



John Wright
Town Clerk

Lyme Regis Town Council

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Strategy and Finance Committee

Notice is given of a meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee to be held at the **Guildhall, Bridge Street, Lyme Regis** on Wednesday 24 April 2024 commencing at 7pm when the following business is proposed to be transacted:

John Wright
Town Clerk
19.04.24

The open and transparent proceedings of Full Council and committee meetings will be audio recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council.

If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded.

If members of the public have any queries regarding audio recording of meetings, please contact the town clerk.

Members are reminded that in reaching decisions they should take into consideration the town council's decision to declare a climate emergency and ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and beyond.

AGENDA

1. Public Forum

Twenty minutes will be made available for public comment and response in relation to items on this agenda

Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each to address the committee

2. Apologies

To receive and record apologies and reasons for absence

3. Minutes

To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 6 March 2024

4. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that if they have a disclosable pecuniary interest on their register of interests relating to any item on the agenda they are prevented from participating in any discussion or voting on that matter at the meeting and to do so would amount to a criminal offence. Similarly, if you are or become aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter under consideration at this meeting which is not on your register of interests or is in the process of being added to your register you must disclose such interest at this meeting and register it within 28 days.

5. Dispensations

To note the grant of dispensations made by the town clerk in relation to the business of this meeting

6. Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 6 March 2024

To update members on matters arising from the meeting that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues raised within the minutes of the meeting.

7. Update Report

To update members on issues previously reported to this committee

8. Strategy and Finance Objectives

To allow members to consider the committee's objectives for 2023-24

9. Review of Standing Orders

To allow members to review the council's standing orders

10. Review of Financial Regulations

To allow members to consider the council's revised financial regulations

11. The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure

To allow members to undertake the annual review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, in accordance with standing order 5.j.xix

12. The Annual Review of the Complaints' Policy and Procedure

To allow members to undertake the annual review of the complaints' policy and procedure, in accordance with standing order 5.j.xvii

To allow members to consider the volume and nature of complaints received

13. Information Policy

To undertake the annual Information Policy review

14. Equality and Diversity Policy

To allow members to review the equality and diversity policy

15. Debt Management Policy and Procedure

To allow members to review debt management policy and procedure

16. Debt Management Policy and Procedure

To allow members to review debt management policy and procedure

17. Review of Arrangements with other Local Authorities, Not-For-Profit Bodies, and Businesses

To review the arrangements Lyme Regis Town Council has with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies, and businesses

18. Appointment of Signatories for Wilkinson Legacy account

To allow members to approve revised signatories for the Wilkinson Legacy account

19. List of Payments

To inform members of the payments made in the months of November and December 2023

20. Investments and Cash Holdings

To inform members of the council's current reserve position

21. Debtors' Report

To inform members of outstanding debts and the steps being taken to recover them

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded while members consider this item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

22. Exempt Business

To move that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business in view of the likely disclosure of confidential matters about information relating to an individual, and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

a) Agenda item 21 – Debtors' Report

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2024

Present

Chairman: Cllr P. May

Councillors: Cllr B. Bawden, Cllr S. Cockerell, Cllr R. Doney, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr P. Evans, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr D. Ruffle, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr R. Smith, Cllr G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: N. Cleal (finance manager), M. Green (deputy town clerk) A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

23/86/SF

Public Forum

O. Chuter

O. Chuter spoke in relation to agenda item 11, Replacement Mini-Golf Building. She asked if the council may be able to look into relocating the indoor rowing centre over the summer months from the Jubilee Pavilion to the Langmoor Room, in order to continue already established indoor rowing classes. She said documentation had been forwarded to members and she wanted to confirm this had been read and received by members of the committee.

The deputy town clerk confirmed all correspondence relating to the indoor rowing centre had been emailed to members.

O. Chuter said the indoor rowing centre had been established for a couple of years and had been successfully growing month by month. She said a separate proposal had already been submitted to enable this to continue. She said they currently had over 90 gig members and non-gig members who regularly used the centre on a pay-as-you-go basis. She said the demographics of those who attended varied considerably and benefits in particular included social participation, maintaining and developing fitness, rehabilitation and mental wellbeing. O. Chuter said instructor led classes were held five days a week, with many users benefitting from the close proximity to home and work. She said the gig club also used the machines to train seven days a week over the winter, then during the summer when the weather reduced the outdoor gig rowing. For future, she said she was keen to strengthen the links with local schools and youth services to develop healthy hobbies and interests within the younger population in the area. She said the Woodroffe School and Lym Valley Scouts had already used the facilities and had been in touch about learning more rowing. O Chuter said she was keen to forge links with local GPs to encourage those who would ordinarily struggle to access exercise, and to provide exercise

specific to women, from those with newborn babies to older generations to improve self-esteem, lessen anxiety and provide avenues for returning to exercise.

Cllr D. Ruffle and Cllr G. Stammers arrived at 7.04pm.

O. Chuter said she was keen to do classes in the evenings to incorporate more people who worked. She said they had developed a strong community asset and she had seen how this had helped many individuals. She said she remained passionate about maintaining and developing this so more locals could benefit, plus helping to create a healthy, happy local population.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked O. Chuter what the indoor rowing centre would have done if the Langmoor Room hadn't been available and asked if they'd looked elsewhere.

O. Chuter said the initiative had developed over the last couple of years but if the room wasn't available, it wouldn't have happened and there wouldn't be 90 people involved. She said they had looked elsewhere but it was too expensive to operate on this level and people wouldn't be able to afford the costs that would then be passed on.

23/87/SF Apologies for Absence

Cllr C. Aldridge
Cllr C. Reynolds – illness

23/88/SF Minutes

Proposed by D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 were **ADOPTED**.

23/89/SF Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr B. Larcombe declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, Update Report.

23/90/SF Dispensations

There were none.

23/91/SF Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 24 January 2024

Park and Ride 2024

The deputy town clerk said due to recent weather, the land used for park and ride remained exceptionally wet and unless there were a number of dry days between now and Easter, the landowner was quite pessimistic about being able to operate, at least for the first few days of the holiday. He said the landowner was keeping a close eye on the situation.

A National Park for Dorset

Cllr B. Larcombe said as the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Council (DAPTC) representative, he had spoken to them about their role in gathering a collective view of the National Park proposal and they were supportive of this. He said the issue had been included in the programme for the networking event on 7 March 2024.

23/92/SF Update Report

Second Homes and Empty Properties Council Tax Premium

Cllr B. Bawden said the question of how the premium affected chalets was subject to government legislation but the indication was they would be exempt, although this was yet to confirmed.

23/93/SF Strategy and Finance Objectives

Cllr B. Larcombe asked why there was no update on the office refurbishment.

The deputy town clerk said there was no update at the time the agenda went out but this would be reported to Full Council. However, he said good progress had been made and there appeared to be no major obstacles to the council moving to St Michael's Business Centre later this year.

23/94/SF Governance Arrangements

Cllr P. May said this item was on the agenda as a majority of members had written to him about the council considering the membership of committees, the committee structure and the minutes of meetings. He said the council could make recommendations for the next administration to consider.

Members gave their views on the three issues mentioned.

The majority of members felt merging committees would lead to longer meetings and poor decision-making, that restricting numbers on committees would lead to longer Full Council meetings when other members wanted to have their say, and shorter minutes restricted just to the decisions or with a summary of the debate and no members' names mentioned would be preferable.

Several members also requested that minutes were circulated to members within one or two weeks of the meetings.

Several members felt these issues should not be discussed this late in the administration as the changes would be imposed on the new administration. However, there was support for members using their expertise to provide recommendations to the new administration.

The town clerk said there were lots of other governance issues that were not included in the report and he felt all these issues should be considered as a whole. He said in

May 2019, the previous administration recommended to this administration it should look at governance and a working group was set up to do this. He said the council decided to keep things the same and the model was similar to most other councils. However, there were councils that did things different, such as Sherborne who had portfolio holders and greater delegation to officers. The town clerk reminded members a consultant would be commissioned early in the new administration to work with members, when both structural and cultural suggestions were likely to be made.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe to recommend to the upcoming council that it may wish to examine the committee structure, based on the views the Strategy and Finance Committee made, and minutes should be shorter, kept to the salient points and where practical, anonymised.

Cllr B. Bawden asked if the recommendation could be amended to include that minutes should be sent to members within one or two weeks.

The town clerk said his concern was the committee would try to amend the minutes and there would be debates with individual members about what should be included. He said he didn't have an issue with providing the minutes, as long as there were no alterations.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to recommend to the upcoming council that it may wish to examine the committee structure, based on the views the Strategy and Finance Committee made; that minutes should be shorter, kept to the salient points and where practical, anonymised; and that minutes should be circulated to members within one or two weeks of the meeting.

23/95/SF

Further Land Movement at Ware Cliff

The deputy town clerk said little work was done on site on the first day due to the weather. Since the report was written, there had been further land movement on western beach behind the beach huts. He said the work done so far wouldn't cost £20k but he asked members to approve expenditure up to this amount because there were likely to be more works necessary in the coming weeks.

Cllr B. Larcombe said this was what the council had a reserve for and he would endorse the money spent and give scope for further expenditure.

The deputy town clerk said the work was being carried out in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and there would be limits on what the council could do in this area. He said some people in Natural England would say nature should be allowed to take its course and would not support the council in carrying out large amounts of earth works, even if it was to protect property. He added that it may reach a point when Natural England doesn't permit any works, even if it meant losing chalets.

Cllr R. Smith suggested there be a budget allocation for dealing with land slippage, as he couldn't see the problem going away. He suggested an allocation of £20k per year.

In response to a member question, the deputy town clerk said the town council owned up to and beyond the top of the slope and all the land that had moved recently was owned by the council. Over the top of the slope, the land was owned by Natural England.

The town clerk said he didn't feel a budget allocation was necessary as there were appropriate procedures in the council's standing orders and financial regulations to allow officers to authorise this kind of expenditure in consultation with the mayor and relevant chairman, and then report back to members.

It was proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr G. Turner to set aside an allowance of £20k a year to deal with land movement.

This motion was not carried.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the further land movement at Ware Cliff and the emergency works undertaken to protect properties; to approve the unbudgeted expenditure estimated at up to £20,000 + VAT incurred in undertaking the emergency works that have already taken place and those works which need to be undertaken to deal with further slippage; to retrospectively approve the exception to standing orders in the appointment of Axminster Excavations to carry out these works because of the specialist nature of the works and their ability to mobilise and complete the works at very short notice; and to approve the appointment of Lewis Brown Ltd to carry out the future monitoring of ground markers at Monmouth Beach to commence on the planned withdrawal of the current contractor, West Country Land Surveys Ltd, in autumn 2024 and note the exception to standing orders in their appointment because of the specialist nature of the works and because they have already been through a competitive process in respect of similar works in the seafront gardens.

23/96/SF

Replacement Mini-Golf Building

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Cllr D. Ruffle said option 1 – reducing the tender price for the already approved building without making changes – seemed the sensible option because for the cost of what the mini golf took in income each year, a new building could be provided. He didn't think staff would like to be based in Langmoor Room permanently.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he was keen to use the Langmoor Room as a staff rest room and felt staff would be happy there. He asked what remedial work would be required to the room and said this work would have to be done regardless of what it was used for.

The deputy town clerk said the work included the replacement of the entrance doors, the windows were sub-standard and there were significant issues and potential leaks on the flat roof. He said different standards would be applied if the room was permanently occupied by staff and the council's duty of care in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) were even greater to staff than they were to others.

The deputy town clerk said if members went for option 1, there would need to be two interim arrangements while the works were taking place; one for the amenities staff to operate out of and the provision of the Langmoor Room for gardening staff. In response to the indoor rowing centre's request, he said this couldn't be accommodated this summer because it would be used for staff.

It was agreed officers would inform the indoor rowing centre they couldn't be accommodated this summer and future arrangements would need to be considered by the new administration.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to proceed with reducing the tender price for the already approved mini-golf building without making changes which would result in the need for a fundamental redesign and the reapplication for permissions and consent with resultant delays, increases in fees and build costs.

23/97/SF

Jubilee Pavilion

Cllr R. Doney asked why it would be the responsibility of Visitor Support to have their own public liability insurance as this hadn't been an issue when it was previously run as a welcome point.

The town clerk said the welcome point was going to be operated by a separate body, not the council, so they needed to have their own public liability insurance. However, officers had brokered an advantageous deal for the group.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if the cap on utilities would be based on assumptions of continued use or current use.

The town clerk said officers would assess what the consumption would be and this would become the cap.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to agree the principles of an agreement for the future use and management of the Jubilee Pavilion, and to agree £3,000 of unbudgeted expenditure from the 2023-24 budget for costs to reinstate the Jubilee Pavilion as a welcome point.

Cllr P. Evans said as changeover day was on Friday, he suggested Visitor Support were asked to consider opening the welcome point on a Friday as well as weekends. He also asked that a report was taken to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee to review how it was going and to ask Alan Vian to attend those meetings.

23/98/SF Budget Performance, 1 April – January 2024

The finance manager said the forecast year-end cash position of £1,314,400 was an improvement of £172k since it was last reported to members in October 2023. She said these figures were based on actual income and expenditure until the end of January 2024 and this position could further improve in the last two months of the financial year.

The finance manager said following the earlier decision regarding the mini-golf building, the updated year-end cash position was £1,231,400 as an additional £83k was allocated to the project.

The town clerk said this decision meant the council wouldn't have as much money to allocate to additional projects in 2024-25, but this was to be discussed later in the agenda.

23/99/SF CCTV Project

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr S. Cockerell, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the progress and spend against the 2023/24 budget allocation for CCTV, to approve a 2023/24 budget of up to £29,000 to cover the estimated CCTV project overspend and to approve £9,000 from the 2024-25 budget to renew nine seafront cameras and connect them to Dorset Council's control centre.

Cllr D. Sarson asked what a realistic timescale would be for the installation of the camera at the skatepark as members of the Allotments Association were keen to have it in place.

The deputy town clerk said June or July 2024 was a likely timescale.

23/100/SF Priority Two Objectives and Projects

The town clerk said £83k had been approved the amenities hut overspend and an additional £9,000 had been allocated to the CCTV project, so there was now £32k available for priority two projects. However, officers believed the cash position would improve by the end of the financial year so there could be scope to release funds for further projects. He said officers could bring a report back to members early in the new administration to confirm if there were more funds available.

The town clerk said to help members, he could suggest projects which were more time sensitive. He said the secure card link to the amenities hut was critical because there would be no wifi provision after 31 January 2025; the bursary scheme had been popular and if no further budget was made available, these would stop from 1 April 2024; and there would be some work arising from the Traffic and Travel Working Group, including the 20mph proposal, which was already in progress, but he thought £10k would be sufficient.

The town clerk said seasonal evening seafront litter collection was important but the council had struggled to recruit to this posts to undertake this work in the past. Officers

believed there was scope for existing staff to cover the peak periods during Easter and Whitsun, so it would only be necessary to employ staff from June to August, therefore reducing the cost. He said officers could have discussions with staff about doing this on an overtime basis.

Cllr R. Smith asked if a 4G connection could be used for the secure card reader.

The deputy town clerk said he had previously received a quote for £12k for a hard-wired connection but this may not be needed and he was looking at all potential means of securing a card link. He hoped this figure could be reduced.

Cllr R. Smith suggested the defibrillator at the mini golf be added to the list of projects.

Proposed by Cllr P. May and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the following priority two objectives: a secure card link to the mini golf hut, the continuation of bursaries, recommendations from the Traffic and Travel Working Group with a revised figure of £10k, and the defibrillator at the mini golf; to ask officers to explore the option of having seafront litter collection staff for June to August and to discuss with existing staff the opportunity of overtime for other peak periods; and to instruct officers to bring a report to members in the first quarter of 2024-25 with the year-end position with a view to releasing funding for further priority two projects.

23/101/SF Church Cliff Beach Bathing Water Designation

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr R. Smith, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to delegate the survey response for the Church Cliff Beach bathing water designation to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to the town clerk in consultation with three members of the Strategy and Finance Committee.

Cllrs B. Bawden, S. Cockerell and P. May agreed to work with the town clerk.

23/102/SF List of Payments

Cllr B. Larcombe asked why the charge for electricity at the cadet hut was the same as other units as it wasn't in use.

Officers said it was used as a store but it was where the electric vehicles were charged and there was also computer equipment in the building because the operations supervisor sometimes worked there.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr P. Evans, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the schedule of payments in January 2024 for the sum of £132,691.46.

23/103/SF Investments and Cash Holdings

Members noted the report.

23/104/SF Accreted Land and Trailer Park at Monmouth Beach

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

23/105/SF Debtors

Proposed by Cllr R. Smith and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

23/106/SF Exempt Business

a) Accreted Land and Trailer Park at Monmouth Beach

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if officers were content this was the right figure for the rent and asked if there was a sense of the impact it would have on people who used the land and whether DC would pass the increase onto them.

