

That the draft Terms of Reference for the Environment Committee be brought forward to the Council for adoption, following a review by the Finance and Governance Committee of the draft Terms of Reference for all Council committees.

4) Environmental Action Plan – Update

The VSBDM reported that the existing Action Plan agreed by Council in March 2020 was in need of review and updating. It was noted that this process would be undertaken by the Environmental Action Plan working party and their recommendations be brought back to the next meeting of this Committee.

5) Carbon Neutral 2030 Strategy and update on SALIX grant application

Clarification was provided by the Town Clerk that although it had been anticipated that the Carbon Neutral 2030 Strategy would have been presented to today's meeting, that had not proved possible as the report had not been provided to the Council sufficiently in advance of the meeting. An update would therefore be provided to a future meeting.

It was noted that the Council had lodged a grant application with SALIX under Phase 3b of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. There was some uncertainty over the grant available and the contribution required from the Town Council, but it was noted that the costs would not exceed those indicated in Minute No. 80(a) of the Council Meeting held on 26th September 2022. Attention was drawn to the fact that the grant application process and criteria were complex and that deadlines were tight. It was noted that the Environmental Action Plan working party would oversee this process between Council and Committee meetings.

The VSBDM reported that the main focus of the strategy to decarbonise the Council's public buildings was likely to be the installation of solar panels, air source heat pumps and building management systems.

6) Development of Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy

The VSBDM presented a briefing note which set out the increasing sales of Electric Vehicles (EVs) and the need for the Town Council to respond to this by providing the charging infrastructure required for visitors to its car parks. It was noted that for a tourist economy such as Swanage, particularly because it is located at the end of a peninsula, it is crucial that Swanage provides charging facilities that are of sufficient power and in sufficient numbers for it to retain its place as a premier visitor destination.

The briefing note set out the options available for the Council to significantly increase electric vehicle charging facilities including funding some or all of the EV charging programme internally and/or working with a private sector partner. It was noted that Dorset Council had selected the second option.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Harris and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To instruct officers to liaise with Dorset Council and BCP to assess detailed options to ensure that Swanage car parks have sufficient EV chargers and appropriate electrical supplies to meet future needs and report details at a future meeting.

It was further proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Foster and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: -

To delay any future EV charger installations (except those for which a binding contract has been issued) until a future delivery model has been approved by the Town Council.

7) **Tree Management**

a) **Adoption of Dorset Council Tree Policy**

The Assets & Compliance Manager introduced a briefing note which set out the importance of adopting a policy to define the Council's approach to the management of Council-owned trees. It was explained that this should be supported by a Swanage Town Council Tree Strategy which would provide greater clarity for residents. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

TO RECOMMEND:

That the Dorset Council Tree Policy be adapted for Swanage Town Council purposes and adopted together with a Swanage Town Council Tree Strategy.

b) **Consideration of the draft Swanage Town Council Tree Strategy**

The Assets & Compliance Manager introduced the draft Tree Strategy, contained within appendix 1 to the briefing note circulated prior to the meeting. This set out the Council's approach with regard to tree inspections, tree works, tree planting and site specific tree strategies, although it was noted that it should be viewed as a working document subject to annual review. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

TO RECOMMEND:

That the draft Swanage Town Council Tree Strategy be adopted.

c) **Swanage Town Council Trees and Plants Report 2022**

The Assets & Compliance Manager presented a progress report on planting undertaken by the Operations Department during 2022. It was noted that during the year the Town Council had purchased, and are in the process of planting, 37 trees. The primary focus had been widening the selection of suitable species for planting, responding to the changing climate.

d) **Consideration of request for a Commemorative Tree to be planted at Prince Albert Gardens**

Consideration was given to a request received from the Platinum Jubilee Committee for an oak tree to be planted at Prince Albert Gardens and a plaque to be installed alongside. This would be funded by the Committee itself. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To grant permission for the planting of a commemorative tree and installation of a plaque to mark the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee at Prince Albert Gardens, with delegated authority granted to the Assets & Compliance Manager to decide the exact location.

8) **Sustainable Swanage Update**

The VSBDM and Sustainable Swanage officer presented a quarterly review of the activities of Sustainable Swanage, assessing progress against the action plan agreed between Sustainable Swanage and Swanage Town Council. It was noted that there had been some significant achievements recently, including completion of the registration of Peveril Point and The Downs as a Local Nature Reserve and the establishment of a Community Pantry. Looking to the future, it was proposed that the former St Mark's Playing Field and Northbrook Copse be established as two green spaces to be managed in accordance with the adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy.

9) **Swift Box Project**

The VSBDM introduced a briefing paper describing the work of Swift Conservation and seeking support for erecting swift boxes on Council properties. Attention was drawn to the fact that swifts were nesting in the vicinity of the Town Hall. Unfortunately, it was noted that there were no suitable opportunities in the town centre at the current time. However, the Committee expressed its support for the project and agreed that the Town Council would promote through social media.

10) **Budget Setting 2023/24**

a) **Draft List of One-Off Items of Revenue Expenditure**

The draft list of significant one-off expenditure items for 2023/24 was considered and it was noted that this would be discussed more fully by the Finance and Governance Committee as part of the budget setting process.

b) **Draft Capital Programme**

The draft list of capital expenditure for the next three financial years was considered and projects relevant to the committee were noted. It was again acknowledged that this would be discussed more fully by the Finance and Governance Committee as part of the budget setting process.

11) **Waste Management**

a) **Review of waste service Summer Season 2022 and arrangements for 2023**

The Assets & Compliance Manager reported that it had been a positive year with a better working relationship between Dorset Waste Services and Swanage Town Council and a much-improved level of service. This included the placement of new bins and bin housings along the seafront with an improved schedule of emptying into the early evening.

It was noted that moving into 2023, Dorset Waste Services had advised that there is a risk that they will be unable to provide the same level of service without a financial contribution from Swanage Town Council. However, it was reported that as yet there had been no confirmation that that was the case. The situation would be kept under review during budget setting for the next financial year.

b) **Update on activities from Swanage Landers and Beach Buddies**

Swanage Landers reported that it had been a good spring and summer. In addition to their normal operation, 137 hours had been donated by volunteers to support the four visits of the Mechanical Road Sweeper to the town that had been arranged by the Town Council.

Beach Buddies reported that they had managed to clear 1,923 kg of litter during their weekly Sunday patrols, which often included roads around the town centre as well as the beach. It was noted that visitors speaking to the volunteers had a perception that Swanage is a very clean town.

12) **Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

a) **Peveril Point and the Downs Local Nature Reserve**

It was noted that the Local Nature Reserve will have an official launch in the spring of 2023.

13) **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday 1st February.

The Meeting closed at 3.45 p.m.
