget existed.

**Recommended to Council**

- i) That, having considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, recognising the scale of the Council's Revenue Budget and the complexity of operations delivered by the Council, as well as the role that the Council is required to play to facilitate and support infrastructure required for the future growth of the town, the Basic Allowance be set at £1,069 for 2022/23
- ii) That no additional allowance is paid to the Chairman of Council

## **26. Tourism Services**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk regarding the impact of the closure of the Dorchester TIC, alongside the implementation of core components of the Tourism Strategy during its first year.

### **Resolved**

That a further review of the impact of the closure of the TIC takes place before the 2023 summer season, prior to which the impact of the loss of the TIC is monitored as part of the delivery of the overall Tourism Strategy.

Chairman