The deputy town clerk said a valuer had provided these figures and the increase was based on RPI over the period since the last increase. He said when the council agreed a phased approach to any increase, it had stipulated to DC the phased benefit should be passed directly to the land users. However, he didn't know what DC was proposing to charge users because it said it was confidential information. He said if the council was to consider an amount lower than the valuer's suggestion, it would have to be by way of a grant to DC.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to note the received consent from Natural England for the 'harbour use' of the town council-owned accreted land at Monmouth Beach; to approve the granting of a new lease to Dorset Council's for its use of both the above land and the adjacent 'trailer park' land with a term of five years and at an initial rent of £14,100 for 2024/25, increasing to £19,200 in 2025/26 and, thereafter, increasing by RPI as calculated at September each preceding year; and that the cost of any subsequent applications for consent to Natural England be wholly met by Dorset Council as a condition of any future lease renewals.

b) Debtors

Members noted the report.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm.

DRAFT

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 6 March 2024

Title: Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 24 January 2024

Purpose of the Report

To update members on matters arising from the meeting that are not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda and to allow members to seek further information on issues raised within the minutes of the meeting.

Recommendation

Members note the report and raise any other issues on the minutes of the meeting that they require further information on.

Report

23/91/SF – Matters arising from the minutes of the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting held on 24 January 2024

Park and Ride 2024

As per the email to members on 22 March 2024, following discussions with the landowner of the Charmouth Road site, it was decided to delay the opening of the park and ride site until after Easter due to a waterlogged field.

It is hoped the service can operate for the May Bank Holiday weekend from 4 to 6 May 2024 and again for the Whitsun week from 25 May to 2 June 2024. Subsequent dates will be as agreed, ground conditions permitting.

The AA was notified and agreed to delay the erection of the advanced signage until 3 May 2024.

The planning application for improved on-site facilities was approved by Dorset Council's Planning Committee on 18 April 2024 and a verbal update will be provided at this meeting.

23/94/SF – Governance Arrangements

The length of council and committee minutes has been significantly reduced and where possible, anonymised. Minutes are also being circulated to members within two weeks of the meeting, where possible.

23/95/SF – Further Land Movement at Ware Cliff

Land movement seems to have stopped for the time being, but the situation is under constant review.

Some day huts on Western Beach will be moved seawards very slightly on 22 April 2024 because the land to their rear has moved sufficiently to pose a possible risk to them.

Lewis Brown will take over land monitoring in this area from autumn 2024 as previously agreed.

The application to Natural England for consent for the works undertaken to date will be made when there is reasonable confidence that the land situation has stabilised, and no further works will be required in the immediate future.

23/96/SF – Replacement Mini-Golf Building

The temporary building is on site, as are temporary toilets. The card reader connection is being finalised.

A further site meeting is taking place with the contractor on 25 April 2024, after which it is hoped to make an almost immediate start. The initial works will involve site establishment and the demolition of the existing building. The indicative programme extends to 18 weeks at present.

In the meantime, the mini golf has had a very busy start to the season.

23/97/SF – Jubilee Pavilion

The welcome point at the Jubilee Pavilion opened over the Easter weekend as planned.

Tye contractors have confirmed they will be on site to complete the roof works on Monday 22 April 2024, provided the weather remains dry. Given a suitable 'weather window', the remaining works should only take 1-2 days to complete.

23/99/SF – CCTV Project

Five of the six new cameras are installed and operational, albeit with local monitoring facilities only. The sixth camera will be installed as soon as the required infrastructure at the skatepark has planning permission and is installed, and the electricity supply has been provided. The planning application has been submitted and is waiting to be determined.

The nine existing cameras along the seafront are being replaced, as agreed by members.

The main outstanding issue is to agree the terms and technical specifications for and to establish the link to the Dorchester control centre, where remote monitoring can take place. We are still waiting to meet with Dorset Council to finalise details. This has been an outstanding issue since last December and the matter has been escalated.

23/101/SF – Church Cliff Beach Bathing Water Designation

The council responded to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs's survey on the proposed Church Cliff Beach bathing water designation, broadly outlining the council's support.

John Wright
Town clerk
April 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Update Report

Purpose of Report

To update members on issues previously reported to this committee

Recommendation

Members note the report

Report

Sand Harvesting and Beach Replenishment

The work was completed prior to Easter as programmed. Dorset Council also undertook some unplanned works to improve the profile of the shingle beach.

Although the beach profile was affected by multiple storms combined with high tides in the period immediately after the works were completed, the current profile has improved, although some sand has undoubtedly been 'lost',

This council's staff undertook work utilising the tractor to reduce the sand 'cliff' immediately after the storms, but the profile is now considered acceptable, and no further work is planned at this stage.

The comment about the potential benefits of extending the Cobb Gate groyne have been passed on to Dorset Council's engineer and have also been made in correspondence.

A meeting took place on 12 April 2024 with Ed Carter, who now has responsibility within Dorset Council for more strategic aspects of harbour use and management. In this respect, he has taken over some of the former responsibilities of Ken Buchan. These responsibilities include the Harbour Revision Order, which has now finished its consultation process and is awaiting signature.

Car park charges

There have been some issues in implementing the new car park tariffs, as follows:

- The new tariffs in Monmouth/Cabanya were due to be applied on 1 April 2024 but were delayed due to the lead time (six weeks) required by Flowbird, our contractor, to create the new software. They were contacted at the end of February but could only apply the changes on 17 April 2024. Consequently, due to remaining on the old tariff (£1.60 per hour), there has been lost income (new tariff £1.90 per hour) for the first 17 days of April. A loss of £6,087.74.

- There has also been an issue with the JustPark charging hours in Monmouth/Cabanya. The charging hours were due to change from 6pm to 9pm but the installation was applied late on 8 April 2024. There will have been some lost income due to this delay.
- The new tariff for ticket machines at Woodmead was applied late on 4 April 2024 because the original software did not run as expected on 1 April 2024. There was a loss of income due to this delay. A loss of £508.58.
- Vehicles parking at Woodmead were overcharged on JustPark between 25 and 31 March 2024 due to the new tariffs being put in place too early. An overcharge of £1,087.12.
- On the implementation date of the new charges at Monmouth/Cabanya, 17 April 2024, the machines were incorrectly overcharging people when purchasing multiple hours. The machines were switched off and customers were encouraged to pay via JustPark. Penalty charge notices were not issued during this time. The issue has been resolved.

Mark Green
Deputy town clerk
April 2024

Matt Adamson-Drage
Operations manager

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Strategy and Finance Objectives

Purpose

To allow members to consider the committee's objectives for 2023-24

Recommendation

Members note the report

Background

1. During the 2023-24 budget-setting process a budget estimate was identified against approved projects.

Report

2. The objectives have been assigned to committees for review. This committee has objectives which, when approved, will be delegated to other committee; principally, Town Management and Highways.
3. This committee's 2023-24 objectives, along with the allocated budget, completion date and lead officer, are at **appendix 8A**.
4. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

John Wright
Town clerk
April 2024

APPENDIX 8A

Objective	Budget £K	Completion date	Lead officer	Comments
Determine the future use of the Jubilee Pavilion		<p>Apr '23</p> <p>August '23</p> <p>January 2024</p>	MG	<p>A report was considered at the Full Council meeting on 17 May 2023 to allow members to consider the future use of the Jubilee Pavilion. It was agreed the pavilion would be used as a non-commercial public facility. Officers are preparing an advert, inviting expressions of interest from local community groups for its use.</p> <p>Advert inviting expressions of interest issued, deadline on 6 September 2023. Expressions of interest considered by this committee on 11 October 2023.</p> <p>Preferred user chosen – Alan Vian to run a welcome point for visitor and a space for events. A detailed report on how this will be managed was considered by the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee on 10 January 2024. An agreement to be drawn up between Alan Vian and the council and this will be taken to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee on 21 February 2024.</p> <p>Alan Vian intends to take over use of the pavilion on 30 March 2024.</p> <p>At the previous meeting of this committee, members agreed the principles of an agreement with 'Visitor Support' and expenditure of £3,000 to make some basic improvements to the pavilion.</p>
Achieve an unqualified external auditor's letter		Sept '23	JW	The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was submitted to the external auditor BDO LLP by the deadline on 30 June 2023 and the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited

				<p>AGAR 2022-23 has been published on the council's website within the required timeframe.</p> <p>The external auditor has concluded its review of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2023. The comments from the auditor were as follows:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.</i></p> <p>This will be formally reported to the Full Council on 25 October 2023.</p> <p>On 25 October 2023, the council approved and accepted the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the external auditor's certificate (Notice of Conclusion of Audit) for the year ended 31 March 2023, and notes the actions required at the conclusion of the review have been undertaken.</p>
Complete Strawberry Fields' option appraisal	10		MG	<p>This is an outstanding objective from 2022-23. An options' appraisal on Strawberry Fields is informed by a long-term arrangement for the Charmouth Road park and ride site. Officers aim to be able to bring a report to members in autumn 2023.</p> <p>Submission made to Dorset Council under 'Call for Sites' to put the site forward for either park and ride or</p>

				leisure and recreational use. Further work was on hold pending the outcome of the planning application for the existing park and ride site.
Comply with standing orders and financial regulations		Mar '24	JW	Compliance is ongoing. Breaches will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee or Full Council. Two breaches of financial regulations reported to this committee on 12 July 2023.
Retain the General Power of Competence		Mar '24	JW	The council confirmed at the Annual Meeting on 31 May 2023 it meets the criteria for the General Power of Competence.
Ensure the timely renewal of policies & procedures		Mar '24	AM	The council considers the following policies and documents every year: standing orders, financial regulations, freedom of information and data compliance, complaints, press and media. Every year, the council is also required to ascertain compliance with the General Power of Competence, make appointments to committees, agree terms of reference and a scheme of delegation, review the system of internal control and risk, make appointments to external bodies, review subscriptions, and confirm insurance arrangements. These requirements are scheduled throughout the year for consideration by the Full Council or Strategy and Finance Committee. All other policies and procedures are considered by the relevant committee every three years. All policy reviews will be allocated to the relevant committee during 2023-24. All outstanding policy reviews have been allocated to meetings during this cycle.
Perform in accordance with the 2023-24 budget		Mar '24	JW	The Strategy and Finance Committee considers budget performance, reserves, investments, and bad

				debts throughout the year. Unbudgeted expenditure will be reported through the committee structure and will be approved by council resolution. Budget performance reports considered by this committee on 12 July and 11 October 2023 and 6 March 2024.
Implement a strategy for the management of & investment in the council's assets		Mar '24	MG	<p>There were no responses to the council's invitation to quote. Further attempts were made to attract quotes in June 2023.</p> <p>The intention is to complete the work in house utilising the capacity created by the agreed two-year temporary post to support the deputy town clerk with property, asset management and project work.</p> <p>The property and projects assistant has been appointed (starting in post on 9 October 2023) and will work with the deputy town clerk to develop an asset management plan.</p> <p>Property and projects assistant has developed an asset spreadsheet as part of the Local Government Transparency Code and this will help formulate the strategy. An 'asset team' has been put together led by the deputy town clerk and the team will meet on 6 March 2023 to discuss the completion of the plan. The intention is to produce a focussed plan which is primarily a 'working tool' and which identifies the council's assets using plan-based mapping, the frequency of their inspection, maintenance, any larger one-off investments required and the estimated timing and sums involved to inform the short and medium-term budget-setting processes.</p>
Determine the future use of the council's offices		Mar '23	MG	A report was considered by the Strategy and Finance Committee on 22 March 2023 and its recommendation was approved by resolution of the Full Council on 5 April 2023, i.e., 'to regard the

			<p>existing council office as the first option for the office accommodation and to cost the works, but if this option is out of the question, the council will consider St Michael's Business Centre.'</p> <p>It was resolved by the Full Council on 25 October 2023 'to take out a short-term lease of Unit 2 to safeguard its availability' and 'not to proceed with the project to refurbish the council office and to look for alternative office facilities, subject to a further report to the Full Council meeting on 25 October 2023'.</p> <p>It was further resolved to 'endorse the recommendation from the Strategy and Finance Committee not to proceed with the project to refurbish the council office and to look for alternative office facilities and 'to defer consideration of whether to include a sum of £50k in the 2024-25 budget for urgent repairs to the western wall of the Guildhall passageway and the roadside first floor window adjacent to the office building to the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting on 29 November 2023'.</p> <p>On 7 February, Full Council resolved 'to relocate the council's office facilities to alternative ground-floor accommodation at the St Michael's Business Centre, Lyme Regis, with a target date for relocation of autumn 2024, and to dispose of the council's existing office building and site, excluding car parking, on the most financially advantageous basis and with a target date for any sale of no later than spring 2025.</p> <p>Discussions are ongoing with Lyme Regis Development Trust and Lyme Regis Museum about</p>
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				<p>the precise basis of the move to St Michael's Business Centre. Quotes are being sought from five commercial agents for proposals to assist with the marketing and disposal of the existing office.</p> <p>Report considered by Full Council on 13 March 2024 and noted by members. Proposals from agents for the marketing and disposal of this site are being sought and will be brought to members in due course.</p>
Review the Transparency Code & GDPR compliance		Mar '24	AM/JS	<p>Work was scheduled to commence in September 2023.</p> <p>Work is well underway on the Transparency Code and we aim to publish the information on the website in early-2024. Work on compliance with GDPR will then commence.</p>
Progress the digital office: document storage, planning tool, digital asset mapping		Mar '24	JW	<p>Work was scheduled to commence in September 2023.</p> <p>Work will commence when Transparency Code and GDPR project is complete. It will start with digital asset mapping, linked to the asset plan (see above), probably using the newly purchased 'Parish Online' mapping facility.</p>

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Review of Standing Orders

Purpose

To allow members to review the council's standing orders

Recommendation

Members approve the standing orders

Background

1. The standing orders detail how the council organises its affairs and functions. It covers procedures during meetings, financial matters not covered in the council's financial regulations, delegation to council officers and other matters. Sections of the standing orders are mandatory.
2. The council's existing standing orders requires, under 5.j. x, annual 'review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations': standing orders were last reviewed by this committee on 10 May 2023 and subsequently adopted by Full Council on 17 May 2023.

Report

3. The council's standing orders are based on a model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) but with additions and amendments to reflect this council's custom and practice and policy decisions.
4. The proposed standing orders are at **appendix 9A**.
5. There are two proposed amendments:
 - Standing order 8 (voting on appointments) – A new standing order will be added at 8c. as follows: 'A councillor does not have to be present at a meeting to seek election to an office of the council or a committee.'
 - Standing order 18j. and 18k (financial controls and procurement) – public sector procurement is governed by several regulations, which set out procedures for the award of high value contracts. The new threshold values for public contracts came into effect on 1 January 2024. Amendments to the thresholds are shown in red on the appendix.

6. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Adrienne Mullins
Support services manager
April 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Review of Financial Regulations

Purpose of Report

To allow members to consider the council's revised financial regulations

Recommendation

Members consider and approve the proposed financial regulations

Background

1. The financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial management of the council.
3. The council's standing orders requires, under 5.j. x, annual 'review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations'.
4. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) produced a revised model of its financial regulations in 2016.
5. In 2022, officers reviewed NALC's model financial regulations and produced a new set of financial regulations that incorporated revisions in legislation and good practice.
6. Following a review by this committee on 10 May 2023, the council's financial regulations were subsequently adopted by the Full Council on 17 May 2023.

Report

7. The proposed financial regulations are at **appendix 10A**.
8. There is a proposed change to paragraph 8.2 regarding treasury management, which is shown in red in the appendix.
9. The only other proposed change reflects the changes made to standing orders related to threshold values for public contracts. These changes are shown in red in footnote 2 in the appendix.
10. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
April 2024

Financial Regulations

1. General

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and has a sound system of financial control which facilitates the effective exercise of the authority's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. These financial regulations are designed to demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities.
- 1.2 The responsible financial officer (RFO) is a statutory office and shall be appointed by the council. The town clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly. The RFO, acting under the policy direction of the council, shall be responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs in accordance with proper practices. He/she shall determine on behalf of the Council its accounting records, and accounting control systems. The RFO shall ensure the accounting control systems are observed and that the accounting records of the council are maintained and kept up-to-date in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information as required by council.
- 1.4 At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council shall conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.5 In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and then in force.
- 1.6 In these financial regulations, the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- 1.7 Deliberate or wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.8 Members of the council are expected to follow the instructions within these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.

2. Annual Estimates

- 2.1 Detailed estimates of all income and expenditure including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year shall be prepared by the RFO in the form of a budget to be considered by council. At the same time, the RFO will produce a five-year forecast of income and expenditure.

2.2 The council shall review the budget not later than the end of December each year and shall set the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved budget.

