

## WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2016

**Present:** Cllrs A Alford (Chairman), P Barrowcliff, I Gardner, M Penfold, J Russell, A Thacker (Vice-Chair) and T Yarker

**Apologies:** Cllrs

**Also present:** Cllr J Dunseith, Cllr T Farmer, Cllr M Rennie, Cllr P Shorland and Cllr D Turner

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Susan Carne (Democratic Services Manager), Martin Hamilton (Strategic Director), Stephen Hill (Strategic Director), Dr Steph Lyons (Programme Manager for the Combined Authority), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Julie Strange (Head of Financial Services) and Jason Vaughan (Strategic Director)

19. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

20. **Code of Conduct**

There were no declarations of interest.

21. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 August 2016 were signed as a correct record.

22. **Forward Plan**

The committee received and noted the Forward Plan.

23. **Budget Update**

Cllr Barrowcliff introduced the report which set out the 2017/18 budget proposals, the latest position on reserves and financial settlement from government. The report set out the budget options in 3 groups, budget options requiring member approval (appendix 1), budget options requiring management approval (appendix 2) and budget options already approved (appendix 3). With regard to the financial settlement from government, Cllr Barrowcliff supported the proposal that the council should accept the 4 year financial settlement, he believed that this was the correct course of action and would allow the council to budget for the coming years and there was no risk of reduced revenue support grant during that period.

Decision

(a) That the budget options requiring member approval set out in Appendix 1 are included within the 2017/18 budget proposals;

(b) That the updated position on reserves as set out in Appendix 4 is approved;

(c) That the council accepts the government's offer of a '4 year' financial settlement and that the Section 151 officer submits the required efficiency plan.

*To enable the Council to balance the 2017/18 budget.*

#### **24. Treasury Out turn Report 2015-16**

The committee received an update on treasury management activity and performance for the 2015/16 financial year in accordance with the council's treasury strategy. The key investment transactions for the year were set out in paragraph 5.13 of the report. For the financial year ending 31 March the council received an average income return of 2.34% which was considered to be a good rate of return on investments with a low level of risk. It was noted that looking forward, new investments were likely to return lower yields.

Decision

That the changes to the treasury portfolio be noted.

*To ensure that members are aware of developments within their remit.*

#### **25. Development of Dorchester's Centre**

Cllr Russell introduced a report that presented a draft of GL Hearn's Dorchester Town Centre report. The report addressed the following 3 key elements of work:

Advice to the council on the current and future potential for Dorchester as a more regionally important retail and leisure/housing destination;

Advice on development type/mix; and

Preparation of development strategy options.

Members welcomed the GL Hearn report and the proposals for soft market testing, a retail capacity study and an archaeology peer review. A web page had been set up on dorsetforyou.com so that the public could be kept informed of the project. It was also considered important to show potential tenants/developers that the council was committed to the development of the town centre. Cllr Barrowcliff also welcomed the report, as a good start to the project, and asked for some financial analysis work to be done. In addition Cllr Yarker requested that a timetable for the project be reported back to the Executive Committee.

Decision

(a) That the draft Dorchester Town Centre report prepared by GL Hearn be received;

(b) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director in consultation with the planning and asset management portfolio holders to finalise the report with GL Hearn;

(c) That additional work described in the report be commissioned by the Council (soft market testing; archaeological peer review and retail capacity study) and once specifications have been prepared and costs/budget have been confirmed, the town centre strategy.

*To report to executive on the GL Hearn commission, which was approved 12 April 2016. To enable the member led Charles Street Working Group to make progress to support Dorchester's town centre including the council's assets and Charles Street site.*

## 26. **Shire Hall, Dorchester, Project Update**

The committee received a report on the revised tenders for the main capital works to the Shire Hall following the report to the Executive Committee in August 2016 and the request to award the contract. Following the return of tenders a valuation engineering exercise had been undertaken by the council and the Shire Hall Dorchester Trust and all three contractors had been asked to reprice. The lowest tender was £35,000 above the contracted sum figure but within the overall budget for the scheme. It was noted that the shortfall might be met by additional value engineering or additional funds from the HLF, however members needed to be aware of the risk when awarding the contract. In response to a question the Strategic Director, Martin Hamilton, reported that further value engineering could be looked at in parts of the project other than the building works and that a further bid had been made to the HLF to bridge the funding gap. Overall members felt that the risk to the fabric of the building being damaged over the winter months outweighed the financial risk.

