

Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

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Councillors nominated to the Services Committee are hereby summoned to attend the following meeting. Please inform the Clerk if you are unable to attend.

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

**MEETING:** Finance and Governance Committee Meeting

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 24 July 2019 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, DT4 8NG

This is a meeting in public, not a public meeting. If you would like to attend and have any special requirements e.g. access or a copy of the agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact us.

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedAgenda and papers are available at [www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

J L Biscombe, CiLCA

Town Clerk 18 July 2019 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Agenda

1. Welcome by the Chair
2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the last meeting
5. Councillor questions
6. Public comments and questions
7. Public toilet charging
8. Grants Policy
9. Dependents’ Care Expenses
10. Financial monitoring
11. Information items
12. **Welcome by the Chair**
13. **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

To approve apologies for absence and substitutions.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive Councillor declarations of interest in matters on the agenda

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 12 June 2019 as a true and accurate record.

Recommendation:

That Councillors agree the minutes and that they are duly signed as a true and accurate record.

1. **Councillor’s Question Time**

Prior notice preferred where possible

1. **Public Question Time**

The length of time available for public questions will be determined by the Chairman.

1. **Public Toilet Charging**

**Toilet Charging**

**Purpose of Report**

To discuss the options for income generation from charging for the use of public toilets.

**Background**

The Town Council is at present responsible for the management, maintenance and cleanliness of 10 public convenience facilities (Kings Statue (Promenade), Pier Bandstand, Cove Street, Greenhill Gardens, Lodmoor Car Park, Maiden Street, Nothe Gardens, Overcombe Corner, Swannery Car Park and the seasonal toilets on the seafront).

Additionally, from Spring 2020 the Council is due to be responsible for the future management and maintenance of the extended Beach Office and toilet facility development on the central seafront adjacent to the King Statue. This will provide 18 unisex toilets, 3 accessible toilets, changing places space, a parent room, and a family room. Dorset Council will be responsible for delivering the facility.

At the Full Council meeting on the 31st July, Members will be asked to consider funding a financial shortfall to deliver the Beach Office and toilet facility development. This is in addition to the funding set out in this report.

Currently, the Council makes a charge of 20p for the use of the Swannery Car Park ladies, gents or Baby change facilities. The Accessible toilet is free but is administered through the national radar scheme. This generates in the region of £6,500.00 per annum.

The Town Council’s annual public convenience budget is £395,000. The main costs are attributed to cleansing, water and future maintenance requirements - ongoing need to refurbish and replace equipment or undertake redecoration on a rolling programme of works.

**National Context**

Members may be minded to review: -

* Royal Society for Public Health report “Taking the Pxxx” - The Decline of the Great British Public Toilet – [www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/healthy-places/taking-the-p.html](http://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/healthy-places/taking-the-p.html)
* House of Commons - The Provision of Public Toilets (2007-08) report <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomloc/636/636.pdf>
* A number of high-profile organisations are removing charging including network rail - [www.networkrail.co.uk/news/peeing-for-free-is-no-april-fools-joke-for-millions-of-passengers/](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/news/peeing-for-free-is-no-april-fools-joke-for-millions-of-passengers/)

**Public Survey**

A public survey was carried out during April 2018 by the preceding Council. 813 responses were received. One of the questions asked respondents whether they would be prepared to pay to use a clean, well-cared for facility. 556 responded to this question, with 63% indicating they would be prepared to pay up to 20p, 9% between 20p and 50p and 21% 50p or over [the other 7% chose an alternative amount or arrangement]. Charging had quite strong mixed views both ways. Many people felt if charging was introduced it needed to be easy, quick and modern.

Of the respondents the majority were residents of Weymouth with the breakdown as follows

* 671 (83.4%) Residents
* 102 (12.7%) Visitors
* 12 (1.5%) Local Business owners
* 10 (1.2%) Holidaymakers
* 10 (1.2%) Workers

Overall results indicate that cleanliness, condition and general appearance are the main concerns.

**Charging**

As members are aware, the standard of the toilets requires improvement. Since the Town Council took over the toilets, we have been working with Dorset Council and local contractors to make a positive difference but overall there is significant work for the Town Council to do over the next few years to bring the toilets up to a good quality and condition that we need to offer and maintain.