2.3 The annual budgets shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3. Budgetary Control

3.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

3.2 Unless under the circumstances outlined in paragraph 3.4, no expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate.

3.3 The finance manager shall regularly provide the council with a summary of receipts and payments to date along with a forecast for the financial year. The statement will compare expenditure and income against the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least four times a year; as soon as practicable after 30 June, 30 September and 31 December, and as soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March.

3.4 The clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £10,000. The clerk shall report the action to the council as soon as practicable thereafter. Should expenditure above this limit be anticipated before authority can be obtained at the next scheduled council meeting, the chairman of the council should convene an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council to seek authority for the expenditure. Where possible, the council will maintain a reserve to cover such eventualities.

3.5 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year; they should be moved to the council's general reserve, or to a specific reserve in the case of on-going projects.

3.6 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.

3.7 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4. Accounting and Audit

4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 and any subsequent amendments thereto.

- 4.2 On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the RFO will verify bank reconciliations for all accounts. The RFO will sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar documents) as evidence of verification.
- 4.3 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the council, including the annual return, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the council.
- 4.4 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the accounts of the council contained in the annual governance and accountability return (as supplied by the auditor appointed from time to time by the Audit Commission) and shall submit the annual governance and accountability return for approval and authorisation by the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 as amended, or set by the auditor.
- 4.5 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 and any subsequent amendments thereto. Any officer or member of the council shall, if the RFO or internal auditor requires, make available such documents of the council which appear to the RFO or internal auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or internal auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or internal auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.6 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work required by the council in accordance with proper practices. The internal auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the operations of the council, shall report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report in respect of each financial year. To demonstrate objectivity and independence, the internal auditor shall be free from any conflicts of interest and have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 4.7 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books, and vouchers and for the display or publication of any Notices and Statements of Account required by Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 4.8 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from the internal or external auditor, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative nature.
- 4.9 The council shall carry out a review of the effectiveness of internal audit on an annual basis in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 and any subsequent amendments thereto.

5. Banking Arrangements and Cheques

- 5.1 The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council and be regularly reviewed for efficiency. The bank mandate will include the mayor, deputy mayor, chairman and vice chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee. The bank mandate for members will be amended on election to these offices.

- 5.2 A schedule of payments made, forming part of the agenda for the meeting shall be prepared by the finance manager. Petty cash reimbursement will be reported as a total when reimbursement takes place, unless this exceeds £200 per month, when full details will be provided. The relevant invoices will be made available for inspection at the council's offices. If the schedule is in order, it shall be approved by a resolution of the council.
- 5.3 Payments under £25,000 (other than petty cash or debit card as per paragraph 5.6) should normally be paid through online banking using BACS; two authorisers are required to make payments. The authorisers are the town clerk, deputy town clerk, finance manager, operations manager and support services manager. The only exception is where a creditor is unable to provide their banking details.
- 5.4 Payments over £25,000 should be paid by cheque and authorised by two persons: a member and the RFO or two members; email authorisations are acceptable.
- 5.5 Cheques drawn on the bank account shall be signed by two authorised signatories, i.e., members of the council and authorised officers.
- 5.6 The bank debit card can be used for payments up to £1,000, providing two of the authorisers from 5.3 approve payment.
- 5.7 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the authorised officers to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.8 The RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items, provided that a list of such payments is submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the council or Strategy and Finance Committee.
- 5.9 In respect of grants, the council will approve expenditure within set limits.
- 5.10 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

6. Payments of Accounts

- 6.1 The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments
- 6.2 All payments shall be effected by BACS, cheque, debit card, direct debit or other order drawn on the council's bankers.
- 6.3 Payments should normally be made against authorised invoices after the receipt of goods and services; the following exceptions apply:
 - 6.3.1 Payments using the debit card (see paragraph 5.6) may be made in advance of the receipt of goods and/or services.

- 6.3.2 Some new suppliers of goods and/or services may not grant the council credit. If the council still needs to go ahead with the order, payment may be made in advance of receipt of the goods or services using a pro forma invoice. A full invoice must be produced by the supplier and retained by the council after receipt of the goods/services.
- 6.3.3 Some smaller suppliers may require an advance or deposit to be paid (to allow the purchase of materials, for example). The finance manager must obtain references to minimise the risk of loss to the council, and authorise an advance or deposit. In such event, an invoice from the supplier will be dual authorised in the same manner, and a deposit paid prior to receipt of goods or services.
- 6.4 All payments, where the invoice is not disputed, should be made within payment terms, and earlier if practical and cost effective.
- 6.5 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and finally certified for payment by the town clerk, deputy town clerk or finance manager. The officer who placed the order shall certify that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.6 The finance team shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetical accuracy and shall post them to the appropriate expenditure heading. They shall take all steps to settle invoices submitted within payment terms.
- 6.7 The finance team may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other minor expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the finance team with a claim for reimbursement: operational floats, for example, in respect of the amenity area may be maintained as necessary. Petty cash should only be used for minor expenditure items and where no other payment method is appropriate.
- 6.8 Payment for other supplies or other obligatory payments such as business rates may be made by variable direct debit provided the instructions are signed by two authorised bank signatories and any payments are reported to council.
- 6.9 No employee or councillor should disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.10 Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, preferably off-site.
- 6.11 The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.12 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking, may only be changed on written confirmation by the supplier, which may be by email.

7. Payment of Salaries

- 7.1 As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the current rules of PAYE and

National Insurance. Salaries shall be as agreed by council. Progression through the salary scales is delegated to the town clerk, with the exception of the town clerk, deputy town clerk, operations manager, finance manager and support services manager, where progression through the salary scale is on the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee.

- 7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available council meeting.
- 7.3 Payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary reductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- 7.3.1 by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know
 - 7.3.2 by the internal auditor
 - 7.3.3 by the external auditor
 - 7.3.4 by any person authorised under the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.4 The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.5 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the council.

8. Treasury Management

- 8.1 Lyme Regis Town Council aims to hold a minimum reserve of 50% of budgeted income. With the approval of the council, this reserve can be varied in response to external and internal events, e.g., major programmed expenditure, financial uncertainty. In addition to this reserve, the council also holds surplus funds as a result of the timing of income and expenditure. It is important that such funds are invested prudently with regard to the council's fiduciary responsibility to local council taxpayers the priority for security and the liquidity of investments.
- 8.2 The council will undertake a review of its investments and loans, **reporting to the chairman and vice chairman of the Strategy and Finance Committee** ~~as part of the budget setting process~~ and determine its appetite for investment risk, i.e., low, medium or high. **This will be reported to the council annually.** This approach may be varied by the council from time to time as circumstances dictate. The strategy will be a public document as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 8.3 All the town council's investments will be specified investments, i.e., they are:
- 8.3.1 Made in sterling

8.3.2 Short term; investments will not normally exceed 12 months.

8.3.3 Made with a recognised and reputable financial institution.

8.4 All investments will be at the discretion of the RFO and will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee at each meeting.

8.5 Risk Management

8.5.1 Liquidity risk management

The council will ensure it has adequate cash resources, overdraft or standby facilities to enable it at all times to have the level of funds available which are necessary for the achievement of its service objectives.

8.5.2 Legal and regulatory risk management

The council will ensure all of its treasury management activities comply with its statutory powers and regulatory requirements. The council recognises future legislative or regulatory changes may impact on its treasury activities and, so far as it is reasonably able to do so, will seek to minimise the risk of these impacting adversely.

8.5.3 Fraud, error and corruption, and contingency management

The council will ensure that it has identified those circumstances that may expose it to the risk of loss through fraud, error, corruption or other eventualities in its treasury management dealings. Accordingly, it will employ suitable systems and procedures, and will maintain effective contingency management arrangements.

8.6 External borrowing

If the council wishes to borrow funds it should consider whether approval is required from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. All investments and borrowings will be reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee at each meeting.

8.7 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

9. Income

9.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be effected by the finance team and shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the finance manager.

9.2 The council will review all fees and charges annually, as part of the budget-setting process.

9.3 Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the council. The RFO shall have delegated authority to write off sums, both debtors and creditors, of less than £250, which should be reported to the council retrospectively.

- 9.4 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the finance team. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the finance team considers necessary.
- 9.5 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.6 The finance team shall promptly complete any VAT return that is required.
- 9.7 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the finance team shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 9.8 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.

10. Orders for Works, Goods and Services

- 10.1 An official order shall be issued for all goods over £1,000, and for all services over £2,000.
- 10.2 All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times, including achieving the best terms available in respect of each transaction. For all items over the purchase order threshold (see paragraph 10.1), this will usually be by obtaining three or more written quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any provisions in Regulation 11 (1) below, with the exception of preferred suppliers (see paragraph 10.3).
- 10.3 A level playing field should be given to all suppliers approached, and once the quotes have been received and evaluated, no new quotes from outside the process should be considered, except in exceptional circumstances. Any such circumstances should be reported to members. Once quotes have been received, consideration should be given to going back to suppliers to request best and final quotes; this opportunity should be given to all suppliers who provided quotes. Sensitive commercial information should not be shared with potential suppliers.
- 10.4 For regular purchase items, such as staff clothing, plants, and building supplies, the council may enter into a preferred supplier relationship, following suitable market testing. This should streamline the procurement process and provide the council with the opportunity to secure discounts. Any such agreement will be for a period of up to three years and will be notified to the council.
- 10.5 Officers shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.
- 10.6 A member may not issue an official order or make or imply any contract on behalf of the council.

11. Contracts

- 11.1. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, except in an emergency or where contracts relate to items 11.1.1 to 11.1.5:

- 11.1.1 For the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services, no purchase order is required, but the requirement to obtain value for money remains as per paragraph 10.2
 - 11.1.2 For specialist services or equipment such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants, no purchase order is required, but the requirement to obtain value for money remains as per paragraph 10.2
 - 11.1.3 For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant where no other supplier can reasonably provide the service
 - 11.1.3 For work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council
 - 11.1.4 For additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £1,000 (in excess of this sum the RFO shall act after consultation with the chairman or vice-chairman of council)
 - 11.1.5 For goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
- 11.2 Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph 11.1 the clerk shall invite tenders from at least three firms.
 - 11.3 When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
 - 11.4 Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the clerk either by email or post. All tenders will remain unopened until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
 - 11.5 All sealed tenders shall be opened, after the stated closing date and time, by the proper officer and at least one member of the council.
 - 11.6 The council's tender documents will state that the price submitted by the successful contractor or consultant will be made public. However, prices submitted for component parts of tenders will not be made public.
 - 11.7 Tender prices submitted by unsuccessful organisations will not be released into the public domain.
 - 11.8 If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £60,000 or if all the tenders are identical, the council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works. Tenders are evaluated by officers and appointment recommendations are made to the appropriate meeting of the council or committee.
 - 11.11 Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the

Regulations”) which is likely to be valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.

11.12 The full requirements of the Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in the Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)².

11.13 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

11.14 The thresholds for the award of contracts are:

11.14.1 Less than £10,000 – town clerk, and in their absence deputy town clerk

11.14.2 Between £10,000 and £ 60,000 – town clerk, and in their absence deputy town clerk, and reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee

11.14.3 More than £60,000 – reported to the Strategy and Finance Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Full Council for resolution

11.15 Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

12. Payments Under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works

12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the finance team upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the finance team shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case when it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.

12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. Stores and Equipment

13.1 The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder and Find a Tender websites to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts.

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

a) For public supply and public service contracts ~~£213,477~~ £214,904

b) For public works contracts ~~£5,336,937~~ £5,372,609

These new thresholds are applicable from 1 January 2024.

- 13.2 Delivery notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 Officers shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

14. Assets, Properties and Estates

- 14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry certificates of properties owned by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 as amended.
- 14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item of tangible moveable property does not exceed £1,000.
- 14.3 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the register shall be verified at least annually and reported with the council's annual return.
- 14.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any consents required by law. In each case, a written report shall be provided to the council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case, a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants), together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.6 Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the Full Council. In each case, a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

15. Insurance

- 15.1 Based on the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17) and a review of insurance requirements, the finance team shall effect all insurances. Officers will negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2 The finance team to be promptly notified by officers of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

- 15.3 The finance team shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The finance manager shall be notified of any loss or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report any significant items to council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council.

16. Charities

- 16.1 Where the council is sole trustee of a charitable body, the RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

17. Risk Management

- 17.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 17.2 When considering any new activity, the clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

18. Revision and Suspension of Financial Regulations

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the authority annually. The clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 18.2 The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of the council.

19. Review

- 19.1 This document will be reviewed in May 2024 or sooner if there are changes in legislation or best practice.

Implementation date: 17 May 2023

Review Date: May 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: The Annual Review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure

Purpose of Report

To allow members to undertake the annual review of the Communications/PR Policy and Procedure, in accordance with standing order 5.j.xix

Recommendation

Members approve the amended Communications/PR Policy and Procedure

Background

1. The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. Communications activity must adhere to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011.
2. Standing order 5.j.xix requires that during the course of the council year, either the Full Council or the relevant committee establishes or reviews the council's policy for dealing with the press/media.
3. The policy and procedure are attached, **appendices 11A and B**.
4. There are no proposed changes, other than the implementation and review dates.
5. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Adrienne Mullins
Support services manager
April 2024

Policy

Communications and Public Relations

Purpose

To define the roles and responsibilities within Lyme Regis Town Council for working with the press and media.

To support good internal and external communications.

To help ensure the town council operates and communicates information in a transparent and open manner.

To help ensure the town council provides the public and press with accurate and timely information, communicated in a professional manner.

To help achieve effective two-way communications between the council and the local, regional and national press to promote and enhance the reputation of both the council and the town of Lyme Regis.

To help ensure the town council's image and reputation are communicated in a cohesive, consistent and positive manner.

Policy

For the purpose of this policy, external communications define four main mediums:

1. Printed materials – E.g. newsletters, posters
2. Electronic materials – E.g. email, website, social media
3. Media relations – E.g. press releases, media enquiries, press statements
4. Public relations – E.g. events, council meetings

All communications' activity should reflect the principles of confidentiality, Data Protection, General Data Protection Regulation, Freedom of Information, and copyright, and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011, with reference to the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988.

This policy is also supported by the town council's standing orders and code of conduct.

Supporting Procedure

This policy is supported by a Communications and PR Procedure.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2025

Adrienne Mullins
Support services manager
May 2024

Communications and PR Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure supports the Communications and PR Policy and should be read in conjunction with this policy.
- 1.2 This procedure should also be read in conjunction with the town council's standing orders and code of conduct. Standing order 22.a. states: 'Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media'.
- 1.3 The town council recognises its responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to the press and public in a professional manner. Proper co-ordination will ensure that messages put out by the council are consistent and accurate.
- 1.4 The council is accountable to the local community for its actions and this can only be achieved through effective two-way communication.
- 1.5 The purpose of the town council's Communications and PR Policy and Procedure is to ensure its members and staff effectively communicate this information to promote the openness and transparency of the council.
- 1.6 The town council also recognises the distinction between communication from 'the town council', and communication from individuals as 'councillors'.
- 1.7 Communication of information may be viewed in four main mediums; print, electronic, media relations, and public relations. However, communication with the press and public takes place every day on a very basic level, i.e. desk enquiries, speaking to residents in the street.
- 1.8 The town council respects freedom of speech and this procedure is not intended to restrain this.
- 1.9 Local councils and their representatives are governed by national legislation and codes of practice. The law governing communications in local authorities can be found in the Local Government Acts 1986 and 1988. Communications activity must adhere to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011, which provides guidance on the content, style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity. This code is statutory guidance and therefore councils must have regard to it and follow its provisions. Copies of these documents are available for inspection in the council office.
- 1.10 All publicity will be produced in line with the council's equality and diversity guidelines.

2. Handling General Requests

- 2.1 All staff and councillors are responsible for communicating basic and routine information to the press and public in relation to their specific job duties or role within the council and its committees.

2.2 Requests for information outside of the remit of an individual's responsibilities should be referred to the relevant member of staff or councillor.

3. Responding to media enquiries

3.1 The town council respects the media's role in delivering information to the public and responses will be given in recognition of deadlines, which are crucial to effective media relations.

3.2 The media are crucially important in conveying information to the community, so the council must maintain positive, constructive media relations.

3.3 The media work on behalf of the local community to hold the council to account for its policies and actions, and it is therefore important that they have access to officers and members and to background information to help them in this role.

3.4 Requests for interviews, information or photographs from the media should be referred initially to the support services manager, or in their absence, to the deputy town clerk.

3.5 Any response will be collated in conjunction with the town clerk, deputy town clerk, or operations manager. Where possible, responses will be given by committee chairmen, or in their absence, vice-chairmen. All responses will be signed off by the town clerk, or in their absence, the deputy town clerk.

3.6 Official statements from the town council must be issued on a document bearing the council's masthead, an appropriate title, dated, and with details of who to contact for further information.

