

Dorchester Town Council

Policy Committee

23 January 2023

Present: The Mayor (Councillor J. Hewitt) and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, A. Chisholm, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford (Chairman) and G. Jones.

Apologies: Councillors S. Biles and T. Harries.

In Attendance

Councillors S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper, R. Potter and M. Rennie.

20. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2022, adopted by Council on 28 November 2022, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21. **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

22. **Finance Update**

Members considered a report by the Financial Controller which updated them on the financial position of the Council as at end of December 2022. The report also confirmed that there was no debt over 30 days and gave details of the payments list from 1 November 2022 to 31 December 2022.

Resolved

That the payments list, totalling £425,986.75, be approved.

23. **Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2023-24**

The Committee considered a report of the Financial Controller covering the draft budget for the Policy Committee, the overall Revenue Budget, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and levels of Reserves.

Members agreed that the General Reserve should not be reduced further in future years and that the Council's grants policy be reviewed by the Management Committee.

Recommended

That the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2023-24, as set out in the Appendices 1 to 4 of these Minutes, be adopted, to include: -

- A Council Tax Band D charge of £206.21, an increase of £4.04 (2%)
- A precept of £1,668,507, an increase of 5.4%

24. **Cornhill / South Street**

Further to Minute No. 14(2)/2022 the Committee considered a report by the Tourism Development Officer which set out ideas for improving the street scene at Cornhill and South Street. In respect of Cornhill the suggestion was to relocate some of the items that were in place at present such as the litter bins and information board, provide additional seating and new paving, the aim of which was to provide an improved place for people to rest and be a more flexible space that could be used to draw more people into the town centre. In respect of South Street as a whole it was proposed to replace seven of the existing lampposts with new lampposts that were suitable for use with flower hanging baskets.

The Committee agreed that the lampposts should be replaced so as to allow hanging baskets to be erected this summer. Members felt that a task and finish group should be established to look at improving Cornhill and other suitable spaces. It was noted that this project could be something that the Dorchester BID would wish to support in its new prospectus. Consideration should also be given to Cornhill Market.

Resolved

- (1) That a task and finish group be established to work up an improvement scheme for the Cornhill area and other suitable areas in the town centre.
- (2) That Council, at its next meeting, be asked to nominate Members to sit on the task and finish group.
- (3) That seven replacement lampposts suitable for use with hanging baskets be provided in Cornhill / South Street at a cost of £3,000 each to be funded from the Public Realm reserve.

25. **Menopause Strategy**

Members considered a report by the Town Clerk on the possible introduction of a Menopause Policy.

Resolved

That a Menopause Policy for the Council, based on the report, be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

26. **The Municipal Buildings Electricity**

Members considered a report by the Finance Officer on electricity use in the Municipal Buildings between March and November 2022. During this time contractors were still on site meaning that the office space could not be used and Dorchester Arts could only put on a limited programme in the rest of the building. The Committee agreed that the Council should contribute 65% (£10,058) towards the cost of electricity for that period. Dorchester

Arts to pay the remaining £5,416 (35%). It was noted that this was a transitional cost and that the Council would not expect to make any further contribution.

During discussion of this matter it was agreed that the Management Committee review the outcome of the carbon reduction works undertaken at Weymouth Avenue Pavilion.

Resolved

That a contribution of £10,058 be made to the March to November 2022 electricity costs of the Municipal Buildings, to be funded from within existing budgets.

27. Transition Town Dorchester

Members were reminded that the Committee had previously agreed a grant of £2,000 to Transition Town Dorchester for the purchase of trees. This grant had not been drawn down due Transition Town being able to obtain trees for free from the Woodland Trust.

A request had been received asking whether £500 of that £2,000 could be used as a 50% contribution towards the cost of fencing the community orchard at Poundbury.

The Committee requested that Transition Town Dorchester be asked to undertake some work at the Railway Orchard which appeared in need of some attention.

