

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11 JULY 2017

Present: Cllrs J Cant (Chair), R Kosior (Vice-Chair), F Drake, J Farquharson, C Huckle, C James, R Nowak, A Reed, G Taylor and K Wheller

Apologies: Cllrs

Also present: Cllr P Kimber and Cllr I Bruce

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

Kate Critchel (Democratic Services Officer), Paul Compton (Communications Team Leader), Stuart C Dawson (Head of Revenues and Benefits), Paul Derrien (Housing Enabling Team Leader), Martin Hamilton (Strategic Director), Stephen Hill (Strategic Director), Tony Hurley (Leisure Commissioning Manager), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive) and Nick Thornley (Head of Economy, Leisure & Tourism)

20. Apologies

There were no apologies to report.

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. Code of Conduct

There were no declarations of interest to report.

23. Public Participation

Mr Farn expressed concerns about the western subway and the number of weeds in the area. No single authority seemed to be claiming responsibility for this area. He suggested that the council use the money allocated for the cost of a Town Centre Manager, to appoint a lengths-man to clear and keep the area clean.

In response the Chairman explained that the council had made a big effort to clean up the town centre, clearing waste and de-gumming the pavements. He acknowledged that this work needed to continue. The new Town Centre Manager would help the council achieve this aim.

Mr J West addressed the committee regarding the report of on Multiple Deprivation Areas in the Borough – The Working with You Initiative. He advised that on 13 June 2017 Weyforward sent a detailed and fully costed

business plan to every member of this committee. He expressed concern about the appalling levels of deprivation in the borough and stated that the harsh reality was that Weymouth and Portland Borough Council had failed a generation of people. Money must be invested into people, they need to be educated and financially enabled to learn how to transform their lives.

The Weyforward Business Plan aimed to address issues around deprivation in Weymouth and he suggested that the current system had failed the local community. Mr West felt that it was essential that the council used 21st Century tools to address these issues and suggested that the council invest in Weyforward to help people transform their own lives.

The Chairman agreed that this was an interesting model that was being piloted by in other countries. However this council did not have the funds that were being suggested by Weyforward, but the council would like to work with them. It was agreed that Mr West and the Economic Regeneration Briefholder would meet to explore how Weyforward and the Council could work together on this matter.

24. Questions by Councillors

Councillor Kimber addressed the committee regarding the report on Multiple Deprivation Areas in the Borough . This effected his ward and he asked for ward members for be more formally involved in addressing these serious matters of concern.

In response Councillor Reed and Councillor James confirmed that they were involved with the Health and Well-being Board, and the board had launched a number of initiatives to address these issues. However it was important that all ward members were kept fully informed of developments.

Councillor Kimber asked a further question regarding Churches Together and the night bus for the homeless. He asked what plans did the council have to site this bus overnight on its land

In response Councillor Taylor, Brief holder for Housing advised the committee that this project was run by a private charity organisation and a similar project had been tested on the Isle of Wight. The charity was seeking to place the bus in a static position on one of the council's car parks. Unfortunately there were a number of issues with this proposal. The proposed sites were popular and busy car parks, it was thought that the bus may attract more rough sleepers to the town, particularly during these summer months; there were potential anti-social behaviour concerns for the site and the town centre generally. There were also concerns that the council did not allow overnight sleeping in its car parks and this could set a precedent. The Brief holder continued that there were already excellent facilities and services in the area, where the aim was encourage people off the streets and support people back into society . Therefore the council was, at this time, unable to support this facility.

25. **Management Committee Action Plan**

The committee considered the Action Plan and the following updates/changes were noted.