3.7 Statements made must reflect the minuted opinion of the council, where applicable.

3.8 Councillors may be approached directly by the media and can provide responses, making it clear that the views given are their own and not necessarily those of the council. Members should not claim to be commenting on behalf of the town council.

3.9 The town council recognises that councillors have private lives and may be approached by the media in relation to their roles outside of the council. In this instance, members must make it clear they are not commenting as an elected councillor or on behalf of the town council.

3.10 Requests to take photographs of councillors or staff in relation to council business must be agreed by the individual and in the case of staff, by their line manager.

3.11 There is no out-of-hours media relations service, although councillors can be contacted outside of normal office hours as their contact details are available in the public domain. In extreme circumstances, the town clerk is listed as the contact in the council's emergency procedure and will liaise with the media if necessary.

3.12 The council should not pass comment on anonymous allegations or allegations about individual councillors or staff.

- 3.13 The council is open and accountable and should always explain if there is a reason why it cannot answer a specific enquiry.
- 3.14 Members and staff must alert the town clerk as soon as a potentially positive or negative issue which may attract media interest becomes known. They should not wait until contact is made by the media.

4. Issuing news releases

- 4.1 As well as responding to media requests, the town council will pro-actively issue news releases and distribute them to the relevant media.
- 4.2 Press releases must be issued on a document bearing the council's masthead, an appropriate title, dated, and with details of who to contact for further information.
- 4.3 Press releases are non-party political and wherever possible will include a quote from a councillor.
- 4.4 Releases will not publicise the activities of individual councillors or persuade the general public to hold a particular view.
- 4.5 Photographs may be issued with the news releases and captions must be included in the release. If photographs include councillors or staff, point 3.10 will apply.
- 4.6 Press releases will be sent by email to the relevant media, displayed on the town council website, on the council's social media pages, and if applicable on the tourism website.
- 4.7 The support services manager will be responsible for developing news releases in conjunction with the relevant councillor or staff member. Any other officer or members may draft a press release, but they must be issued through the council office in line with points 4.2 to 4.6, and in agreement with the town clerk, or in their absence the deputy town clerk.
- 4.8 Letters to the editor of a newspaper do not qualify as press releases and caution is advised when submitting a letter of this kind. It may be appropriate for the council to submit a letter on occasions, such as correcting factual errors. These letters should be factual and brief.
- 4.9 Other ways to correct inaccurate reporting about the council include issuing a separate news release, a conversation with the journalist concerned, a personal letter to the editor, or legal advice.
- 4.10 Officers and members have a responsibility to identify newsworthy items and seek opportunities where it may be beneficial to issue a press release.
- 4.11 Although not common practice within this council, councillor press releases may be issued. These are personal releases and are written and issued by the councillor responsible. This type of release may or may not be political and should not include the name of any officer, use the council masthead or crest, or the council telephone number, address, or email as a point of contact. It would be beneficial for copies of intended releases to be provided to the town clerk in advance of their release to the press.

5. Media attendance at council meetings

- 5.1 Local media outlets will be provided on request with the agendas, reports and minutes of meetings, prior to them taking place, as required by the Local Government Act 1972.
- 5.2 The press will be provided with reasonable facilities, i.e. seating and a desk, at meetings or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present, as outlined in standing order 3.o.
- 5.3 The photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of meetings by the media is outlined in standing order 3.m and 3.n.

6. Council website

- 6.1 The council website should provide an informative online resource for residents and visitors, giving information about the council, the town, councillors and staff, services provided by the council, the local community, news, links to useful websites, minutes and agendas, and a search facility.
- 6.2 Information on the website should be accurate and kept up-to-date.
- 6.3 Press releases and council notices should be displayed in the news section of the website.

7. Council column

- 7.1 The council will produce a monthly news column for the local press, providing residents with interesting and informative news about the council, its staff and members, and community issues that are linked to the council.
- 7.2 The column will be produced by the support services manager, or in their absence, the deputy town clerk. Ideas for inclusion in the newsletter can be submitted by councillors, staff, and members of the community.

7. Council newsletter

- 7.1 The council will produce a quarterly newsletter, providing residents with interesting and informative news about the council, its staff and members, and community issues that are linked to the council.
- 7.2 Uplyme Parish Council will contribute to the newsletter and have at least one page in each edition. Copy and pictures will be supplied by Uplyme and the newsletter will be designed and compiled by Lyme Regis Town Council.
- 7.3 The newsletter will be distributed to every property in the DT7 3 area via Royal Mail. It will also be made available on the council's website, publicised on social media and sent via email to those who subscribe.
- 7.2 The newsletter will be produced by the support services manager, with support from the administrative and community engagement assistants. Councillors will be expected to submit

ideas for inclusion in the newsletter and suggestions are also welcome from staff and members of the community.

8. Council noticeboards

- 8.1 Priority is given on the council's noticeboards to official council documents, such as agendas, public notices, election information, and legal issues affecting the council.
- 8.2 Where possible, the council will display posters and information for community related issues.

9. Publicity in Election Periods

- 9.1 In the period between the notice of an election and the election itself, the council is subject to rules which impact on how it can communicate with the public.
- 9.2 During this period, council publicity should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals or recommendations in a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members. This ensures that no individual councillor gains an unfair advantage by appearing in official publicity.
- 9.3 In these circumstances, where a quote is required, the relevant officer may be quoted.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2025

Adrienne Mullins
Support services manager
May 2024

Committee: Full Council

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: The Annual Review of the Complaints' Policy and Procedure

Purpose of Report

To allow members to undertake the annual review of the complaints' policy and procedure, in accordance with standing order 5.j.xvii

To allow members to consider the volume and nature of complaints received

Recommendation

- a) Members approve the complaints' policy and procedure
- b) Members note the volume and nature of complaints received since May 2023

Background

1. Standing order 5.j.xvii requires the council to have a complaints' procedure and for that procedure to be reviewed each year either by the Full Council or following consideration and recommendation from the relevant committee.
2. The policy and procedure are attached, **appendices 12A and 12B**.
3. The only proposed amendments are to the implementation and review dates.
4. Paragraph 2.3 of the policy states a report on the volume and nature of complaints will be presented alongside the annual policy review.
5. Since May 2023 when the complaints' policy and procedure was last reviewed, 158 complaints were received about town council operations, compared with 47 the previous year. There has only been one 'official' complaint dealt with through the complaints policy and procedure. Where complaints concerned other organisations, complainants were directly referred to those organisations.
6. The complaints made to Lyme Regis Town Council were:

Dogs	64
Beach	2
Seagulls	3
Beach huts	1
Filming	1
Toilets	1
Rubbish	1
Gardening	3

Street lights	1
Parking	3
Accessibility	1
Staff	4
Data breach	3
Business	1
Park and ride	2
Traffic	1
Town bus	1
Gazebo removal	66
Total	158

Adrienne Mullins
Support services manager
April 2024

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Standing order 5.j.xvii requires the council to have a complaints' procedure and for that procedure to be reviewed each year either by the Full Council or following consideration and recommendation from the relevant committee.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the rationale for a complaints' policy and provides a definition of what qualifies as a complaint and what doesn't qualify as a complaint. The process for administering complaints is detailed separately in a procedure.

2. The Rationale

- 2.1 The council recognises that mistakes and misunderstandings occur and that such instances can consume a disproportionate amount of time and can have an adverse affect on the council's reputation. The approach adopted in this policy and attached procedure is about complaint rectification, resolution and learning.
- 2.2. An effective complaints' management system can make good any mistakes and misunderstandings and help to maintain and build relationships with those with whom we work. Towards this end, the town clerk will provide members with an annual report that identifies the number and type of complaints received. The policy objectives are to:
 - 2.2.1 Provide a fair complaints' procedure which is clear and easy to use
 - 2.2.2 Publicise the existence of its complaints' procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
 - 2.2.3 Make sure that everyone in the council knows what to do if a complaint is received
 - 2.2.4 Make sure complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
 - 2.2.5 Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
 - 2.2.6 Gather and use information to help us improve what we do.
- 2.3 To achieve this last policy objective an annual report will be presented to the council on the volume and nature of complaints. The report will be presented alongside the annual review of this policy.

3. The Definition

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the council's activities. Typically, a complaint may arise when:
 - 3.1.1 We have done something wrong
 - 3.1.2 We have not done something we should have done
 - 3.1.3 We have not treated someone in a professional or civil manner
 - 3.1.4 We have not achieved a standard that we have set for ourselves.

4. Complaints that are Excluded

4.1. This policy excludes certain types of complaints:

- 4.1.1 A complaint by an employee against another employee; these matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures
- 4.1.2 Complaints against councillors; these are dealt with by Dorset Council's monitoring officer
- 4.1.3 If it is a year or more since the complainant became aware of the issue
- 4.1.4 A previous or similar complaint has been made and considered
- 4.1.5 It is a persistent or vexatious complaint with no grounds
- 4.1.6 The complaint is being made to cause disruption or annoyance.

5. Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed in May 2025 or sooner if there are changes in legislation or best practice.

Supporting Procedure

This policy is supported by a complaints' procedure.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2025

John Wright
Town clerk
May 2024

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure should be read in conjunction with the council's complaints' policy. The emphasis in this policy is on rectification and resolution, and this is reflected within this procedure.
- 1.2 The procedure isn't a substitute mechanism for resolving relatively minor issues: these should be addressed as part of the day-to-day operation of the council. It is a mechanism for addressing major service failures, persistent service deficiencies, and poor attitude.
- 1.3 The council defines a complaint in its complaints' policy as an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the council's activities. Typically, a complaint may arise when:
 - 1.3.1 We have done something wrong
 - 1.3.2. We have not done something we should have done
 - 1.3.3. We have not treated someone in a professional or civil manner
 - 1.3.4. We have not achieved a standard that we have set for ourselves.
- 1.4. The complaints' policy excludes certain types of complaints:
 - 1.4.1 A complaint by an employee against another employee; these matters are dealt with under the council's disciplinary and grievance procedures
 - 1.4.2 Complaints against councillors; these are dealt with by Dorset Council's monitoring officer
 - 1.4.3 If it is a year or more since the complainant became aware of the issue
 - 1.4.4 A previous or similar complaint has been made and considered
 - 1.4.5 It is a persistent or vexatious complaint with no grounds
 - 1.4.6 The complaint is being made to cause disruption or annoyance.
- 1.5 Consequently, if issues can be dealt with outside this policy to the satisfaction of a complainant, then this procedure should not be deployed.

2. The Procedure

- 2.1 Complaints should normally be addressed to the town clerk.
- 2.2 The town clerk will decide who should consider and respond to the complaint: this will normally be the deputy town clerk, the operations manager, finance manager, support services manager or the town clerk.
- 2.3 If the complaint is specifically about the town clerk, the complaint should be addressed to the Mayor. The Mayor will decide how the complaint should be investigated.
- 2.4 Acknowledgement of all complaints will take place within three working days.

- 2.5 The town clerk will also appoint a member of staff, who has no involvement in the complaint, to contact the complainant to clarify the precise nature of the complaint, to establish what the complainant wants the council to do to, and to discuss the process and timescale for resolution. This member of staff will not be involved in investigating or responding to the complaint: their role is to act as the complainant's 'friend'.
- 2.6 If the complaint is about council policy which is being considered, the complainant will be advised that they should raise their concerns during the public forum of the relevant council committee meeting where the issue is under consideration.
- 2.7 If the complaint is about existing council policy or the absence of a policy, the complainant will be advised that they should raise the matter during the public forum of a Full Council meeting where any issues can be raised, regardless of whether or not it is on the agenda.
- 2.8 If a policy decision has already been made by the council, the complainant will be informed that the issue will not be re-opened for six months from the decision date unless there are exceptional grounds.
- 2.9 If the complaint is about any other aspect of council's business or service they will normally receive a response from the investigating officer within 10 working days.

3. Appeal

- 3.1 A complainant has the right to appeal against a decision. The appeal should normally be made within 20 working days of being notified of the decision. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members which will be constituted from the Mayor and committee chairmen.
- 3.2 The panel will normally consider the appeal within 20 working days of notification and will inform the complainant of their decision within 10 working days.
- 3.3 If it isn't possible to respond within 10 working days, the complainant will be written to explaining why a response can't be provided and will be given a revised timescale.

4. Complaints against council employees

- 4.1 The process will follow the same as 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5
- 4.2 The complainant will normally receive an acknowledgement from the investigating officer within 5 working days.
- 4.3 An investigation will take place, which may involve meetings with the complainant, the employee complained against and anyone else with information relevant to the complaint. The investigating officer will inform the complainant and the employee complained against of the outcome of the investigation.
- 4.3 A complainant and the employee complained against has the right to appeal against a decision. The appeal should normally be made within 20 working days of being notified of the decision. The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members.

- 4.4 The panel will normally consider the appeal within 20 working days of notification and will inform the complainant of their decision within 10 working days.
- 4.5 If it isn't possible to consider the appeal within 20 working days or to inform the complainant of the decision within 10 working days, the complainant will be written to explaining why there has been a delay and they will be given a revised timescale.

5. Review

- 5.1 This procedure will be reviewed in May 2025 or sooner if there are changes in legislation or best practice.

Supporting Policy

This policy is supported by a complaints' procedure.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2025

John Wright
Town clerk
May 2024

DRAFT

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Information Policy

Purpose of Report

To undertake the annual Information Policy review

Recommendation

Members consider the report and approve the revised Information Policy

Background

1. Standing order 5.j. identifies the business that shall be transacted during the course of the council year, either by the Full Council or following consideration and recommendation from the relevant committee: the requirement for ‘Establishing or reviewing the Council’s procedure for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998³’ is detailed paragraph 5.j.xviii of the council’s standing orders.
2. The Information Policy, **appendix 13A**, was considered and approved by resolution of the Full Council on 17 May 2023.

Report

3. No changes are proposed to the Information Policy.
4. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

John Wright
Town clerk
April 2024

³ The Data Protection Act 1998 has been replaced by the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK Data Protection Regulation which came into force on 1 January 2021. This change was omitted from the draft Standing Orders considered by Strategy and Finance Committee 11 May 2022. A change to the Standing Orders is included in the recommendation accompanying the minutes from the Strategy and Finance Committee to this meeting of the Full Council.

Information Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There are various pieces of legislation about holding, accessing and processing information and data.
- 1.2 The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals. They rule on eligible complaints, give guidance to individuals and organisations, and take appropriate action when the law is broken. The ICO enforces and oversees the Data Protection Act (2018), the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Freedom of Information Act, the Environmental Information Regulations, and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations.
- 1.3 The General Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 sets out the framework for data protection law in the UK. It updates and replaces the Data Protection Act 1998 and came into effect on 25 May 2018. It was amended on 01 January 2021 by regulations under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, to reflect the UK's status outside the EU. It sits alongside and supplements the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). The UK GDPR is based on the EU GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679) which applied in the UK before that date. In practice, there is little change to core data protection principles, rights, and obligations.
- 1.4 All other information falls under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 1.5 Environmental information falls under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- 1.6 The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 govern electronic marketing.
- 1.7 This policy details how Lyme Regis Town Council interprets the law and complies with regulations. It gives a general overview of the legal requirements imposed on the council, defines how the council will make information accessible and advises how it will protect, store and dispose of information.
- 1.8 Lyme Regis Town Council supports the objectives of openness, accountability and transparency in the public sector.
- 1.9 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, each public authority must adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. This is a method of making information available to the public. The scheme details the information the council will routinely make available, see appendix A.

2. Publication Scheme

- 2.1 There are three ways to obtain any information held:
 - 2.1.1 The council's website

This includes meeting agendas, minutes and the council's governance and financial operating policies and procedures

2.1.2 Inspecting of documents at the council's offices

Contact the town clerk to view documents. Some documents may take some time to locate, so it may be necessary to make an appointment. Normal working hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm.

2.1.3 Submit a written or email request

- 2.2 Information held by the town council which does not fall within the Publication Scheme may be requested in writing and will be considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The request for information must include a name, address for correspondence, and a description of the information required.
- 2.3 Lyme Regis Town Council will respond within 20 working days of receipt of a written request and confirm if it holds the information, advise whether a fee will be charged and provide the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies.
- 2.4 If an information request is subject to a charge, the information will not be released until that fee is paid.

3. **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

- 3.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 deals with access to official information; regulations deal with environmental information.
- 3.2 The Act provides individuals or organisations with the right to request information held by a public authority. They can do this by letter or email.
- 3.3 The Act is fully retrospective and applies to all information, not just information filed since the Act came into force.