The current condition of the toilets is a factor to be considered if the Council is minded to introduce a blanket charge to all toilets at this time although this does not prevent the Council from setting out its future holistic intentions as the facilities are brought up to a satisfactory standard; with a charging viability assessment provided to members in advance of any future improvement works taking place. For clarity, this report only details the fitting of charging units to the new toilets at the beach office as to fit them during construction will marginally reduce the installation costs of the charging units, and at the nearby underground facilities.

The income could be used by the Council to help offset the costs or future additional costs updating and regenerating the facilities for continued public use. However, this income is likely to be minimal as described later in this report.

The new Beach office development provides members with an opportunity to consider the application of a charge specific to this locality; and in advance of construction works to gain financial efficiencies with the installation of charging infrastructure. However, it should be highlighted that the Beach Office underground facilities would not be in a refurbished condition for the 2020 season. It is envisaged that the underground facilities would be available and open during peak season (Easter until October) to meet capacity requirements. Not charging for use of the underground facility would impact on income for the above ground toilets.

The assessment for these facilities may also influence members approach to the wider approach to charging and the future direction to officers.

**Financial**

The estimated net costs of implementing charging facilities at the new Beach office development and the underground units are:

The estimated guide price for the basic installation of a coin operated system (£4,486 per unit), retro fitted to each door of the unisex toilets, accessible toilets (Members may have a view on the accessible facilities being made available to all but with a priority to accessible users or providing these at no charge), parent room, and the family room at the **would be £103,178;**

To supply and install half height coin operated turnstiles in the ladies and gents’ underground facilities (x4) are estimated at **£19,344.**

The above provides a **total estimated cost £122,522 (a).**

It should also be noted that a combined coin and card unit bears an additional cost of £560 (+VAT) per unit with additional charges directly to the merchant vendor for usage of the card system (Estimated at £120.00 per unit). This will also require a network cable connection to each reader. For an occupancy indicator allow £359 (+VAT) per door. If these were to be chosen options, the additional amount to be added to the above is **£26,617**; providing a **Grand (estimated) total of £149,139; or if 50% of the toilets with a card unit - £20,497 and £143,019 total (b).**

The level of income that could be realised for the use of the toilets at the new Beach office development is not known. Officers are not aware of another Dorset seaside town that currently charges for the use of their toilets to use as a comparator. However, it could be reasonably anticipated that the £6,500 per annum generated at the Swannery Car Park could be multiplied by 2.5 to 3 times for the seafront location providing an estimate **of circa £16,250 to £19,500 per annum** at a charge of 20p in accordance with the survey results.

Therefore, based on the above assumptions, the return from investment (without accounting for staff time, cash handling, maintenance, vandalism, break-down etc.) would be between **6.3 years** (**a** - cash only units inclusive of turnstiles) **or 7.3 years** (**b** - cash & proportion card system) at best. Optimistically, the life expectancy of the equipment would be estimated at 10 –14 years. Based on this assumption, the balance of the years following the return from the investment would only cover the cost of the future replacement equipment. It would be unlikely to generate additional income that could be applied to priority projects and areas of work.

To fund the purchase of the charging equipment, the Council would have to either use reserves that are being accumulated to meet the Council’s legal liabilities or seek a loan incurring additional interest. Members should be aware that at the Full Council meeting on 31 July, the Council will be asked to consider additional funding for the beach office and toilets as there is currently a shortfall.

As an aside the Council could also be looking into the introduction of advertising within the toilets to generate income.

**Equalities**

Under the 2010 Equalities act, the Council are required to undertake an impact assessment where there is a change of service delivery.

**Environmental Impacts**

Carbon footprint generated through the production and installation of the charging infrastructure.

**Reputation**

Moving from a free to charging model could generate a negative public reputational image of the Council, especially where national organisations are moving away from charging and where it is hoped that the legislation to end the toilet tax is agreed by Parliament.

The soon to be launched Community Toilet scheme is based on a free to use model; businesses may look to change this or not be supportive of the scheme should the Council move across to a charge.