- The Marsh Masterplan report would be presented to committee in October.
- Review of Public Conveniences was almost complete, report to committee in August.
- Committee keen to receive the review of licenses from Scrutiny and Performance as soon as practical.
- In respect of enforcement and the 3GS contract, members need to consider extending after the consultation period.
- Licensing members attending site visit of the night time economy, other councillors would be welcome
- Full report from Scrutiny and Performance on licensing and dog fouling with key actions due in September.
- Community Governance Consultation on-going and council still awaiting LGR “minded to decision” Chief Executive advised that combined authority decision was linked to the LGR decision.
- Delivery Plan for the Western Dorset Growth Strategy being prepared
- The Listed Building and Conservation Areas Review to be reported to committee once Scrutiny and Performance Committee had completed its review.
- Sale of North Quay soon to be complete
- Review of the controls over HMO’s to be carried out after new legislation was implemented
- Armed Forces Convent briefing had taken place.
- Art Strategy Member Group to meet shortly
- Members received an update from Cllr I Bruce, Chairman of the Harbour Management Board regarding the Boards activities.
- Work continuing on updating the Car Parks ticket machines
- Traffic Management Report to be presented to committee in September.

26. **Local governance arrangements in relation to local government reform**

The Chief Executive set out the report, to enable sovereign councils to consider proposed governance arrangements through which they could oversee work toward local government reorganisation in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole whilst awaiting a “minded to” decision from the Secretary of State. He advised that the impact of the general election and other factors had meant a delay in the “minded to” decision and therefore the councils were facing a shortened timeframe for preparation.

In order that the new councils could still be implemented in the most efficient and effective way, the best way forward would be to establish two joint committees through which councils worked together to prepare themselves for the “minded to decision” and a legal order by the Secretary of State beginning the formally move towards new council status. Members were also advised that East Dorset and Purbeck District Council had been invited to join this committee and be part of the process.

The committee noted that the proposal suggested 2 members from Weymouth and Portland Borough Council be involved at this stage, these appointments would be politically proportional; there would also be opportunities for other councillors to engage on a task and finish basis.

The committee also noted the minute extract from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had been tabled at the meeting and agreed with the proposal to cap the number of Dorset County Councils representatives on the Dorset Area Joint Committee at six.

It was propose by Councillor J Cant seconded by Cllr R Kosior

Recommendation to Council

That the Council agrees to the establishment of a Joint Committee with the functions set out in the terms of reference at Appendix A to the standard report.

27. **Review of Members' Allowances - report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

The committee considered the report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Council's scheme of members' allowances. A decision had been deferred at Full Council on 1 June 2017 and Council had invited the Panel to reconsider its report. In accordance with the council's decision, the Panel invited all Councillors to meet with it to discuss the recommended increase in the SRA to the Chair of the Management Committee. Five members met with the Panel in 29 June 2017. A number of issues were raised, however no evidence was provided to the Panel to justify a change to the recommendation.

Members agreed that the report be referred to Full Council for consideration, without discussion.

It was proposed by Councillor J Cant seconded by Councillor J Farquharson

Recommendation to Full Council

That the report and recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances be presented to Full Council for formal consideration.

28. **Community Led Housing Fund spending plans and priorities**

The Brief holder for Housing outlined the report to allocate the community-led housing fund of £430,315 to community-led housing schemes. She explained that the funds were aimed to increase the delivery of community-led affordable homes of all tenures. The amount received was based on the number of holiday homes in the area and the affordability of housing.

Members were advised that community-led housing was, as described by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing.

The committee was informed that Portland was one such area, making progress in setting up a Community Land Trust (CLT). This emerging CLT had the potential to deliver affordable homes for local people.

Some concern was expressed regarding the risks of releasing of these funds to an emerging organisation and it was questioned whether it would be better to give land instead of capital grants. However the Housing Enabling Team Leader advised, that this process would ensure that the funds from the DCLG were being spent in accordance with the plans sent to the DCLG in February 2017. By spending and committing funds for community-led housing projects, Weymouth and Portland Borough would be in a good position to bid for further funds in the future.

It was proposed by Councillor G Taylor seconded by Councillor C James

Decision

That £430,315 of the community-led housing fund be allocated to community-led housing schemes as detailed in the report to Management Committee of 11 July 2017.