4. **Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

- 4.1 These regulations give the public the right to access environmental information held by public authorities. The request can be made by letter, email, telephone or in person.
- 4.2 Environmental information is divided into the following six main areas:
 - 4.2.1 The state of the elements of the environment, such as air, water, soil, land, fauna (including human beings)
 - 4.2.2 Emissions and discharges, noise, energy, radiation, waste and other such substances
 - 4.2.3 Measures and activities such as policies, plans, and agreements affecting or likely to affect the state of the elements of the environment
 - 4.2.4 Reports, cost-benefit and economic analyses
 - 4.2.5 The state of human health and safety, contamination of the food chain

4.2.6 Cultural sites and built structures (to the extent they may be affected by the state of the elements of the environment)

5. The Right to Know

- 5.1 The right under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) to request information held by public authorities, known as the right to know, came into force from January 2005.
- 5.2 The Act allows access to recorded information such as emails, meeting agendas and minutes, research or reports held by the council.
- 5.3 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives applicants two statutory rights: to be told if the public authority holds information; and if it does, to have that information communicated to them.

6. Exemptions

- 6.1 Some information is exempt from disclosure.
- 6.2 There are 23 exemptions in the FOIA, some of which are absolute and some qualified. There are 12 exceptions from disclosure in the EIR, all of which are qualified.
- 6.3 Where information falls under an absolute exemption, the harm to the public interest that would result from its disclosure is already established, e.g., personal information, or if disclosure would result in an actionable breach of confidence.
- 6.4 There are five exemptions that are likely to apply to information held by the Town Council:
 - 6.4.1 Information that is readily accessible to the applicant by other means
 - 6.4.2 Information that constitutes Court records
 - 6.4.3 Information that is defined as personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018
 - 6.4.4 Information that has been provided in confidence
 - 6.4.5 Information prohibited from disclosure by law

If a public authority believes that the information is covered by a qualified exemption, it must apply the public interest test.

7. Public Interest Test

The public interest test favours disclosure where a qualified exemption or an exception applies. In such cases, the information may be withheld only if the council considers that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in disclosing it.

8. Handling of Requests

- 8.1 The council must normally supply the information requested in the format requested within 20 working days of receipt of a written request; confirm if it holds the information; advise whether a fee will be charged and provide the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies.
- 8.2 However, the town council does not have to confirm or deny the existence of the information or provide it if: an exemption applies; the request is vexatious; similar to a previous request; or the cost of compliance exceeds an appropriate limit.
- 8.3 If the town council decides not to disclose the information requested it will give reasons for its decision, explain how the exemption or exception applies and explain the arguments under the public interest test.
- 8.4 If an applicant is unhappy with a refusal to disclose information, they can request a formal review of the decision by a person not directly involved with the refusal. If the review concurs with the decision not to disclose the information the applicant can complain to the ICO. The ICO will investigate the case and either uphold the council's use of an exemption or decide that the information must be disclosed.

9. Fees

- 9.1 The FOIA only allows the council to charge for answering Freedom of Information requests when costs exceed £450.
- 9.2 In these cases the council can decide to:
- 9.2.1 refuse the request; or
 - 9.2.2 comply with the request and charge for allowable costs as prescribed in the regulations (a fee notice will be sent to the applicant requesting the appropriate fee); or
 - 9.2.3 comply with the request free of charge
- 9.3 The request for information will not be answered until the fee has been received.
- 9.4 If the cost of completing the request is more than the estimate then the council will incur the additional cost. However, where the cost is less than the estimated cost then the difference will be refunded to the applicant.
- 9.5 The council will charge 10p per A4 sheet and 15p per A3 sheet (b&w only) for photocopying and printing documents, plus recover the actual cost of postage or any other transmission costs from the applicant. Colour copies will be charged at 15p per A4 sheet and 20p per A4 sheet. Staff costs will be charged at £25 per hour.

10. Appeal Process

- 10.1 The role of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is to enforce and promote the FOIA and the EIR. It has responsibility for ensuring that information is disclosed promptly and that exemptions from disclosure are applied lawfully.

- 10.2 Cases can be referred to the ICO if, for example, there has been excessive delay or if the application of an exemption or a refusal made on public interest grounds is disputed. The ICO may serve a decision notice on the council either confirming the decision or directing it to disclose information within a certain timescale. Non-compliance with a decision notice may constitute contempt of court.
- 10.3 Finally, if either the applicant or the council disagrees with the ICO's decision, an appeal can be lodged within 28 days to the independent Information Tribunal.
- 10.4 The Information Tribunal may uphold the ICO's decision notice, amend it, e.g., change the time frame for release of information, or overturn it. Non-compliance with the Information Tribunal's notice may also constitute contempt of court.

11. Data Protection and General Data Protection Regulation

- 11.1 Lyme Regis Town Council is also bound by the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- 11.2 Alongside the General Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR establish a framework of rights and duties which are designed to safeguard personal data.
- 11.3 They aim to balance the legitimate needs of organisations to collect and use personal data for business and other purposes against the right of individuals to respect for the privacy of their personal details.
- 11.4 Personal data may be held electronically or in paper records.
- 11.5 There is a fine line between determining what is personal data and what is not. Therefore, to help decide whether filed information falls within the scope of the Act, below is a reference guide comprising of a series of questions which, when worked through in order, is intended to help determine whether the data held is personal data. If the answers to the questions are yes, then the data is assessed as personal data.
- 11.5.1 Can a living individual be 'identified' from the data or from other information in your possession, or likely to come into your possession?
- 11.5.2 Does the data 'relate to' the identifiable living individual, whether in personal or family life, business or profession?
- 11.5.3 Is the data 'obviously about' a particular individual?
- 11.5.4 Is the data 'linked to' an individual so that it provides particular information about that individual?
- 11.5.5 Is the data used, or is it to be used, to inform or influence actions or decisions affecting an identifiable individual?
- 11.5.6 Does the data have any biographical significance in relation to the individual?

11.5.7 Does the data focus or concentrate on the individual rather than on some other person, object, transaction or event?

11.5.8 Does the data impact or have the potential to impact on an individual, whether in a personal, family, business or professional capacity?

11.6 The town council processes personal data in order to:

11.6.1 fulfil its duties as an employer by complying with the terms of contracts of employment, safeguarding the employee and maintaining information required by law

11.6.2 pursue the legitimate interests of its business and its duties as a public body, by fulfilling contractual terms with other organisations, and maintaining information required by law

11.6.3 monitor its activities including the equality and diversity of its activities

11.6.4 fulfil its duties in operating the business premises including security

11.6.5 assist regulatory and law enforcement agencies

11.6.6 process information including the recording and updating details about its councillors, employees, partners and volunteers

11.6.7 process information including the recording and updating details about individuals who contact it for information, or to access a service, or make a complaint

11.6.8 undertake surveys, censuses and questionnaires to fulfil the objectives and purposes of the council.

11.6.9 undertake research, audit and quality improvement work to fulfil its objects and purposes

11.6.10 carry out council administration. Where appropriate and governed by necessary safeguards we will carry out the above processing jointly with other appropriate bodies from time to time.

11.7 Where appropriate and governed by necessary safeguards, the council will carry out the above processing jointly with other appropriate bodies.

11.8 The council will ensure at least one of the following conditions is met for personal information to be considered fairly processed:

11.8.1 the individual has consented to the processing

11.8.2 processing is necessary for the performance of a contract or agreement with the individual

11.8.3 processing is required under a legal obligation

11.8.4 processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the individual

11.8.5 processing is necessary to carry out public functions.

- 11.8.6 processing is necessary in order to pursue the legitimate interests of the data controller or third parties.
- 11.9 Particular attention is paid to the processing of any sensitive personal information and the council will ensure at least one of the following conditions is met:
 - 11.9.1 explicit consent of the individual
 - 11.9.2 required by law to process the data for employment purposes
 - 11.9.3 a requirement in order to protect the vital interests of the individual or another person.
- 11.10 Even if the information is not considered personal data, it may however be information of a sensitive nature such as data about an employee's religious beliefs, medical background, sexual orientation, criminal records etc.
- 11.11 The legislation is underpinned by a set of eight principles:
 - 11.11.1 personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
 - 11.11.2 personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
 - 11.11.3 personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
 - 11.11.4 personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
 - 11.11.5 personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
 - 11.11.6 Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
 - 11.11.7 appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
 - 11.11.8 personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.
- 11.12 The council will ensure it handles personal data and complies with the spirit of these principles.
- 11.13 The information provided will be processed and stored so it is possible for the council to contact, respond to or conduct the transaction requested by the individual. By communicating with the council, individuals are deemed to be giving consent for their personal data provided to be used and transferred in accordance with this policy. It is the responsibility of the

individual to ensure the council is able to keep their personal data up-to-date and accurate. The personal information will not be shared or provided to any third party or be used for any purpose other than that for which is provided. It will only be kept for as long as necessary, after which, it will be deleted.

- 11.14 The legislation states that anyone who processes personal information must comply with the eight principles and that the area covered by the Act provides individuals with important rights, including the right to find out what personal information is held on computer and most paper records.
- 11.15 The town council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office that it processes personal data. Failure to notify the ICO is a criminal offence. The main purpose of notification and registration with the ICO is for transparency and openness.
- 11.16 The legislation contains a number of exemptions from the rights and duties, and personal data must be processed in accordance with the Act unless one of the exemptions applies.
- 11.17 An individual has the following rights as a 'data subject':
 - 11.17.1 access to information – an individual has the right to request access to the information the council has on them
 - 11.17.2 information correction - if they believe the information the council has about them is incorrect, they may contact us so that we can update it and keep their data accurate
 - 11.17.3 information deletion – if the individual wishes the council to delete the information about them, they can do so by contacting the council
 - 11.17.4 right to object – if an individual believes their data is not being processed for the purpose it has been collected for, they may object to the council.
- 11.18 Should an individual or organisation feel they are being denied access to personal information that they are entitled to by the town council or feel their information has not been handled according to the eight principles, they can contact the ICO.
- 11.19 Complaints are usually dealt with informally, but if this is not possible, enforcement action can be taken.

12. Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations

- 12.1 The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations apply to unsolicited electronic marketing messages sent by telephone, fax, email or text.
- 12.2 If, at any time, the council wants to make automated telephone calls or send faxes to individuals they must have the subscriber's consent and their identity must be clearly included in calls or faxes.

- 12.3 If they wish, subscribers (individuals or businesses) can opt out of direct marketing phone calls both to a land line and a mobile number. People on the Telephone Preference Service register will not receive these types of calls unless they give their permission.
- 12.4 Individual and corporate subscribers can also register their objection to receiving unsolicited direct marketing faxes by registering their number with the Fax Preference Service.
- 12.5 Unsolicited marketing material by electronic mail (this includes texts, picture messages and emails) will only be sent if the person has chosen to receive them, unless the email address was obtained as a result of a commercial relationship. The council will always give the individual the opportunity to stop receiving the emails.
- 12.6 Spam is the use of electronic messaging systems (including most broadcast media, digital delivery systems) to send unsolicited bulk messages indiscriminately. The most widely recognised form of spam is e-mail spam, also known as unsolicited bulk email (UBE), junk mail or unsolicited commercial email (UCE).
- 12.7 The ICO is working with its European counterparts and the US to try to reduce spam, but currently there is no legislation to cover spam sent to business addresses. The town council has processes and software in place to protect the email server as far as reasonably possible from spam.

13. General Responsibility

- 13.1 All town council members and officers have a duty to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
- 13.2 The council will issue procedural guidelines to complement this policy setting out how a request for information should be dealt with. In addition, staff training will be provided.
- 13.3 It is, however, the responsibility of the person who receives the information request to ensure that it is responded to according to the Act. Additional advice and support in this regard is available from the town clerk.

14. Additional Information

- 14.1 Additional guidance on the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations and the Data Protection Act are available on the ICO's website: www.ico.gov.uk.
- 14.2 Alternatively the ICO can be contacted by post, telephone or email:

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Helpline telephone number: 01625 545745
Email: mail@ico.gov.uk

15. Document Management Policy

15.1 This policy applies to all documents produced by the council and all documents received in its offices. Its objective is to aid sensible, timely management and disposal of all filing, paperwork, records and documentation.

15.2 It is important that records are carefully retained and systematically filed as they are required for inspection by a number of agencies, e.g., internal audit, external audit, HMRC.

15.3 Retention and Disposal of Documents

The requirements for the retention of specific records are laid down in the Accounts and Audit Regulations for Local Authorities. The advised periods and reasons for the retention of records are detailed on the table below.

Record	Minimum retention period	Comments
Annual Leave Records	3 years	
Application Forms (unsuccessful Applicants)	6 months from appointee starting duties	
Audit Till Rolls	3 years	
BACS Amendments and Error Reports	6 years	
BACS Details	6 years	
Bank Reconciliation Records	6 years	
Bank Statements and Advices	6 years	
Bond Certificates – Copy	6 years	After redemption
Bonds/ Mortgages Register	Indefinitely	
Budget Working Papers	6 years	
Capital Registers	Indefinitely	
Car Allowance Claims	3 years	
Car Allowance Records	6 years	
Car Lease Records	2 years	From end of lease
Car Loan Records	6 years	From end of loan
Cash Books	6 years	
Consolidated Loans Pool Registers	Indefinitely	
Consolidated Loans Pool Working Papers	6 years	
Collection and Deposit Books	6 years	
Computer Input Forms	2 years	
Contract Documents	Contract period + 2 years	From final payment
Contract Payment Certificates	Contract period + 2 years	From final payment
Controlled Stationery Records	Indefinitely	
Copy Orders	3 years	
Copy Renewal/ Endorsement Memos	Indefinitely	

Correspondence Files	5 years	
Correspondence with Successful Contractors	Contract period + 2 years	From final payment
Council Meeting Minutes	Indefinitely	Can be transferred to SCC Archives
Creditor Cheque Lists	5 years	
Deduction Tabs	5 years	
Deeds of Covenant	12 years	After final payment
Delivery Notes	3 years	
Expenses Claims (mileage, subsistence)	5 years	HMRC requirements
Employers Liability Insurance	40 years	Management and Statute of Limitations
Final Account Working Papers	5 years	
Finance Ledgers	Indefinitely	
Flexi-time Records	3 years	
Grant Claims / Returns	5 years	
Half Yearly Interest Schedules	Indefinitely	
Health and Safety Inspection Records	21 years	
Insurance Claims and Correspondence	5 years	
Insurance Policies (other than Liability Insurance)	3 years	After discontinuation
Insurance Registers	Indefinitely	
Insurance Schedules	Indefinitely	
Insurance Valuations	5 years	Unless re-valued
Internal Ledger Transfers	5 years	
Inventory of Furniture & Equipment	Indefinitely	
Investment Certificates	5 years	After holding
Invoices (including credit card payment slips)	5 years	
Journal Entries	5 years	
Leasing Payments	5 years	
Leasing Registers	Indefinitely	
Leaver Forms	5 years	
Liability Insurance	Indefinitely	
Loans Transfer Registers	Indefinitely	
Manual Cheque Payment Records	5 years	
Maternity Pay Records	3 years	
Members Allowance Claim Forms	5 years	
Members Attendance Registers	Indefinitely	
Micro-fiche Records	Indefinitely	
Mortgage Deeds & Bond Certs.	5 years	From cancellation

(repaid)		
New Starter Forms	6 years	
Notification of Coding	3 years	After end of tax year
Orders	3 years	
Other Payroll Tabs	6 years	
Overs and Shorts Records	6 years	
Overtime Claims	3 years	
Overtime Records	6 years	
P45 Forms	3 years	
Paid Invoices	6 years	
Pay Slips – copies	7 years	
Paying-In Books	6 years	
Payroll Cheque Lists	6 years	
Payroll Control Account Reconciliations	6 years	
Payroll Control Total Tabs	6 years	
Payroll Deduction Tabs	6 years	
Permanent Amendments	6 years	
Personnel Files	Indefinitely	
Petty Cash Imprest Records	6 years	
Petty Cash Receipts	6 years	
Postal Remittance Books	6 years	
Public Liability Insurance	21 Years	
Private Health Care Records	6 years	HMRC requirements
PWLB Year End Statements	6 years	
Receipt Books	6 years	
Renewal/ Endorsement Memos - Copy	Indefinitely	
Replacement Cheque Records	3 years	
Returned Cheque Records	6 years	
Securicor Records	6 years	
Shorts and Overs Records	6 years	
Sickness Records	3 years	
Staff Records	6 years	
Stock Transfer Forms	6 years	
Stop Cheque Lists	6 years	
Summaries of Accumulated Totals	6 years	
Sundry Debtor Accounts	6 years	From date paid or written off
Sundry Debtor Records	3 years	
Superannuation Correspondence	Indefinitely	
Superannuation Records	6 years	Main records held with SCC
Tax and NI Details	6 years	
Taxable Benefit Details	6 years	HMRC requirements

Temporary Loans Records	3 years	After repayment
Temporary Variations	3 years	
Tenders - Unsuccessful Quotations	3 years	
Tenders - Successful Quotations	Contract period + 2 years	From final payment
Till Rolls (Receipting Machine)	3 years	
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit and Working Time regulations
Unpresented Cheque Listings	3 years	
VAT Returns and Records	5 years	
Write Off Schedules	Indefinitely	
Year-end Financial Tabs	Indefinitely	
Year-end Payroll Tabs	12 years	

15.4 General documentation, not listed above, may be kept for reference purposes, however, will be destroyed after five years.

