

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

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**Notes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Services Committee (Advisory)

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 2nd April 2021 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Zoom

**Councillors**

**Present:**

Cllr Ryan Hope (C) Cllr Kevin Brookes Cllr Alex Fuhrmann

Cllr David Gray (Sub) Cllr Gill Taylor Cllr Mark Tewkesbury

Cllr Graham Lambert Cllr Luke Wakeling (Sub) Cllr Tia Roos

Cllr Kate Wheller (VC) Cllr Oz Kanji Cllr David Northam

Cllr Becky Blake Cllr Peter Dickenson

**Officers**

Matt Ryan (Deputy Town Clerk)

Tara Williams (Parks and Open Spaces Manager)

Tony Hurley (Operations Manager)

Ed Warr (Town Centre Manager)

Niki Ayles (Democratic & Administration Officer)

Charlie Shepherd (Events Manager)

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| AS0001 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Hope welcomed attendees to the meeting.  Matt Ryan explained that on 5th May 2021 the Council agreed that instead of returning to face to face meetings, an enhanced scheme of delegation would be put in place in order to allow the Town Clerk to enable decisions to be taken under the direction of Councillors until face-to-face meetings recommence. Tonight’s meeting is therefore not a formal Services Committee meeting, but an advisory Services Committee Meeting. Although the meeting may look and feel like a formal Services Committee, it is not. Committee minutes will be held over until the next formal meeting can be held, and those minutes will be presented to Full Council and the next appropriate Committee meeting for approval or sign off. Any recommendations agreed will be to recommend actions to the Town Clerk. Matt Ryan has powers to deputise for the Town Clerk but will make her aware of all recommendations. |
| AS0002 | **Apologies for Absence**  Apologies were received from Cllr Harris, who was substituted by Cllr Gray, and Cllr James, who was substituted by Cllr Wakeling. |
| AS0003 | **Declarations of Interest**  There were no declarations of interest. |
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| AS0004 | **Councillors Questions**  There were no Councillor questions. |
| AS0005  AS0006 | **Public Comments and Questions**  The following public questions were put forward via Cllr Fuhrmann:  **“Is there to be further tree planting at the Links Road dog exercise area? If so, is there also a plan to maintain a set space for dog walkers at the location, as places dwindle in the town? I also felt that the community was not engaged in the process of taking away open space for dog exercise and comms should be improved.”**  The following response was provided by Tara Williams:  There are currently no plans to undertake any further tree planting at Links Road open space unless this is required by a future council decision. The site still provides space for dog walkers.    At the Full Council meeting on the 13 January, Councillor Kate Wheller, supported by Councillor Jan Bergman, asked for a tree to be planted for each child living in Weymouth who started primary school in 2020: this was in line with a campaign that was launched by BBC Countryfile, it also formed part of the Council’s wider desire to improve biodiversity and plant trees as part of its climate emergency objectives.  This large site was selected for partial planting in order to meet the Council’s climate emergency objectives. Unfortunately, the Town Council has very limited areas of open space to undertake this level of planting and therefore clear decisions have to be made, which will involve the loss of some wider open grass areas in order for the Council to fully commit to planting trees to offset its carbon emissions.  I’m pleased to report that the Children’s Community Woodland project has received very positive publicity via the local media.  **“With the parks team being licenced to enforce the dog PSPO, what is the allocation and cost impact of attention being taken away from their original roles?”**  The following response was provided by Tara Williams:  Parks and Open Spaces staff were offered the opportunity by Dorset Council to attend a course to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN), primarily relating to dog fouling. Previously parks staff stepped, knelt, dug or picked up and disposed of people’s dog faeces without the ability to take action. The staff have frequently witnessed members of the public allowing their dogs to defaecate and when challenging this behaviour have been told ‘you can’t do anything about it’.  In order to help tackle the problem, some staff opted to undertake FPN training. There is no intention of Parks staff undertaking a Dog Warden service, what the training does provide is the opportunity to take action whilst they are undertaking their day-to-day duties in the Council’s parks and open spaces. Consequently, there is no cost or impact on service delivery of current roles as these conversations are already taking place as part of staffs attempts to change behaviour when undertaking routine visits to site. Working patterns will not change in any meaningful way.  