

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - MONDAY, 11 MAY 2020

Present:

Councillor Cross (in the Chair)

Councillors

Blackburn	G Coleman	Mrs Scott	L Williams
Brookes	Farrell	Smith	T Williams
Mrs Callow JP	Galley	Stansfield	
Campbell	Hugo	I Taylor	
Clapham	Kirkland	Walsh	

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

1 CHANGES TO MEETINGS PROCEDURES

The Council considered a report on recent legislation that had been enacted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, that allowed local authority meetings to be held virtually and noted the proposed arrangements for meeting procedures.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

1. To endorse the approach that where necessary, full Council meetings and committee meetings will be held remotely while restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic are in place.
2. To note that the provisions for timing of speeches, voting and public representations will remain unchanged with public representations being made remotely.
3. To endorse the arrangements for declarations of interest and considering exempt items'.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 March 2020, be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Mayor.

5 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING AND ITS BUSINESS

Members considered proposals for the annual Council meeting to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and for the current Mayor to continue in office. The report also proposed that the Council's committees continue and members considered minor revisions to their membership as submitted by the Group Leaders.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

- '1. To confirm that the Annual Council for 2020 be cancelled and not held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.
2. To note that consequently there will be no change made to the appointment of the Mayor in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.
3. To note that the Deputy Mayor will be appointed to the Executive following the meeting and therefore in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 he will stand down as Deputy Mayor at the conclusion of the meeting. Council will be asked to consider a replacement at its next meeting.
4. To note that the committees of the Council appointed at the Annual Meeting in 2019 and their political balance will continue in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.
5. To agree to the memberships of the committees of the Council and their Chairs and Vice Chairs as set out in in Appendix 5(a) of the Council report and that delegated authority is given to the committees themselves to determine changes to Chairs and Vice Chairs these should the need arise for change during the year.
6. To agree that any membership changes to committees or sub-committees during the course of the Municipal Year be reported to the Director of Governance and Partnerships by the relevant Group Leader for implementation'.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

6 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2020/2021

The Council considered the report on the proposed calendar of meetings for 2020/21 and in doing so noted that the schedule took into account the immediate months ahead and that meetings before the recess period were limited to those where either statutory requirements existed or there was a business continuity need, which included the arrangements for scrutiny during that period.

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In light of the reduced number of meetings being proposed, Members also considered proposals in relation to the extension of Council plans and strategies as well dispensations to apply to members who failed to attend meetings for a period of six consecutive months.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

- '1. To approve the calendar of meetings for 2020/2021 as attached at Appendix 6(a) to the Council report.
2. To agree that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the start times of meetings prior to 1 September 2020 which would previously have started at 6pm, be delegated to the Chair to determine. Following that date then these meetings commence at 6pm as usual (set out at the end of the calendar of meetings at Appendix 6(a)).
3. To agree that if a plan or strategy, which is normally approved by Council, is due to be expire before the next Council meeting is held, then the Chief Executive be authorised to extend the end date following consultation with the four Group Leaders.
4. To approve the extension of the dispensation of the six-month consecutive period for Councillor Mrs Henderson with regard to her non-attendance at a Council related meeting, up to and including the Annual Council meeting in 2021. This dispensation also to apply to all other Councillors up to the Annual Meeting 2021, on the basis that there has, since the pandemic started and will be in the immediate future, fewer formal Council related meetings to attend as a result of the pandemic, or effects of it and members may inadvertently breach the non-attendance rule'.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

7 COVID-19 - UPDATE REPORT AND DECISIONS

Members received the report updating on actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Motion: Councillor T Williams proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

- '1. That following the introduction of the report by the Leader of the Council, to agree that the Chief Executive reports on how he has exercised his delegations at Appendix 7(a) with no time limit on his presentation. Members then to ask questions of the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council'.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

(The meeting also agreed to set aside procedural standing orders for this part of the item to allow members to speak more than once and for the Chief Executive to respond to questions and comments raised).

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The Leader introduced the report and then invited the Chief Executive to outline the Council's response in relation to the pandemic, after which members considered actions he had taken under the Executive delegation to him that had been approved on 23 March 2020. Members also noted the hard work undertaken to date by Council staff and partners.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded) the remaining recommendations within the report namely:

- '2. To endorse the council related decisions listed at Appendix 7(b) of the Council report undertaken by the Chief Executive in respect of the coronavirus pandemic, in terms of additional expenditure and budgetary pressure caused by loss of income
3. To approve, in retrospect, the taking of all actions outlined in Appendix 7(b) even if these actions should have been included in the Forward Plan or have resulted in unapproved departures from the budget framework, policy framework, or Contract Procedure Rules as the decisions were required urgently due to the major incident.
4. To agree to delegate to the Chief Executive delegated powers to act outside of the Forward Plan, the budget and policy frameworks and the Contracts Procedure Rules, should the need arise where such decisions are required urgently in relation to issues appertaining to Covid-19, following consultation with each of the Group Leaders and the relevant Cabinet Member. This to be reviewed at the next Council meeting.
5. To agree that weekly briefings continue between the Chief Executive, his extended Management Team, the four Group Leaders and the two Members of Parliament, until that group determines either the frequency of meetings change and/ or they are no longer required'.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

Note: The Chief Executive agreed to organise a conference call with the Police and Crime Commissioner or Lancashire Constabulary and the Council's Housing Team on the management of anti-social behaviour in the town.

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 4.28 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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