15.5 Any documents relating to town council-owned land and property will be retained indefinitely by the town council or by the council's solicitor to give a complete picture of refurbishments, disposals or acquisitions.

15.6 Documents produced by and readily available from other sources will be destroyed when they are outdated or superseded.

15.7 Development control and planning applications will be destroyed automatically after one year. If, however, a particular application forms part of a planning history for a specific site or town council-owned property, then the application will be kept indefinitely or until such times as the site is developed.

15.8 Within six months of a member of staff leaving Lyme Regis Town Council employment, the individual's personnel file will be reviewed, any superannuation or salary documentation will be extracted and the remaining documentation will be destroyed. If there is likely to be a claim made against the town council under employment or other relevant legislation, the personnel file will be archived until such times as any claim has been dealt with or legal advice states that it may be destroyed.

15.9 Storage of Documents

15.9.1 Documentation readily in use or where easy and regular access is required will be stored at the town council's offices.

15.9.2 Officers are encouraged to scan documentation where and when appropriate so that it is stored electronically for future reference. The IT systems are automatically backed up on a regular basis to ensure the safe keeping of electronic documents.

15.9.3 Older paperwork and documentation will be archived either at the town council's offices or off site. Any documents of an historical nature will be offered to the County Records Office or the museum, as appropriate.

15.9.4 If need be, documents will be stored in secure conditions either at the town council's offices, with the council's solicitor or at an offsite storage facility.

15.9.5 Certain specific documentation such as meeting minutes will be offered to the county archives at Dorset County Council in Dorchester.

15.10 Destruction of Documents

15.10.1 All confidential or sensitive documents and any documents containing personal information covered by the Data Protection Act that are earmarked for disposal will either be shredded at the Town Council offices or sent for destruction by a recognised contractor specialising in the disposal of confidential waste.

15.10.2 All general documentation and paper waste will be recycled.

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APPENDIX A

Publication Scheme

1. Introduction

1.1 This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information identified by the Information Commissioner's Office and referred to in paragraph 2. Additional information the definition of these classes is issued by the Information Commissioner.

1.2 The scheme commits an authority:

1.2.1 To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below

1.2.2 To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below

1.2.3 To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme

1.2.4 To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public

1.2.5 To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme

1.2.6 To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available

1.2.7 To make this publication scheme available to the public

2. Classes of information

2.1 Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance

2.2 What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts

2.3 What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews

2.4 **How we make decisions**

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision-making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

2.5 **Our policies and procedures**

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

2.6 **Lists and registers**

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

2.7 **The services we offer**

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

3. **The classes of information generally not included**

3.1 The classes of information will not generally include:

3.1.1 Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure

3.1.2 Information in draft form

3.1.3 Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reason.

4. **The method by which information published under will be made available**

4.1 The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained. Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

4.2 In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

4.3 Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

4.4 Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

5. Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

5.1 The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

5.2 Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

5.3 Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

5.4 Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

5.4.1 photocopying

5.4.2 postage and packaging

5.4.3 the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

5.5 Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

5.6 If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

6. Written requests

6.1 Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

7. Information available from Lyme Regis Town Council under the Publication Scheme

7.1 All information on the website is free, all hard copy will be charged at 10p per A4 sheet (b&w)

7.2

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained
Who is who on the council and its committees	Website / hard copy
Contact details for the Proper Officer and council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address)	Website / hard copy

Location of main council office and accessibility details	Website / hard copy
Staffing structure	Website / hard copy
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website / hard copy
Finalised budget	Website / hard copy
Precept	Website / hard copy
Borrowing approval letter	Hard copy
Financial standing orders and regulations	Website / hard copy
Grants given and received	Website / hard copy
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard copy
Current strategic plan	Website / hard copy
Annual report to parish or community meeting (current and previous years)	Website / hard copy
Quality status	Hard copy
General Power of Competence	Hard copy
Timetable of meetings (council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and town meetings)	Website / hard copy
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website / hard copy
Minutes of meetings (as above) – excluding information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting	Website / hard copy
Reports presented to council meetings - excluding information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting	Website / hard copy
Responses to consultation papers	Website / hard copy
Responses to planning applications	Website / hard copy
Bye-laws	Hard copy
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures	
Procedural standing orders	Website / hard copy
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Website / hard copy
Delegated authority in respect of officers	Hard copy
Members' Code of Conduct	Website / hard copy
Policy statements	Hard copy
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff	Hard copy
Internal policies relating to the delivery of services	Website / hard copy
Equality and diversity policy	Website / hard copy
Health and safety policy	Website / hard copy
Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)	Website / hard copy
Policies and procedures for handling	Website / hard copy

requests for information	
Complaints' procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website / hard copy
Information security policy	Website / hard copy
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Website / hard copy
Data protection policies	Website / hard copy
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Website / hard copy
Class 6 – Lists and Registers	
Assets Register	Hard copy
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice)	Hard copy
Register of members' interests	Website / hard
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard copy
Allotments	Website / hard copy
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Hard copy
Community centres and village halls	N/A
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Website / hard copy
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy
Bus shelters	Hard copy
Markets	N/A
Public conveniences	Hard copy
Agency agreements	Hard copy
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees, cremations, scattering of ashes, hiring of football and cricket pitches)	Website / hard copy
Newsletter	Website / hard copy

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Equality and Diversity Policy

Purpose of the Report

To allow members to review the equality and diversity policy

Recommendation

Members approve the revised equality and diversity policy

Background

1. The equality and diversity policy was reviewed by this committee on 1 February 2023 and approved by the Full Council on 15 February 2023.
2. Prior to this review, the policy had not been reviewed since 2015, when it was called an equal opportunities policy. The 2023 review was therefore a fundamental review which aimed to strengthen the purpose of the policy, to emphasise the council's responsibility for the actions of its employees and members, and to outline how the policy will be implemented in the areas of recruitment and selection, training and development and promotion.
3. The policy was amended to require annual reviews and annual equality and diversity training for members and employees.
4. The equality and diversity policy is contained within the employee handbook and is provided to members when they join the council.

Report

5. There are no proposed changes to the policy, **appendix 14A**, other than the implementation and review dates.
6. Equality and diversity refresher training will be provided to members and employees as part of the induction programme for the new administration.
7. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Adrienne Mullins
Support services manager
April 2024

Policy

Equality and Diversity

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure equal opportunities and fairness among staff, members, customers, clients, service users, job applicants and organisations considering contracting with the council.
- 1.2 To select, recruit, develop and promote the very best people through objective assessment, based solely on suitability for the job.
- 1.3 To create a balanced workforce, reflecting the diversity of the local working population.
- 1.4 To cultivate a working environment that is free from harassment.

2. Policy

- 2.1 Lyme Regis Town Council recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the council, its employees, members, citizens, service users and visitors to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the council to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The council aims that its workforce is representative of all sections of society and each employee and member feels respected and able to give of their best.
- 2.3 The council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and to all its members.
- 2.4 All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, and members will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and members will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.
- 2.5 Council employees or members will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customer or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation in the provision of council services. These are known as protected characteristics
- 2.6 This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any government departments, and any other statutory bodies.

3. The council's commitment

- 3.1 The council is directly responsible for the actions of all its employees and agents of the council, as well as for their protection from harassment and discrimination. The council therefore takes an active role in protecting those it is responsible for.
- 3.1 To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all its employees and members are recognised and valued.
- 3.2 Every employee and member is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- 3.3 Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all employees and members.
- 3.4 To promote equality in the workplace which the council believes is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- 3.5 The council will review all its employment practices and procedures and member procedures to ensure fairness.
- 3.6 Breaches of the equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings or in the case of members, a possible breach of the code of conduct.
- 3.7 This policy is fully supported by members and the town clerk and has been discussed with employees.
- 3.8 The policy will be monitored and reviewed every year.

4. Responsibilities of Management

- 4.1 Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the members and the town clerk who will ensure that they and employees operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Managers will ensure that:
 - 4.1.1 All their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
 - 4.1.2 Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
 - 4.1.3 Proper records are maintained.
- 4.2 The town clerk is responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants.

5. Responsibilities of Employees and Members

5.1 Responsibility for ensuring there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all employees and members and the attitudes of employees and members are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all employees and members should:

5.1.1 Comply with the policy and arrangements;

5.1.2 Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;

5.1.3 Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff, members or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.

5.1.4 Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

5.1.5 Inform their manager or the Mayor if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

6. Third Parties

6.1 Third-party harassment occurs where a council employee or member is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. The council will not tolerate such actions against its staff or members, and the employee or member concerned should inform their manager / supervisor or the Mayor at once that this has occurred. The council will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

7. Related Policies and Arrangements

7.1 All employment and member policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The council's policies will be reviewed regularly, normally every three years, and any discriminatory elements removed.

8. Rights of Disabled People

8.1 The council attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

8.2 Under the terms of this policy, the council will:

8.2.1 Make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee or member who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);

8.2.2 Include disabled people in training/development programmes;

8.2.3 Give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

9. Implementing the policy

9.1 Recruitment and selection

9.1.1 All positions are open to individuals who have the required level of skill, knowledge and/or experience.

9.1.2 Job applicants will receive a job description and person specification to enable them to assess their suitability for the position.

9.2. Training

9.2.1 Appropriate training on and off the job will be available to all employees and employees will be encouraged to take advantage of relevant training opportunities.

9.2.2 Where an individual is returning to a job following a prolonged absence, additional training and support will be offered.

9.2.3 Where a position changes due to technology or reorganisation, appropriate training and support will be offered to the affected individuals.

9.2.4 All inductees will be made aware of the equality and diversity policy.

9.3 Development and promotion

9.3.1 Ability, motivation, commitment, past experience and qualifications are the qualities used to determine an individual's promotion potential.

9.3.2 Development and training will be offered to all suitable individuals where opportunities exist.

9.3.3 Length of service will not determine suitability for promotion as it can indirectly discriminate against some groups.

9. Equality Training

9.1 Training sessions will be held for members and employees on equality issues. These will be repeated annually.

10. Monitoring

10.1 The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees and members by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion/ beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff or members who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

10.2 There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.

10.3 The council will maintain information on staff or members who have been involved in certain key policies: disciplinary, grievance and bullying and harassment.

10.4 Where appropriate equality impact assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the council's policies and its services may have on those who experience them.

- 10.5 The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential.
- 10.6 If monitoring shows the council, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the council, an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, the council's policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal 'positive action'.

11. Grievance/Discipline

- 11.1 Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the council's grievance policy and procedure, and bullying and harassment policy and procedure. Members have the right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation with Dorset Council's monitoring officer.
- 11.2 Discrimination and victimisation by employees will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary policy and procedure. Discrimination and victimisation by members will be referred to Dorset Council's monitoring officer.

12. Review

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed in May 2025 or sooner if there are changes in legislation or best practice.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2025

John Wright
Town clerk
May 2025

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Title: Review of the Protocol for the Audio Recording of Council Meetings

Date: 24 April 2024

Purpose of Report

To allow members to review the protocol for the audio recording of council meetings

Recommendation

Members approve the Protocol for Audio Recording of Council Meetings

Background

1. On 12 December 2018, the Full Council approved the re-introduction of audio recording council meetings.
2. On 15 May 2019, the Full Council approved a protocol for the audio recording of council meetings.
3. The protocol requires annual review but a review has not taken place since it was implemented in 2019.

Report

4. There are several proposed amendments to the protocol, **appendix 15A**:
 - 5.2 (Sharing audio recordings) – when the protocol was introduced, there was no way of making the recordings available on the council website. Following discussions with the website provider, this will be implemented. Paragraph 5.2 has been amended to reflect this.
 - 6.1 (Review) – it is suggested the council moves to a three-year review period. Most policies and procedures which are reviewed annually are done so because standing orders require it, but the majority of the council's policies are reviewed every three years.
5. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

John Wright
Town clerk
May 2024

Protocol on Audio Recording of Council Meetings

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The formal record of any meeting of a local authority is its minutes and agendas which are required to be maintained and retained for a number of years.
- 1.2 The town council wants to provide a supplementary source of information for preparing and reviewing minutes of meetings.
- 1.3 The town council also seeks to promote open and transparent governance.
- 1.4 Audio recordings will be made available to the public if required.
- 1.5 To achieve these objectives, the town council has installed audio recording equipment in the council chamber and will record its Full Council and committee meetings.
- 1.6 The protocol takes into account the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

2. Protocol

- 2.1 Audio recording will commence when the chairman opens the meeting and will end when the meeting is formally closed. If there is an adjournment during the meeting, the audio equipment will be switched off for the duration of that adjournment.
- 2.2 Where it is resolved to exclude the press and public, all rights to audio record the meeting are rescinded and recording equipment will be required to be turned off.
- 2.3 At the start of Full Council and committee meetings, the chairman will draw attention to the notices in the Guildhall that detail the council's policy on audio recordings of council meetings.
- 2.4 The whole of the meeting, excluding exempt business, will be audio recorded.
- 2.5 The chairman has the discretion to terminate or suspend audio recording if, in their opinion, continued audio recording would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting. Circumstances that could lead to suspension or termination of audio recording include public disturbance or the potential infringement of the rights of any individual.
- 2.6 If audio recording is halted for a technical reason, the committee and members of the public will be notified.

3. Agenda Front Sheets and Signage

- 3.1 The following will be included on the front sheet of agenda and displayed on signs in the council chamber:

'The open and transparent proceedings of Full Council and Committee meetings will be audio recorded and recordings will be held for one year by the town council'.

'If members of the public make a representation to the meeting, they will be deemed to have consented to being audio recorded'.

'If members of the public have any queries regarding audio recording of meetings, please contact the town clerk.'

4. Editing

- 4.1 An unedited copy of the audio recording will be held by the council for one year.
- 4.2 Editing of content will only be undertaken if there is a legal reason to do so.
- 4.3 In the event of spoken obscenities, the audio recording will be muted in an edited version.
- 4.4 Where content is edited, details will be recorded in a log. The chairman of the Full Council or relevant committee will be notified, as will the subsequent meeting of the council or relevant committee.

5. Sharing Audio Recordings

- 5.1 A copy of the audio recordings will be held at the council's offices and will be available on request. Copies made available to the public will exclude anything that is edited from the audio recording.
- 5.2 ~~The council cannot load audio recordings onto its website at this point in time. However, when the council introduces its new website later in 2019, and when possible, recordings will be made available on the website.~~ **Audio recordings will be made available on the council's website for up to one year.**

6. Review

- 6.1 This protocol will be reviewed in May 2027 or sooner if there are changes in legislation.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2027

John Wright
Town Clerk
May 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Debt Management Policy and Procedure

Purpose of Report

To allow members to review debt management policy and procedure

Recommendation

The council approves the debt management policy and procedure

Background

1. Following consideration by this committee on 17 February 2021, the debt management policy and procedure was approved by Full Council on 3 March 2021.

Report

2. The debt management policy and procedure is attached, **appendices 16A and B.**
3. In summary, members will continue to be notified of debts over £1,000 and greater than three months' old; officers will be delegated powers to pursue debts up-to-and-including court hearings. Before possession is obtained, member authority will be sought.
4. No changes are proposed to the policy and procedure, other than the implementation and review dates.
5. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
April 2024

Policy

Debt Management

Purpose

To help the town council maximise its income from its commercial activities in a firm and fair manner

Policy and Legal Context

The council pursues commercial debts in a firm and fair manner and recognises the importance of prioritising its obligation to its electorate to maximise commercial income

The council pursues debts in a legally compliant manner

Supporting Procedure

This policy is supported by a procedure.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2027

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
May 2024

Procedure

Debt Management – tenancies

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure outlines the council's debt collection process for tenants and is a guide for members and officers.
- 1.2 In the first instance, the council will invoice tenants. The invoice will:
 - state what payment is required for
 - detail the total amount due
 - account for VAT, where appropriate
 - state the date by which payment is due, i.e., 30 days from date on invoice
 - detail how and where to make payments
 - provide contact details for enquiries
- 1.3 If payment isn't made within 14 working days of the specified payment period, i.e., 30 days from when the invoice was sent out, a reminder will be sent.
- 1.4 If payment isn't made after a further seven working days, a final reminder letter will be sent. The final notification letter will inform the tenant that if payment isn't made in full, the council will start legal proceeding to recover the debt.
- 1.5 If payment still isn't made after a further five days, legal proceedings will commence. The tenant will be notified.

2. Instalments

- 2.1 The council aims to recover all debts within the payment period. In exceptional circumstances, the council will consider a proposal from a tenant to clear a debt by instalments.
- 2.2 Any proposal must be realistic, and the debt must be cleared within one calendar year.
- 2.3 Any agreement to recover a debt by instalment must be approved by the finance manager or the town clerk.