Resolved

That £500 be contributed to the cost of fencing at the Transition Town community orchard at Poundbury.

28. Calendar of Meetings 2023-24

The Town Clerk presented a draft calendar of meetings for 2023-24.

The Committee discussed the format of the informal Annual Town Meeting and agreed that it should be held in the Corn Exchange on the morning of, but not a part of, the May Community Lunch. The Council's partners be invited to set up displays and residents be encouraged to attend to drop in and meet the Council and its partners. The Annual Report be available to view at the session and Members and Officers be in attendance to respond to questions and queries from residents. The event to be advertised in the Council Newsletter and social media.

Recommended

(1) That the Calendar of Meetings 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 5 to these Minutes, be agreed.

(2) That an informal Annual Town Meeting be held in the Corn Exchange prior to the May Community Lunch as set out above.

Chairman.....

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Actual	Budget	Budget
	£	£	£
CORPORATE & DEMOCRATIC			
Members Allowance	22,176	22,800	23,500
Members Training (inc CRB) & Travel	774	500	400
Civic & Ceremonial Expenses	1,124	1,000	1,000
Mayoral Expenses	10,361	12,600	12,850
Town Crier	552	600	600
Entertaining & Gifts	46	400	408
Youth Council & Democracy Day	0	200	600
Office Team	200,246	209,839	229,249
Met by Precept on Taxpayer	235,279	247,939	268,607
OTHER SERVICES			
Tourism Development	26,396	8,000	8,000
Sawmills rent	8,600	8,600	8,600
To Public Realm Reserve	53,600	54,700	10,000
To Development Reserve	90,000	0	0
Dorchester Heritage Joint Committee	0	3,000	3,000
Citizens Advice	0	8,000	8,887
Dorchester Youth & Community Centre	20,800	21,200	21,200
Dorchester Cricket Club	2,000	0	0
Apprenticeships	6,262	15,000	15,000
Videographer	5,000	5,200	5,500
Debt Charges	39,116	27,578	16,752
Staff - Community Development	44,436	97,942	113,813
Total Expenditure	296,210	249,220	210,752
Treasury Interest	-4,972	-5,000	-20,000
Sawmills rent recharged	-4,300	-4,300	-4,300
Market Income	-19,544	-15,000	-15,000
Total Income	-28,816	-24,300	-39,300
Met by Precept on Taxpayer	267,394	224,920	171,452

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Actual	Budget	Budget
	£	£	£
OFFICES TEAM			
Salaries	232,378	280,058	303,041
Employers National Insurance	22,952	29,788	30,377
Employers Superannuation	51,166	61,613	66,669
Training Courses	4,543	1,200	7,000
Travel & Subsistence	4,782	1,100	2,500
Subscriptions (Professional Bodies)	3,337	3,600	3,800
Cleaning Materials	146	1,200	1,000
Rates	7,236	7,300	7,236
Gas	1,623	1,250	2,000
Electricity	1,867	3,000	4,500
Water	302	500	550
Repairs & Maintenance	251	2,700	3,400
Financial Services	7,754	8,500	8,670
Employment Law and H & S	3,024	3,000	3,225
Legal & Professional Fees,			
Advertising	6,705	1,000	500
Insurance	29,703	34,000	34,000
Printing & Stationery	430	1,000	1,000
Newsletter	4,274	4,200	5,415
Office Equipment & IT	7,251	5,500	10,500
New Website			3,000
Telephones	2,038	1,900	2,000
Photocopier Charges	401	500	600
Postage	126	500	550
Total Expenditure	392,287	453,409	501,533
Recharge to Dorchester Markets			
Panel	-1,689	-1,800	-1,800
Net Expenditure recharged to Services	390,598	451,609	499,733
Recharged to			
Corporate & Democratic			
Management	200,246	209,839	229,249
Allotments	3,781	3,749	12,408
Development	44,436	97,942	113,813
Cemeteries	26,938	26,571	44,417
Parks & Open Spaces	58,354	56,863	63,836
Municipal Buildings	42,546	41,884	20,181
Cultural Activity & Twinning	14,297	14,760	15,830
	390,598	451,608	499,733

REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Actual	Budget	Budget
	£	£	£
Parks & Open Spaces	533,058	569,661	654,307
Allotments	4,130	131	15,045
Municipal Buildings	318,606	408,645	406,996
Cemeteries	65,122	59,614	68,006
Cultural & Twinning Activities	74,400	70,760	83,330
Corporate & Democratic	235,279	247,939	268,607
Other Services	267,394	224,920	171,452
Operational Budget	1,497,989	1,581,670	1,667,743
Precept	1,516,277	1,581,669	1,668,507
Transfer to General Reserves	18,288	-1	764
Subjective Analysis of Revenue			
Employees	710,018	816,210	885,665
External Payments	564,271	488,412	579,206
Transfers to Earmarked	308,500	370,600	325,100
Capital Financing Costs	39,116	27,578	16,752
Income	-123,915	-121,130	-138,980
Transfer from Earmarked	0	0	0
Operational Budget	1,497,989	1,581,670	1,667,743
General Reserve			
Opening Balance at 1 April	128,408	128,408	100,000
Transfer from Ops Budget	21,180	-1	764
To Corporate Projects Reserve	0	-1	764
Closing Balance at 31 March	149,588	128,408	100,000
Earmarked Reserves			
Opening Balance at 1 April	1,899,451	1,583,369	1,323,957
Transfer from Revenue	440,060	871,500	430,102
Other Income & Transfers	459,767	0	0
Expenditure from Reserves	1,247,980	816,044	535,466
Closing Balance 31 March	1,551,298	1,638,825	1,218,593
All Reserves held at year end	1,700,886	1,767,233	1,318,593
Tax Base	7,650.00	7,823.30	8,091.30
Band D Charge	196.64	202.17	206.21
O/s PWLB Debt at 31 March	128,000	94,000	56,000

Medium Term Financial Strategy	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Yoy %
Revenue Budget	£000	£000	£000	£000	Chang
Employees	816	886	903	921	2.00
External Payments	488	579	591	603	2.00
Transfers to Earmarked	371	325	332	338	2.00
Capital Financing Costs	28	17	16	15	-
Income	-121	-139	-142	-145	2.00
New/Transferred Services	0	0	0	0	
Operational Budget	1,582	1,668	1,700	1,733	
Precept	1,669	1,669	1,702	1,736	
Transfer to General Reserves	87	1	2	3	
General Reserve					
Opening Balance at 1 April	118	100	100	100	
Transfer from/to Operational Budget	0	1	0	0	
Transfer to Corporate Projects Reserve	18	1	0	0	
Closing Balance at 31 March	100	100	100	100	
Earmarked Reserves					
Opening Balance at 1 April	1,551	1,324	1,219	1,150	
Transfers/Payments in to Reserves	1,628	430	332	338	
Payments/Transfers out from Reserves	1,855	535	400	400	
Closing Balance 31 March	1,324	1,219	1,150	1,088	
All Reserves held at year end					
Corporate Project Unallocated at Year End	109	369	594	594	
Outstanding Debt at Year End	£k	70	56	42	28
Council Tax	£k	202	206	210	215
Tax Base		7,823	8,091	8,091	8,091

Notes

1. Precept assumes Council Tax rises @ 2.00% from 2022/23, no Tax Base growth
2. Any CIL receipts credited to Corporate Projects Reserve
3. Best estimate of new or transferred services, driven by cuts in other tiers
4. Operational surplus is transferred to Corporate Projects Reserve to pay for MB works
5. Earmarked Reserves expenditure reflects best available knowledge
6. General Reserve set at £100k
7. Further limited savings may be identified in budgets during ongoing review processes