Decision

That the tender for the capital works to Shire Hall be awarded to Greendale Construction.

*To allow the contract to be awarded so that the capital works can commence on site in Autumn 2016. This enables work to start on site before the winter and removes the risk that the fabric of the building may deteriorate further.*

## 27. **Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan - Area Designation**

The committee considered a report on the responses to the public consultation and the request to designate the Chickerell neighbourhood plan area. The Portfolio Holder reported that the neighbourhood plan required an

Executive decision as it fell outside of the delegated criteria for the following reasons:

Significant level of businesses operating in the area;  
Chickerell was closely linked with surrounding areas including parts of Weymouth for additional housing, larger community facilities, education and labour force for the industrial estates and  
The Defined Development Boundary of Weymouth extended into Chickerell parish,

Decision

That the neighbourhood plan area following the parish boundary of Chickerell as proposed by Chickerell Town Council, be designated.

*To respond to a request from Chickerell Town Council for the designation of a Neighbourhood Plan area. A decision is required by the Executive Committee as the Neighbourhood Plan area submitted by Chickerell Town Council does not fall within the remit of the delegated approval process agreed by Executive Committee in July 2012.*

**28. Delegating authority to enforce the provisions of the Microchipping of Dogs**

Approval was sought for officers to be authorised to enforce the provisions of the Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015.

Decision

To delegate authority to the Head of Community Protection to authorise officers to enforce the Mircrochipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015.

*In order to enforce the provisions of the Regulations, officers are required to be authorised in writing by the local authority (Regulation 11 (2)) and be able to produce the written authorisation (Regulation 12).*

**29. Update to the Constitution**

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report that sought to introduce changes to the Constitution to reflect variations to legislative requirements, better alignment of various existing policies and powers across the three councils the development of clearer interactions between existing provisions within the Constitution and further clarity to officer powers and responsibilities. The details of the changes were set out in the appendices as follows:

Appendix 1 – Technical changes to the Articles, Officer Scheme of Delegation, Procedural Rules and Codes and Protocols

Appendix 2 – Code of Conduct for Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters

Appendix 3 – Employment and Dismissal Procedure Rules

Appendix 4 – Code of Conduct for Employees

Appendix 5 – Revision to planning application delegation.

Appendix 5 proposed a single delegation for dealing with planning applications across the partnership (Part 1), however there was a second alternative form of wording (Part 2), should Part 1 not be acceptable to members. Members expressed their support for Part 1, a single delegation across all 3 councils.

Recommendation to Audit & Governance Committee

In so far as members have power so to do:

- (a) agree but otherwise support the updates to the Constitution as set out in Appendices 1 to 4 attached to the report;
- (b) agree but otherwise support updating the Constitution to incorporate a uniform delegation relating to planning applications as set out in Appendix 5, Part 1 of the report; and
- (c) delegate to the Monitoring Officer power to make such further consequential changes to the Constitution as are necessary to reflect the changes set out in the appendices

*To introduce changes to the Constitutions to reflect variations to legislative requirements, seek to secure the better alignment of various existing policies and powers within the different Constitutions, develop a clearer interaction between existing provisions within the Constitution and give further clarity to officer powers and responsibilities.*

### 30. **Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy**

The committee received an updated Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy which had been amended to reflect best practice across the Dorset Councils Partnership.

Decision

That the Joint Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy be adopted.

*To ensure the Dorset Councils Partnership has an up to date strategy which reflects best practice.*

### 31. **Whistle Blowing Policy**

The committee received a revised Whistleblowing Policy, noting the changes that had been made to the policy.

That the Whistleblowing Policy be approved.

*The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we encourage employees and others that we deal with, who have concerns about any*

*aspect of the council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. This is commonly referred to as "Whistleblowing".*

**32. Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee Minutes**

The committee received and noted the minutes of the Dorset Waste Partnership Joint Committee held on 13 June 2016.

**33. Urgent items**

There was no urgent business.

**34. Exempt Business**

Members received the exempt appendix in relation to the Shire Hall Dorchester – Project Update.

**Duration of meeting:** 2.15 pm

**Chairman**

.....