3. Authorisation levels

- 3.1 All action up until eviction, including court proceedings, will be delegated to the town clerk.
- 3.2 Authorisation for eviction must be sought from the council.
- 3.3 The town clerk has authority to write off debts up to £250.

4. Reporting

- 4.1 Outstanding debts over £1,000 and over three months in age will be reported to the council's Strategy and Finance Committee.
- 4.2 The council's Strategy and Finance Committee will be notified on actions and progress on debts where legal action is being taken.

5. Conduct

- 5.1 The council will maintain confidentiality and debts will be discussed in exempt business, only.

6. Communication

- 6.1 All correspondence will be in plain English.
- 6.2 Correspondence will be by letter or email; any reference to letter includes email correspondence.
- 6.3 All verbal agreements will be confirmed in writing.

Supporting Procedure

This procedure is supported by a policy.

Implementation date: 1 May 2024

Review Date: May 2027

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
May 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Review of Arrangements with other Local Authorities, Not-For-Profit Bodies, and Businesses

Purpose of Report

To review the arrangements Lyme Regis Town Council has with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies, and businesses

Recommendation

Members note the report

Background

1. Standing order 5.j.xi requires a 'Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies, and businesses. The reviews should be undertaken each year either by the Full Council or following consideration and recommendation from the relevant committee.

Report

Dorset Council

2. The town council has the following relationships with Dorset Council.

The Tripartite Agreement

3. The Tripartite Agreement was originally between West Dorset District Council (WDDC), Dorset County Council (DCC) and the town council; it was entered into in April 2011. The agreement details management and maintenance responsibilities for Bell Cliff public open space, Marine Parade, Cart Road, Cobb Gate Beach, Front Beach and sand bar.

Beach Management

4. Beyond the mean high-water line, the town council owns Monmouth Beach and the sandy beach. Under the Tripartite Agreement, the town council manages other beaches on behalf of Dorset Council. However, the precise nature of the town council's management responsibilities is not clearly defined in the tripartite agreement.
5. As part of its sea defence undertaking, Dorset Council dredges the harbour and reprofiles the Front Beach in spring each year. In 2023-24, the town council made a £15,000 contribution to the project.

Harbour Revision Order

6. The Harbour Revision Order (HRO) defines the 'harbour area' and sets out the roles, responsibilities, and control mechanisms of the harbourmaster within that area. It is intended to bring greater standardisation of 'rules' between harbours and make the 'harbour experience' easier, more easily understood and more consistent between one harbour and another.
7. The local Order has been consulted on, approved by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and is awaiting signature. It is especially significant in Lyme because the 'harbour area' includes areas either owned by or otherwise controlled by this council. For this reason, assurances were sought from and given by Dorset Council about how the HRO would be applied locally. If those assurances are honoured then the HRO, when signed, should have very little impact on this council's operations.

The boat park and accreted land

8. The town council leases a hard-standing area and a section of accreted land to Dorset Council for boat storage; the lease is held over from 2015. Up until February 2024⁴, Dorset Council illegally occupied town council-owned land beyond the lease agreement boundary and charged others for its use; this land is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
9. The town council has recently finalised negotiations with Natural England for reduced boat storage in this area for a period of five years. The town council is now in the process of entering into a lease with Dorset Council to formally agree to its use of this land. The agreement will take effect from 1 April 2024.

Enforcement

10. The town council enforces Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) on behalf of Dorset Council. The PSPOs relate to dogs, litter, and seagulls. The latest dog-related PSPO allows dogs to roam off lead on the sandy beach from 1 October to 30 April; this is subject to review by Dorset Council.

Business rates

11. The town council pays business rates to Dorset Council on: Monmouth Beach car park; Cabanya car park; Woodmead car park and premises; caravan park and premises; workshop and premises; St Michael's community offices⁵; Cart Road beach huts; Jubilee Pavilion; kiosk store and premises; kiosk and premises; Guildhall Cottage offices and premises; cemetery and premises; Guildhall first floor and premises; Charmouth Road park and ride; and Candles on the Cobb Pavilion.
12. From 2021-22, public toilets are exempt from business rates.

⁴ The town council received consent from Natural England on 26 February 2024.

⁵ Liability for business rates is currently being discussed with Lyme Regis Development Trust

13. In 2023-24, the town council's business rates totalled £133,725. A revaluation of business rates was undertaken in 2022-23 and the town council's business rates are increasing as a result of this exercise. There is no material change to business rates for property assets but the business rates for the council's car parks have increased significantly. In 2024-25 the total business rates payable is £198,660.

Charmouth Road car park

14. In 2015, the town council entered in to a 20-year lease with WDDC for the use of an area of land in Charmouth Road car park as a skatepark. The initial lease rent was £2,000pa and the rent increases annually in line with the retail price index. However, Dorset Council has not increased the lease rent since 2017. The lease rent in 2023-24 was £2,119.41.

Transport

15. Although there is not a direct relationship, the town council operates its town bus service alongside the award of Dorset Council's schools' bus service contract. The current local schools' contract operator, Damory, runs Lyme Regis town bus service Monday to Friday between the times the school bus service is not operating. The operating cost of the town bus service in 2023-24 was £14,619.33.

Elections and by-elections

16. From 2019 onwards, the town council is responsible for its election costs. The 2023-24 budget for elections was £3,850.

Member complaints

17. Complaints against council members in respect of breaches of the town council's code of conduct are considered by Dorset Council's monitoring officer.

The precept

18. Dorset Council collects the precept on behalf of the town council. The 2023-24 precept was £132,778.80.

Planning

19. The town council is a statutory consultee in the planning process. It now holds planning committee meetings every three weeks and responds to applications that fall outside that cycle through delegated authority.
20. Qualifying new development attracts a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is paid by 'developers' to Dorset Council as planning authority. This council subsequently receives from Dorset Council a proportion of the levy collected from local developments, currently 15% in the absence of a neighbourhood plan (25% with a neighbourhood plan). This 'local share' is paid twice yearly. The most recent payment was in the sum of about £4k. The payments to some communities where much more development is taking place can be very considerable.

21. This council has to account for any monies received and record how and when it is spent. Payment may be recovered if not spent within 10 years. There are some limits on how any monies may be spent, primarily to support the delivery of growth.
22. There have been repeated consultations on changing the basis of developer contributions, most recently earlier this year, but no specific changes have been agreed to date.

ICT

23. In September 2016, the town council entered into a three-year agreement with Dorset County Council to provide hardware, software, and technical support; data storage and backup; software licensing for all networked computers; broadband connection; and internet security. The agreement has been extended and currently costs c.£7,500pa.
24. In 2021, the town council entered into a separate agreement with Dorset Council to provide laptops and IT support to members. The cost of this agreement is c.£12,000 per annum.

Visit Dorset

25. The town council has a service level agreement with Dorset Council to provide and manage the Visit Lyme Regis tourism website as a microsite of Visit Dorset. The agreement started on 1 May 2021 for a three-year term, with a possible extension of one year, plus one year. The town council pays £1,445 + VAT in annual costs and a further £5,500 each year for ongoing management.

Car Parking Orders

26. Although this council has the legal ability to make parking places orders controlling the use of its car parks and to enforce the provisions of those orders using its own staff, the orders still require the approval of Dorset Council before being brought into legal effect.

Highways

27. Dorset Council is the highways' authority for Lyme Regis, but some of Dorset Council's functions have been delegated to the town council in an agency agreement. Functions include verge maintenance, highway licences, and A boards.

Dorset Council Waste Services

28. Regular discussions, including an annual seafront planning meeting, take place with Dorset Council Waste Services. The town council buys in additional services to supplement the 'normal' services provided by Dorset Council Waste Services. The town council also manages the activities of its cleansing operative and seafront attendant to dovetail into the services provided by Dorset Council Waste Services.

CCTV

29. Although this council has agreed to install new and additional CCTV cameras, as well as replace existing units, there is no local facility for 'real time' monitoring. This facility is available

in Dorchester and discussions are ongoing with Dorset Council about how the local cameras can be linked to and monitored by the Dorchester control centre.

The Lynch

30. The ownership of the Lynch remains undetermined, but the town council has and will continue to work with Dorset Council on maintenance of the structure.

Not-For-Profit bodies and business

Anning Road Playing Field

31. For most of the year, Lyme Regis Youth Football teams use the playing field for evening training during the week and games at the weekend. By default, the youth teams have almost exclusive use of the Candles on the Cobb Pavilion. This arrangement will be reviewed early in the new administration.
32. The town council operates a park and ride service from a site off Charmouth Road. The council makes an annual payment for use of the land and contract with First Bus to run a scheduled service. To ensure the service's operation, the town council has agreed to underwrite First Bus's losses. In 2023-24 the land payment was £11,093.94 and the bus service operation was underwritten by £10,901.
33. The town council has five-year grant-funding relationships with five not-for-profit bodies: Lyme Regis Development Trust (The Hub), Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride, Lyme Arts Community Trust (Marine Theatre), Bridport and District Citizens Advice, and B Sharp. Regular performance reports on each organisation are presented to the Tourism, Community and Publicity Committee. The funding principally supports the organisations' revenue costs.
34. The town council has a £15,000 budget to provide annual capital grants, typically £500–1,000, to local organisations. Each year there are 15-20 beneficiaries. In 2023-24, 17 organisations were awarded grants totalling £11,122.48.
35. Incorporated into the town council's annual budgets are annual service level agreements and grants. For 2023-24 this includes: £13,757.80 to Woodmead Halls Management Committee for the provision of public access to its toilets, £4,000 to the Christmas Lights Committee, £4,394 for the summer lifeguard service provided by the RNLI and £850 to support the fossil warden service provided by the Jurassic Coast Trust.
36. In 2023-24, the town council made ad hoc grants of £3,300 to the Fossil Festival in April 2023, £5,000 to the Regatta and Carnival Committee for firework displays in July and November and £3,000 to Visitor Support from the Jubilee Pavilion.
37. The town council also has medium term agreements with Kitson and Trotman for legal advice, Darkin Miller Chartered Accountants for internal audit, Chapman Geotechnical Ltd for geotechnical advice, Crickmay Stark for building services, Topsparks Ltd for electrical works and plumbing works, and South West Councils for human resources support.

38. The council also has around a further 50 regular service arrangements, e.g., toilet cleaning, fire alarm servicing, lift servicing, photocopiers, and mobile phones. The council also enters into a number of one-off contracts, e.g., office cleaning. Higher value arrangements are normally governed by contracts, lower value arrangements are normally governed by exchange of letters.
39. The town council has c.200 assets. Relationships with businesses and individuals are governed by leases, licences, or concessions.
40. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

John Wright
Town clerk
April 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Appointment of Signatories for Wilkinson Legacy account

Purpose of Report

To allow members to approve revised signatories for the Wilkinson Legacy account

Recommendation

The council approves the revised signatories for the Wilkinson Legacy account

Background

1. The council holds a historic legacy account with National Savings and Investments.
2. The account is currently in the name of a previous mayor, Owen Lovell.

Report

3. Statements for the account were previously sent by post to the council offices, but this year have been digitalised. Therefore, paper copies need to be requested, or an online account created by the account holder.
4. Due to the name on the account, officers cannot access statements for the account, which are needed for audit purposes.
5. Members are therefore asked to approve changing the bank signatories to the mayor, the town clerk, the deputy town clerk, and the finance manager.
6. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
April 2024

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: List of Payments

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the payments made in the month of March 2024

Recommendation

Members note the report and approve the attached schedule of payments in March 2024 for the sum of £404,300.05

Background

1. Lyme Regis Town Council's Financial Regulations, section 5.2, state:

'A schedule of payments forming part of the agenda for the meeting shall be prepared by the finance officer. Petty cash reimbursement will be reported as a total when re-imbursed takes place, unless this exceeds £200 per month, when full details will be provided. The relevant invoices will be made available for inspection at the council offices. If the schedule is in order, it shall be approved by a resolution of the council.'

Report

2. The format of the report was amended to fulfil the requirements of the transparency code. As well as the date, amount, payee and some brief details, the report now includes an estimated VAT figure and the net cost to the council, as well as a 'merchant category'. The VAT and expenditure categories are indicative of that supplier, because the schedule shows a list of payments, not invoices, so one payment may include multiple invoices and multiple VAT rates, etc. The 'probable' VAT code is the code predominantly associated with the supplier. The 'merchant category' is the name used to group a number of nominal codes and represents the summary level we report on.
3. I present the list of payments for the month of March 2024, **appendix 19A**.
4. If you would like any further information about any of these payments, I would encourage you to contact me in the office prior to the meeting.

Shanie Cox
Finance assistant
April 2024

APPENDIX 19A

		<u>Lyme Regis Town Council</u>							
		<u>Payments list for March 2024</u>			<u>£404,300.05</u>				
		<u>Total</u>							
Date	Supplier	Detail	Frequency	Payment Type	Amount	Probable VAT Code*	Probable VAT*	Probable Net*	Indicative Expenditure Category
NAT WEST BANK									
01-Mar	DORSET COUNCIL	Rates	Monthly	DD	9609	0%	-	9,609.00	Utilities
01-Mar	DORSET COUNCIL	Rates	Monthly	DD	232	0%	-	232.00	Utilities
14-Mar	HMRC NDDS	Tax and NI payment	Monthly	DD	16374.18	0%	-	16,374.18	Staffing
15-Mar	BANKLINE	Bank charges	Monthly	BLN	41.95	0%	-	41.95	Office Expenses
19-Mar	WORLDPAY	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	28.33	0%	-	28.33	Office Expenses
20-Mar	WORLDPAY	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	25.02	0%	-	25.02	Office Expenses
22-Mar	SALARIES	Staff salaries - March 24	Monthly	EBP	48988.18	0%	-	48,988.18	Staffing
				Total	<u>75298.66</u>				
LLOYDS BANK									
01-Mar	ZOOM	Subscription	Monthly	DD	12.99	20%	2.17	10.83	Office Expenses
01-Mar	DWP	Bin collection	Monthly	FPO	3385.64	0%	-	3,385.64	Outside Works
01-Mar	CLUB WIFI	Annual support and licence	Annually	FPO	1892.4	20%	315.40	1,577.00	Outside Works
01-Mar	WESTCOUNTRY LAND	Survey work-Monmouth beach	One off	FPO	1518	20%	253.00	1,265.00	Outside Works
04-Mar	SQUARE	Team plus till point system	Monthly	DEB	20	20%	3.33	16.67	Outside Works
04-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
05-Mar	PLANNING PORTAL	Planning for CCTV at skatepark	One off	DEB	353	20%	58.83	294.17	Projects
06-Mar	SCUTUM	Installation of CCTV	One off	FPO	50522.8	20%	8,420.47	42,102.33	Outside Works
07-Mar	EDF	Gas charges- office	Monthly	DD	865.1	0%	-	865.10	Utilities
07-Mar	DC PENSION FUND	Pension contribution- February	Monthly	FPO	14360.86	0%	-	14,360.86	Staffing
07-Mar	WOODROFFE	Grant	One off	FPO	5000	0%	-	5,000.00	Projects
07-Mar	CLARE TRENCHARD	Repair to juggler	One off	FPO	2560	0%	-	2,560.00	Projects
07-Mar	GLEN CLEANING	Seafront toilet cleaning	Monthly	FPO	1517.47	20%	252.91	1,264.56	Outside Works
07-Mar	TOPSPARKS	Electrical works	One off	FPO	1402.78	20%	233.80	1,168.98	Outside Works
07-Mar	NEWSQUEST	Job and grant advertising	One off	FPO	1115.58	20%	185.93	929.65	Marketing & Tourism
07-Mar	AX LYME CANCER SUPPORT	Grant	One off	FPO	900	0%	-	900.00	Grants
07-Mar	DENCHER	Jubilee pavilion site inspection	One off	FPO	630	20%	105.00	525.00	Outside Works
07-Mar	JADE SECURITY	Cash collections	Monthly	FPO	547.7	20%	91.28	456.42	Outside Works
07-Mar	TRAVIS PERKINS	External supplies	One off	FPO	547.48	20%	91.25	456.23	Outside Works
07-Mar	ADVANTAGE DIGITAL PRINT	Newsletter leaflets	One off	FPO	397	20%	66.17	330.83	Office Expenses
07-Mar	B CLEANING	Office cleaning	Monthly	FPO	375	0%	-	375.00	Office Expenses
07-Mar	AXE SKIP HIRE	Skip hire	One off	FPO	354	20%	59.00	295.00	Outside Works
07-Mar	IEP	Pest control	One off	FPO	340	0%	-	340.00	Outside Works
07-Mar	FLOWBIRD	Call out charges	One off	FPO	321.6	20%	53.60	268.00	Outside Works
07-Mar	COBB GARAGE	Replacement tyres- Lengthsman vehicle	One off	FPO	317.52	20%	52.92	264.60	Outside Works
07-Mar	SCREWFIX	External supplies	One off	FPO	260.62	20%	43.44	217.18	Outside Works
07-Mar	AMMONITE REMOVALS	Garage clearance	One off	FPO	240	20%	40.00	200.00	Unbudgeted expendit
07-Mar	AXMINSTER GARDEN M	Machinery maintenance	One off	FPO	239.73	20%	39.96	199.78	Outside Works
07-Mar	YELLOWBOX	New staff uniform	One off	FPO	224.88	20%	37.48	187.40	Staffing
07-Mar	PARISH ONLINE	Mapping software	One off	FPO	216	20%	36.00	180.00	Office Expenses
07-Mar	CENTRAL SOUTHERN	Annual charge for CSL router	Annually	FPO	216	20%	36.00	180.00	Office Expenses
07-Mar	MOLE AVON	External supplies	One off	FPO	142.15	20%	23.69	118.46	Outside Works
07-Mar	ARTHUR FORDHAMS	External supplies	One off	FPO	122.05	20%	20.34	101.71	Outside Works
07-Mar	DCAN	Great big Dorset hedge grant	One off	FPO	108.45	0%	-	108.45	Projects
07-Mar	LR SCOUTS	Scout bursary	One off	FPO	107.5	0%	-	107.50	Grants
07-Mar	ECOM6	Transaction charges	Monthly	FPO	106.14	20%	17.69	88.45	Outside Works
07-Mar	DJ NEWBERRY	Animal disposal	One off	FPO	100	0%	-	100.00	Outside Works
07-Mar	SIX PAYMENT	Transaction charges	Monthly	FPO	63.36	0%	-	63.36	Outside Works
07-Mar	EUROFFICE	Stationary order	One off	FPO	59.64	20%	9.94	49.70	Office Expenses
07-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Harbourmaster store	Quarterly	FPO	46.74	0%	-	46.74	Utilities