**Recommendations:**

That the Committee is asked to consider: -

1. the future charging approach for the use of Public toilets in Weymouth; and in particular the New Beach Office development (including underground facilities) as set out in this report from Easter 2020;
2. the use of reserves or application for a public works board loan to fund the works if members decide to take forward;
3. Committing resources to carry out an equality impact assessment.
4. **Grants Policy**

To discuss the Grants Policy and Form included in the agenda.

Recommendation:

That Councillors agree the Grants Policy and Form for 19/20 for immediate use.

1. **Dependents’ Care Expenses**

As Councillors are aware, currently the Council is not permitted to pay an allowance for childcare or dependent’s care expenses. This is under The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003/1021 and The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2004/2596.

This represents an inequality placed on Town Councillors in England. Currently Borough, District, County and Unitary Councillors in England can receive such allowances, as can Town and Parish Councillors in Wales.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) have been lobbying the Government for a change in legislation to end this inequality. Weymouth Town Council is a member of NALC and Members are asked to formally support this work. If Councillors agree the resolution the Town Clerk will write to NALC, The Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) and the local MP to affirm its request that work continues to end this inequality placed on Parish and Town Councillors in England.

Recommendation:

That Councillors agree to support the efforts of NALC and other bodies in calling for a change in legislation to allow the payment of dependents’ care expenses.

1. **Financial Monitoring**

Included in this agenda pack are a copy of:

* Quarterly Financial report (Q1 April - June)
* Recent expenditure

Recommendation

That Councillors note the reports.

1. **Information Items**

**Actions from the last meeting**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Action | Status |
| 12/06/19 | Ian Milne to update Councillors when funds are received from DC | In progress |
| 12/06/19 | Working group on the grants policy to bring an updated draft to the next meeting (Jane Biscombe) | Completed |
| 12/06/19 | Working group on income generation to bring an update to the next meeting (Matt Ryan) | In progress |
| 12/06/19 | Jane Biscombe to check Shadow Council minutes for notes of reserves to be transferred | No information found |
| 12/06/19 | Ian Milne to confirm expenditure on toilets and confirm the budgets available for vandalism recovery under each heading. | Completed |
| 12/06/19 | Jane Biscombe to provide Cllr Wheller with further information on military vehicle expenditure. | Completed |
| 12/06/19 | Ian Milne to request discretionary rate relief on public conveniences. | Completed |

**Committee Forward Plan**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Meeting | Items for consideration |
| 04/09/19 | Full Council | Updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations  Presentation from Weymouth BID  Presentation from Litter Free Dorset  Community Development  Town Centre |
| 11/09/19 | HR | Town Clerks Appraisal arrangements  Options for Enforcement staff  Contractors and the Real Living Wage |
| 18/09/19 | Services | Winter Maintenance Plan  Tumbledown Farm update  Radipole lottery project update |
| 25/09/19 | F&G | Policy Review  Mid-year review of capital expenditure 19/20 |
| 16/10/19 | Full Council | Mid-year review of capital expenditure 19/20  Draft Corporate Plan  Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan examiners report |
| 23/10/19 | Services | Laser lighting options to inform the budget draft  Deckchair concessions  Tumbledown Farm update  Scheme of charging 20/21  Public toilet cleansing in house service provision |
| 06/11/19 | F&G | Appointment of Internal Auditors for 20/21  Agency staff procurement  Quarterly Financial Report (Q2)  Draft Budget recommendations |
| 20/11/19 | Full Council | Appointment of Internal Auditors for 20/21 |
| 27/11/19 | HR | Annual appraisal outcomes  Staff car parking |
| 04/12/19 | Services | Tumbledown Farm update  CIL funding allocation |
| 18/12/19 | F&G | Draft Budget and Precept |
|  |  |  |
| 08/01/20 | Full Council | Draft Budget and Precept  Policy Review |
| 22/01/20 | Services | Tumbledown Farm update |
| 05/02/20 | F&G | Draft Risk Assessment  Quarterly Financial Report (Q3) |
| 19/02/20 | Full Council | Draft Risk Assessment |
| 04/03/20 | Services | Tumbledown Farm update |

Recommendation:

That Members note the information items