If members of the public have a question about a town council service, please email the council and it will be forwarded to the appropriate Committee.  **Election of Vice-Chair**  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Fuhrmann  Members voted unanimously in favour of recommending Cllr Wheller to the Town Clerk for the role of Vice-Chair. This appointment will be confirmed by the Town Clerk.  Cllr Hope proposed a re-shuffle of the agenda items in order to release Officers who were in attendance to present a single item update. This was agreed by all in attendance. |
| AS0007  AS0008 | **Information Items**  **Parks and Open Spaces Update**  An update was provided by Tara Williams, as detailed in the agenda documentation.  **Beach Management Update**  An update was provided by Tony Hurley, as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Tony Hurley confirmed that Dorset Council have not implemented any specific conditions with regards to the £25k for additional crowd management/visitor information services on the seafront. However, WTC has provided information regarding how this money will be spent.  It was highlighted that five toilets remain out of action and this is now brand affecting. It was suggested that the issues should be resolved and discussions held later about who pays for this.  Tony Hurley responded that, in order to manage the demand, WTC has opened up both underground toilets on most days, especially during weekends. The issue of the flush defects is frustrating and the toilets are currently under warranty. DC is pursuing this with the supplier. Replacements have been ordered and the WTC Maintenance Officer will fit these if required.  Members felt that if the issue cannot be resolved by DC in the next few days, WTC should carry out the works itself and charge DC, who can then look at re-claiming the costs from the supplier.  Tony Hurley responded that Ideal Standard are replacing the units in the next couple of weeks. Engineering a different solution will be difficult as the mechanism is behind a breeze block wall. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk have escalated the matter to a senior level within DC and it is hoped that the matter will be resolved within 2 weeks.  Cllr Hope suggested that WTC holds more parts in stock so that any issues can be resolved as soon as they occur.  Tony Hurley will provide an email update to Committee members in a fortnight’s time in order to monitoring the situation.  **Actions from previous meetings**  It was noted that some actions are several months old and need to be resolved.  Cllr Gray requested that weather monitoring be moved up the agenda as the Catering Group would like to see this in place for this season. Weather prediction is important to the Catering Group in terms of the setting of rotas for staff.  An update will be circulated via email, with a report to be presented to the next Advisory Services Committee.  **Forward Plan**  Cllr Hope would like Member input regarding areas of the Council to be scrutinised and what areas Members would like to do more work on in terms of services. Any suggestions should be emailed to Cllr Hope and Cllr Wheller who will be meeting to structure the Committee over the next 12 months in order to ensure that the Council is giving residents that best that it possibly can.  **Resolved:**  Members noted the information items.  **Services Plans and Performance Manager**  Matt Ryan introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  **Town Centre Management Service Plan**  Ed Warr presented the Service Plan for the Town Centre Management Service, which can be found at Appendix B of the agenda documentation.  Cllr Gray referred to TCM4 “to help identify sources of funding (grants and sponsorship) to support of the council’s service delivery and enhancement of the town centre” and was concerned that it does not mention applying for grants and sponsorship, or what success looks like. Additionally, there is no Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for TCM4 with regards to whether WTC has been successful in applying for grants. There is a need for Officers to know when they have been successful in order that they can inform Members.  Matt Ryan suggested that Officers could modify TCM to state “to help identify sources of funding (grants and sponsorship) to support of the council’s service delivery and enhancement of the town centre, of £10k in the first year”. This would give Officers a figure to aim towards.  It was noted that there is a need to review section 4.2 in order to ensure that financial figures add up and the number of risks quoted is correct. Additionally, the paragraph regarding mitigation has a worded added that needs to be removed.  