29. **Accelerating Housing Development Programme**

The Brief holder for Housing explained to the committee the Accelerating Home Building Programme. Members were asked to consider the programmes progress and the allocating of reserves to enable the action plan to be implemented including aiming to achieve completion of housing developments matching the annual Objectively Assessed Need.

The housing supply was seen nationally as a priority and to bolster resources and make better progress, it was proposed to appoint a Commercial Housing Enabler. The Action Plan appended to the report, was based on the feedback received from the Housing Finance Institute.

Overall the committee were supportive of the report and proposals, but expressed caution in respect of the expenditure for a consultant. It was important to track progress closely to ensure results.

It was proposed by Councillor G Taylor seconded by Councillor C Jame

Decision

That £50k from reserves be allocated for once off projects to the Accelerating Home Building Programme to 31 March 2019.

30. Grant request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club

The brief holder for Community Facilities presented a report setting out a grant request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club to assist with its project to construct a new clubhouse at The Marsh.

Members were advised that the project has secured a significant amount of money for the project, including a major grant from Sport England. The club had seen an increase in the cost of construction due to delays and technical complexities and was faced with the possibility of having to abandon the project.

In response to questions, the Leisure Commissioning Manager advised that he had sought assurance from the club on how they would now deliver the project.

Councillor James highlighted an individual case, which had benefited from the support and skills of the club, improving the general well-being and mental health of this individual. Members agreed that the club did bring admirable support to its local community and they were keen to support the completion of the new clubhouse

It was proposed by Councillor K Wheller seconded by Council R Nowak

Decision

- (a) That the request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club for a one-off grant of £30,000 to assist with the project to construct a new clubhouse (planning application WP/15/00296) at The Marsh, Knightsdale Road, Weymouth to be funded from the reserves already earmarked for one-off projects by approved.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director to agree the terms of a grant agreement with the Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club.

31. Proposals for a review of the Esplanade lighting scheme in Weymouth

The Brief holder of Leisure, Tourism and Harbours advised the committee that the report and recommendation before them had been superseded by a

recent meeting between himself, officers and Dorset Coastal Connections. He proposed that recommendations 1,2, and 3 now be withdrawn.

As an outcome of that meeting, Dorset Coastal Connections had indicated that they were prepared to fund the consultation report and conservation impact assessment. Once this was complete a further report to this committee would be presented in the autumn.

In their discussions, Members sought to make it clear that they were not considering bringing back the “fairy lights”; but aimed to establish a scheme that enhanced the town and the esplanade; there was also some debate with regard to the merits of an “artist” led project and a “non-artist” led project. But all members were keen to see the use of local workforce and expertise wherever possible.

It was proposed by Councillor R Kosior seconded by Councillor J Cant

Decision

- (a) That the council agrees to enter into a funding contract with Dorset County Council, as the accountable body for the Dorset Coast Forum’s Dorset Coastal Connections project, in order to benefit from a grant of £200,000 towards the development of a new lighting scheme for Weymouth Esplanade and that the Strategic Director and Corporate Manager Legal Services are given delegated authority to agree the terms of the contract.
- (b) That the council collaborates with the Dorset Coast Forum as part of the Dorset Coastal Connections project on the development of a new lighting scheme for Weymouth Esplanade.
- (c) That a further report be presented to the Management Committee on a new lighting scheme for Weymouth Esplanade in the autumn.

32. **Multiple Deprivation Areas in the Borough - The Working with You Initiative**

The Brief holder for Social Inclusion advised the committee of the update on the areas of multiple deprivation in the Borough and the Working with You initiative.

The report also proposed an extension of targeted activity to the Weymouth East ward.

Members expressed concern regarding the results of these findings and felt that Dorset County Council, as key financial stakeholders, had not done enough to address some of these serious issues. Members were keen to see if the Melcombe Regis Board project proved to be successful, if so, perhaps similar initiatives could be extended to other areas of deprivation.