RESERVES	Cttee	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Paid In	Spend	Balance	Reason for holding Reserve
		Mar 22	22/23	22/23	Mar 23	23/24	23/24	Mar 24	
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Earmarked Reserves									
Infrastructure & Equipment									
Cemeteries	Man	63,936	18,100	225	81,811	6,100	30,000	57,911	Buildings/infrastructure refurb.
MB Repairs & Maintenance	Man	3,795	1,168,581	1,126,706	45,670	10,000	45,670	10,000	Building works/refurb
MB Front of House works	Man	0	250,000	250	249,750		249,750	0	
Parks Premises	Man	47,329	5,300	261	52,368	8,000	50,000	10,368	Buildings/infrastructure refurb.
Play Equipment	Man	28,467	10,000	21,615	16,852	11,000	0	27,852	Equipment replacement
Tree Reserve	Man	0	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	Tree Works
Public Realm	Pol	400,758	54,700	0	455,458	10,000	0	465,458	Infrastructure refurb
Vehicles & Equipment	Man	69,557	19,900	0	89,457	20,000	20,000	89,457	Fleet & equipment replacement
Cultural									
Arts, Culture & Sport	Man	29,874	0	10,074	19,800	0	0	19,800	Cricket Club, RHSS Fund, Mayors Fund
Christmas Lights	Man	3,607	2,000	0	5,607	0	0	5,607	Replace lights
Tourist Information	Pol	18,603	100	7,000	11,703	0	5,000	6,703	TIC Replacement Projects
Miscellaneous Reserves									
New Corporate Projects	Pol	661,192	98,848	650,768	109,272	260,000	0	369,272	Own or partner capital projects
Apprenticeship Reserve	Pol	9,815	0	2,250	7,565	0	0	7,565	
Planning Advice Reserve	Pol	21,844	0	2,055	19,789	0	10,000	9,789	Local Plan & other advice
Climate Emergency Reserve	Pol	88,427	0	18,666	69,761	75,002	50,000	94,763	Own or partner Climate projects
Development Reserve	Pol	75,002	0	0	75,002	0	75,002	0	Development Assistant
Treasury	Pol	15,000	0	15,000	0	0	0	0	To offset losses on asset sale
Graves In Perpetuity	Man	14,092	0	0	14,092	0	44	14,048	Maint. and flowers on 6 graves
Total Earmarked Reserves		1,551,298	1,627,529	1,854,870	1,323,957	430,102	535,466	1,218,593	
General Reserve	Pol	118,288	-1	18,287	100,000	0	0	100,000	General Emergency Fund
Total Reserves		1,669,586	1,627,528	1,873,157	1,423,957	430,102	535,466	1,318,592	

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023-24

	2023								2024				
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
COUNCIL	22 MM 23 (Tu)		31		25		27		29		25		20 MM 21 (Tu)
POLICY	15		24		18		20		22		18 MS@ 1830		+
MANAGEMENT	9 (Tu)		17		11		13		15		11		+
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT	2 (Tu)	5	3	7	4	2	6	4	8	5	4	2 (Tu) & 29	-
MARKETS JOINT PANEL		*							*				
HERITAGE JOINT COMMITTEE			25 (Tu)				17 (Tu)		23 (Tu)			16 (Tu)	
SITE VISITS		6 @ 9.30AM		8 @ 9.30AM								9 @ 9.30PM	
CIVIC EVENTS	23 ATM	Hardy Sun 4					<u>Remem</u> Sun 12						21 ATM
BANK HOLIDAYS	1, 8, 29			28				25, 26	1		29	1	6,27

MM Mayor Making MS Mayoral Selection Committee

ATM Formal Annual Town Meeting (it is proposed to hold an 'informal' ATM prior to the Community Lunch the week before 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 with Dorset Council.

+ 2024 is an election year, as per 2019 it is proposed not to hold the May Policy and Management Committees with any urgent items going direct to the Council meeting.