With regards to TCM3, TCM6 and TCM7, Matt Ryan suggested that these can be associated to feedback. Therefore, Officers can set a satisfaction level with the businesses that are approached and supported by the Town Centre Manager. A satisfaction level of 95% can be set and Officers can report back on this.  Ed Warr will be undertaking a business survey which looking at business satisfaction regarding the quality of the public realm. A lot of it will fall to DC but WTC will collect that information and can feed back into the Town Centre Multi-Agency Management Group, providing a sample of business optimism in the next 6 months.  With regards to TCM7, Cllr Taylor agreed that WTC should be undertaking research on trends and applying best practice but would like to see something coming back to this Committee ahead of March 2022 as a lot of them have financial implications. She would like to see a paper coming to the Committee at the appropriate time, setting out the result of the research and what is happening nationally, and what WTC can pick up on.  Cllr Hope agreed that if left until March 2022, WTC will not be able to do anything for another 12 months as it will not have been budgeted for, and suggested that the date should be amended to November/December 2021 for information to come forward.  When asked how footfall is currently measured in the town centre and on the beach, Ed Warr responded that WTC are not currently gathering data as it is not currently being paid for. There are cameras in St Mary Street and St Thomas Street but if WTC can revert to collecting the data, it will also have access to historical data.  With regards to the promenade and beach, Matt Ryan explained that there is no longer a footfall counter but the RNLI undertake a beach count on a daily basis during the season, providing WTC with a rough estimate of customers within the seafront location.  Cllr Hope highlighted that the lack of wet weather activities has been noted as a weakness and would like to see as an additional target (TCM8) that WTC will work with partners to develop wet weather activities. This should have a target date of 2023.  Cllr Northam highlighted that the Town Centre Master Plan refers to wet weather activities and this will also feature in the Neighbourhood Plan.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Gray Seconder: Cllr Wheller  Members voted unanimously in favour of a Task and Finish Group comprising of Cllr Gray, Cllr Wheller, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Hope, Matt Ryan, Tony Hurley and Ed Warr, meeting to re-write the Service Plan around measurable aspects.  **Events Service Plan**  Charlie Sheppard presented the Service Plan for the Events Service, as detailed in Appendix A of the agenda documentation.  Cllr Wheller left the meeting at this point.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Tewkesbury  Members voted unanimously in favour of recommending the adoption of the Events Service Plans to the Town Clerk, subject to the following amendments:   1. Quarterly monitoring of the 150 events. 2. An increase in income split between sponsorship and grants, to be clarified with the Events Manager. 3. E&F3 to include ad hoc and opportunistic events. 4. A new objective around equality impact assessments 5. Update financial information in 4.2 6. Amend 4.6 to read “balanced budget”, as you cannot have a “balance budget” as it currently reads. Or remove 4.6 altogether if not appropriate.   Should it be felt that any amendments have not been included, any Committee member can request that the Service Plan comes back to Committee. |
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| AS0009 | **Updated Events and Festivals Programme 2021**  Charlie Sheppard introduced the item as detailed in Appendix C of the agenda documentation.  With regards to the Summer fireworks displays, WTC is currently obtaining quotes from fireworks companies and are asking how they will fulfil silent or low noise displays. Details will be shared with Members once these have been received.  Quotes are currently being obtained for 3 fireworks displays however TEAF have requested that the possibility of increasing this to 6 displays (to include Guy Fawkes night) be explored as 6 displays will look more attractive to potential sponsors as they will get more promotion.  Cllr Lambert reminded Members that fireworks are not good from an environmental and ecological point of view and this needs to be considered.  Cllr Hope responded that Officers have been asked to look at alternative, more environmentally friendly, options to replace fireworks in future years.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Tewkesbury Seconder: Cllr Taylor  Members voted by a majority of 11 in favour, with 2 abstentions, of recommending the approval of the updated Events & Festivals Programme for 2021, as set out in Appendix C, to the Town Clerk. |
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|  | The meeting closed at 8.27pm. |