As a Weymouth East Ward member and representing the council on the Health and Well-being Board, Councillor Reed advised that there was a lot of projects and initiatives taking place, but that there was “no quick fix”.

Members noted that the Borough had experienced and continues to experience significant deprivation especially in comparison with the rest of Dorset. The committee asked that the Leader and Chief Executive continue to lobby central government regarding the borough economic case.

In response to concerns about the Underhill School and Osprey Quay campus, the Chief Executive agreed to write to Dorset County Council.

Decision

That the committee approves:-

- (a) officer support for the continuation of the Working with You initiative project in the priority areas of Littlemoor, Melcomber Regis, Underhill and Westham and to approve the publication of project updates for these areas;
- (b) the extension of activity to include the Weymouth East ward, Local Super Output area of Rodwell and Chapelhay

In accordance with Rule 1, paragraph 16 of the council’s procedure rules a vote was taken to continue the meeting beyond 2.5 hours, which was approved.

33. Revision of Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy

The committee considered a report recommending changes to the council’s current Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy for Members decision pursuant to minute 152 (a) of April 2017.

The councils existing policy was introduced in 2012 following extensive research undertaken by a member working group. The aim of the policy was to ensure fairness and robustness in the giving of all grants, loans and subsidies and was not directly linked to any recent reports relating to specific existing or proposed grant funds.

Members were advised that working practice had indicated a need to review aspect of the policy to make it more efficient.

The committee supported the report and its recommendations and it was proposed by Councillor C James seconded by Councillor J Cant

Decision

- (a) That the revisions contained within the revised Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy at Appendix 1 be approved;

- (b) That the adoption of a standard grant agreement between the Council and all recipients of grants of £2,000 which will be adapted according to the organisation and amount of award be approved;
- (c) That the officer scheme of delegation be amended to give officers delegated authority to approve grants, loans and subsidies up to a value of £2,000 in consultation with the relevant brief holder(s) and ward member.

34. Annual Register of Grants, 2016-17

The committee considered a report on the overview of grants made by the council and those into the Borough including those directly received or enabled by the council through officer support or match funding in the financial year 2016/17.

Councillor Taylor reminded the committee that an audit had been carried out in 2012 and suggested this be the starting point of the proposed audit of external grant funding practice in the Borough; these options could be developed for improved success. It was also suggested that the council reconsider appointing a dedicated grants officer; however the Chief Executive highlighted to members that the council continued to be successful at attracting a variety of grants.

Decision

- (a) That the grant register and activity for the financial year 2016-17 be approved;
- (b) That an audit of external grant funding practice in the Borough be agreed so options can be developed for improvement success.

35. Shared Media Protocol

The Corporate Affairs and Continuous Improvement Brief holder presented a report giving members an opportunity to review the shared media protocol for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council.

The protocol had been in place since 2015; however since then there had been an increase in social media communication. The protocol provided clarity and agreement on who should represent the council in corporate public and media relations activity. It aligned process where this made sense, but retained local arrangements where these were important.

Members were advised that the protocol had been considered by Joint Advisory Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had suggested that in respect of "Ward matters" ward member quotes should always be sought

where possible on both a proactive and reactive basis. Members agreed with this suggestion and that the protocol be amended accordingly.

The committee welcomed the protocol and in particular, the clarity around regarding social media i.e. Facebook and twitter. Members were reminded that training, advice and support was always available from the communications team.

Decision

That the shared Media Protocol be adopted.

36. Application for Hardship Relief

The committee considered an application for hardship rate relief by Satriaales Dorset Ltd.

It was proposed by Councillor J Cant seconded by Councillor J Farquharson

Decision

That the application for Hardship Rate Relief be rejected.

37. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to report.

38. 4 Month Forward Plan

Decision

The committee received and noted the Forward Plan.

39. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

Chairman

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