07-Mar	METRIC	Transaction charges	Monthly	FPO	43.2	20%	7.20	36.00	Outside Works
07-Mar	SW HYGIENE	Yellow bag collection	Monthly	FPO	40.46	20%	6.74	33.72	Outside Works
07-Mar	STAFF	Eye test	One off	FPO	35	0%	-	35.00	Staffing
07-Mar	STAFF	Eye test	One off	FPO	25	0%	-	25.00	Staffing
07-Mar	TOTAL PLUMBING	External supplies	One off	FPO	24.02	20%	4.00	20.02	Outside Works
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Hill road	Monthly	DD	1063.67	20%	177.28	886.39	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Office	Monthly	DD	1053.59	20%	175.60	877.99	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges-MB car park	Monthly	DD	917.72	20%	152.95	764.77	Utilities
08-Mar	UNITY 5	Zatpark charges	Monthly	DD	497.04	20%	82.84	414.20	Outside Works
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Marine parade	Monthly	DD	419.39	20%	69.90	349.49	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Guildhall	Monthly	DD	335.06	20%	55.84	279.22	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Cadet hut	Monthly	DD	275.45	20%	45.91	229.54	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Guildhall	Monthly	DD	240.65	20%	40.11	200.54	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Cabanya car park	Monthly	DD	222.11	20%	37.02	185.09	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Cobb road	Monthly	DD	196.46	20%	32.74	163.72	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Playing fields	Monthly	DD	142	20%	23.67	118.33	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges-Guildhall	Monthly	DD	133.95	20%	22.33	111.63	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Marine parade	Monthly	DD	97.73	20%	16.29	81.44	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Workshop	Monthly	DD	60.27	20%	10.05	50.23	Utilities
08-Mar	YU ENERGY	Electricity charges- Showers	Monthly	DD	13.62	20%	2.27	11.35	Utilities
08-Mar	FRUUGO	D Day oil lamps	One off	DEB	200.49	0%	-	200.49	Projects
08-Mar	IOSH	IOSH membership	Annually	DEB	147	0%	-	147.00	Office Expenses
08-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	10	20%	1.67	8.33	Utilities
11-Mar	BARCLAYCARD	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	15.76	0%	-	15.76	Outside Works
11-Mar	BARCLAYCARD	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	14.28	0%	-	14.28	Outside Works
11-Mar	AMAZON	Staff footwear	One off	DEB	70.86	20%	11.81	59.05	Office Expenses
11-Mar	PAYSLIPS DIRECT	Payslips	One off	DEB	49.2	20%	8.20	41.00	Office Expenses
11-Mar	AMAZON	Computer accessories	One off	DEB	28.77	20%	4.80	23.98	Office Expenses
11-Mar	MAILCHIMP	Subscription for business briefing	Monthly	DEB	12.25	20%	2.04	10.21	Office Expenses
11-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	10	20%	1.67	8.33	Utilities
11-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
11-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
12-Mar	QUADIENT	Franking machine top up	One off	DD	100	0%	-	100.00	Office Expenses
12-Mar	TAKEPAYMENTS	Transaction fees	Monthly	DD	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Office Expenses
12-Mar	TAKEPAYMENTS	Transaction fees	Monthly	DD	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Office Expenses
14-Mar	ALLSTAR	Fuel usage	Monthly	DD	421.9	20%	70.32	351.58	Outside Works
14-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- MB chalets	Quarterly	DD	2182.96	0%	-	2,182.96	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Lister gardens	Quarterly	DD	1173.64	0%	-	1,173.64	Utilities
15-Mar	AIB	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	395.16	0%	-	395.16	Outside Works
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Shelters	Quarterly	DD	316.13	0%	-	316.13	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- MP toilets	Monthly	DD	289.5	0%	-	289.50	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges - MB bowling green	Quarterly	DD	249.74	0%	-	249.74	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Town hall	Quarterly	DD	133.2	0%	-	133.20	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Candles on the cobb	Quarterly	DD	127.83	0%	-	127.83	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges - Cemetery	Quarterly	DD	118.41	0%	-	118.41	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- TIC	Quarterly	DD	103.14	0%	-	103.14	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Mini golf	Quarterly	DD	96.08	0%	-	96.08	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Former scout hut	Quarterly	DD	80.77	0%	-	80.77	Utilities
15-Mar	EE LIMITED	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DD	78.36	20%	13.06	65.30	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges - Gardens	Quarterly	DD	45.71	0%	-	45.71	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Trough	Quarterly	DD	29.9	0%	-	29.90	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Boat area	Quarterly	DD	22.66	0%	-	22.66	Utilities
15-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Langmoor gardens	Quarterly	DD	21.99	0%	-	21.99	Utilities
15-Mar	CHAIR COVER DEPOT	Wedding chair covers	One off	DEB	7.53	0%	-	7.53	Projects
18-Mar	SAGE SOFTWARE LTD	Subscription	Monthly	DD	391.2	20%	65.20	326.00	Office Expenses
18-Mar	ETSY	Wedding table runner	One off	DEB	37.04	20%	6.17	30.87	Projects
18-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
18-Mar	NICK TOMLINSON ECOLOGY	Bat survey - Cemetery	One off	FPO	336.14	0%	-	336.14	Projects
18-Mar	TADDLEFARM	Tables and barrel hire - Civic night	One off	FPO	328.5	20%	54.75	273.75	Office Expenses

19-Mar	WORLDPAY	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	66	0%	-	66.00	Office Expenses
19-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	8	20%	1.33	6.67	Utilities
19-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
20-Mar	WORLDPAY	Transaction charges	Monthly	DD	23.94	0%	-	23.94	Office Expenses
20-Mar	REFUND	Refund for beach hut booking	One off	FPO	125	0%	-	125.00	Refunds
20-Mar	REFUND	Refund for beach hut key	One off	FPO	20	0%	-	20.00	Refunds
20-Mar	REFUND	Refund for beach hut key	One off	FPO	20	0%	-	20.00	Refunds
20-Mar	REFUND	Refund for beach hut key	One off	FPO	20	0%	-	20.00	Refunds
20-Mar	REFUND	Refund for beach hut booking	One off	FPO	15	0%	-	15.00	Refunds
20-Mar	REFUND	Refund for parking overcharge	One off	FPO	11	0%	-	11.00	Refunds
22-Mar	MAILING ROOM	Maintenance charge	One off	DD	504.65	20%	84.11	420.54	Office Expenses
22-Mar	EDF ENERGY	Electricity charges- WM pay and display machine	Monthly	DD	245.56	5%	11.69	233.87	Utilities
25-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
25-Mar	GIFFGAFF	Mobile bundle	Monthly	DEB	6	20%	1.00	5.00	Utilities
25-Mar	DORSET COUNCIL	Dredging contribution	One off	FPO	150000	0%	-	150,000.00	Office Expenses
25-Mar	DORSET COUNCIL	Recharge for election	One off	FPO	5047.34	0%	-	5,047.34	Office Expenses
25-Mar	DC PENSION FUND	Pension contribution- March	Monthly	FPO	13980.37	0%	-	13,980.37	Staffing
25-Mar	AX EXCAVATORS	Landslip movement	One off	FPO	11983.2	20%	1,997.20	9,986.00	Unbudgeted expendit
25-Mar	BOAT BUILDING	Coronation bench	One off	FPO	7000	0%	-	7,000.00	Projects
25-Mar	DC PENSION FUND	Pension contribution	One off	FPO	3865.43	0%	-	3,865.43	Staffing
25-Mar	CHAPMAN GEOTECHNIC	Landslip inspections	One off	FPO	3262.5	0%	-	3,262.50	Outside Works
25-Mar	HC LEWIS CONTRACTORS	Langmoor gardens pathways	One off	FPO	2258.4	20%	376.40	1,882.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	WOODROFFE	Bursary	One off	FPO	2000	0%	-	2,000.00	Projects
25-Mar	DAMORY	Bus subsidy	Monthly	FPO	1368.08	0%	-	1,368.08	Rents
25-Mar	THE TOWN MILL	Grant	One off	FPO	1000	0%	-	1,000.00	Grants
25-Mar	WESTCOUNTRY LAND	Survey work	One off	FPO	930	20%	155.00	775.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	JADE SECURITY	Cash collection	Monthly	FPO	515.65	20%	85.94	429.71	Outside Works
25-Mar	AXMINSTER GARDEN M	Machinery maintenance	One off	FPO	510.55	20%	85.09	425.46	Outside Works
25-Mar	LYME REGIS TOWN BAND	Grant	One off	FPO	500	0%	-	500.00	Marketing & Tourism
25-Mar	1ST LYME VALLY SCOUTS	Grant	One off	FPO	499	0%	-	499.00	Grants
25-Mar	1ST LYME VALLY SCOUTS	Grant	One off	FPO	499	0%	-	499.00	Grants
25-Mar	PLAY INSPECTION CO	Annual inspection	Annually	FPO	324	20%	54.00	270.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	ROYAL MAIL	Door to door service	One off	FPO	318.01	0%	-	318.01	Office Expenses
25-Mar	TOPSPARKS	Electrical works	One off	FPO	316.73	20%	52.79	263.94	Outside Works
25-Mar	MAXOLOGY	Drone footage - landslip	One off	FPO	311.4	20%	51.90	259.50	Marketing & Tourism
25-Mar	FOOTPRINT FUTURES	Bid writing workshop	One off	FPO	250	0%	-	250.00	Unbudgeted expendit
25-Mar	CIPFA	Annual subscription	Annually	FPO	236	20%	39.33	196.67	Office Expenses
25-Mar	SOUTH WEST WATER	Water charges- Beach MP	Quarterly	FPO	201.68	0%	-	201.68	Utilities
25-Mar	TRAVIS PERKINS	External supplies	One off	FPO	182.59	20%	30.43	152.16	Outside Works
25-Mar	IEP	Pest control	One off	FPO	180	0%	-	180.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	STAFF	Staff expenses	One off	FPO	160.4	0%	-	160.40	Staffing
25-Mar	GEOFF LOKER	Loler examination	One off	FPO	150	0%	-	150.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	DAVID TUCKER	Bid writing workshop	One off	FPO	150	0%	-	150.00	Unbudgeted expendit
25-Mar	CLARITY COPIERS	Copier usage	Monthly	FPO	149.16	20%	24.86	124.30	Office Expenses
25-Mar	C K COMMUNICATIONS	Airtime rental radios	Annually	FPO	144	20%	24.00	120.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	MOLE AVON	External supplies	One off	FPO	91.23	20%	15.21	76.03	Outside Works
25-Mar	PODPOINT	Admin fee	Monthly	FPO	88.74	20%	14.79	73.95	Outside Works
25-Mar	MICHELLE OWEN	Wedding flowers	One off	FPO	85.95	0%	-	85.95	Projects
25-Mar	ARTHUR FORDHAMS	External supplies	One off	FPO	82.23	20%	13.71	68.53	Outside Works
25-Mar	SIX PAYMENT	Transaction charges	Monthly	FPO	81.66	0%	-	81.66	Outside Works
25-Mar	ECOM6	Transaction charges	Monthly	FPO	81.66	20%	13.61	68.05	Outside Works
25-Mar	OFCOM	Radio license	Annually	FPO	75	0%	-	75.00	Office Expenses
25-Mar	SCREWFIX	External supplies	One off	FPO	59.9	20%	9.98	49.92	Outside Works
25-Mar	SW HYGIENE	Yellow bag disposal	Monthly	FPO	53.95	20%	8.99	44.96	Outside Works
25-Mar	METRIC	Hosting costs	Monthly	FPO	43.2	20%	7.20	36.00	Outside Works
25-Mar	NPOWER	Electricity charges- Harbour master store	Monthly	FPO	43.07	5%	2.05	41.02	Utilities
25-Mar	STAFF	Staff expenses	One off	FPO	35	0%	-	35.00	Staffing
25-Mar	YELLOWBOX	Staff clothing	One off	FPO	23.94	20%	3.99	19.95	Staffing
25-Mar	IMAGIN	Staff name badge	One off	FPO	17.88	20%	2.98	14.90	Staffing
25-Mar	AXMINSTER TOOLS	External supplies	One off	FPO	14.98	20%	2.50	12.48	Outside Works

Committee: Strategy and Finance

Date: 24 April 2024

Title: Investments and Cash Holdings

Purpose of Report

To inform members of the council's current reserve position

Recommendation

Members note the cash position at the end of January 2024 and instruct officers on any measures they wish to introduce to increase investment return

Background

1. The council's cash holding at the beginning of the financial year was c.£1.634k.

Report

2. The council's cash holding at 31 March 2024 was c.£2.046m, **appendix 20A**.
3. The council has adopted a prudent approach to forecasting its reserve at the end of the financial year and has ensured it remains as robust as is possible.
4. The reserve is improved on previous assumptions for a number of reasons. Officers have always adopted a prudent approach in any financial model, the finance department has been successful in debt collection and to date, minimal expenditure has been released for three major 2023-24 projects.

Treasury Management

5. The council's financial regulations state its approach to treasury management, see below:

'Lyme Regis Town Council aims to hold a minimum reserve of 50% of budgeted income. With the approval of the council, this reserve can be varied in response to external and internal events, e.g., major programmed expenditure, financial uncertainty. In addition to this reserve, the council also holds surplus funds as a result of the timing of income and expenditure. It is important that such funds are invested prudently with regard to the council's fiduciary responsibility to local council taxpayers the priority for security and the liquidity of investments.'
6. The council's policy on investment is risk-based, i.e., low, medium, or high; it has remained a low-risk approach for some time.
7. Through the budget-setting process, the council aims to undertake a review of its investments and loans and determine its appetite for investment risk. This approach may be varied by the council from time-to-time as circumstances dictate.

8. The council's financial regulations further state that the council's current approach to investments and risk must be:
 - made in sterling
 - short term: investments will not normally exceed 12 months
 - made with recognised and reputable financial institution.
9. Officers will review treasury management over the next quarter to determine the best investment options and will liaise with the chairman and vice-chairman of this committee on any measures they wish to introduce to increase investment return.
10. Any recommendations from this committee will be considered by the Full Council on 1 May 2024.

Naomi Cleal
Finance manager
April 2024

<u>Lyme Regis Town Council</u>			
<u>Bank Balances</u>			
<u>31-Mar-24</u>			
		£	Access
NatWest- General		1,000	Instant
NatWest Liquidity Manager 1.45%		84,051	Instant
NatWest Special Interest Bearing Account 1%		481	Instant
Natwest Fixed C - 3.7%		200,000	17/04/2024
Natwest Fixed D - 3.7%		200,000	17/04/2024
Natwest Fixed E - 3.65%		200,000	15/04/2024
Natwest Fixed F - 4.04%		300,000	12/04/2024
Lloyds - Current		11,000	Instant
Lloyds - Liquidity Manager (0.7%)		949,273	Instant
Wilkinson Legacy 0.6%		538	One month
Charity Bank - 3.56%		100,000	29/06/2024
TOTAL		<u>2,046,343</u>	