

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL URGENCY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30 April 2020 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Best, Kevin Bonavia, Bill Brown, Carl Handley, Jacq Paschoud and Sakina Sheikh.

ALSO PRESENT: Director of Law, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Director of Strategy & Communications, and Head of Business and Committee.

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

RESOLVED that

- (i) following Constitutional changes by Council since the last meeting of the Urgency Committee, it was agreed that the Speaker of the Council shall act as Chair; and
- (ii) Councillor Chris Best be appointed Vice Chair for the remainder of the municipal year 2019/20.

2. Declaration of interests

None were made.

3. Minutes

Councillor Handley referred to the minute regarding Milford Towers and receiving the Secretary of State's agreement to disposal consent. He asked whether a letter was ever received for the disposal of Milford Towers. The Director of Law advised that the Secretary of State's consent was received for three years. The matter was referred back to full Council in 2018, with a recommendation to the Secretary of State that a further consent be made, because the leases needed to be renewed. The consent was received and those leases were renewed until 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4. Calendar Report

Councillor Handley said that in these changing times, officers were having to make very quick decisions. He asked officers to ensure that members are kept up to date with important decisions to ensure that members are able to answer local residents' queries accurately. The Director of Strategy & Communications, agreed to this request. She said that there had been a period of very rapid change, and communication of these changes had been

difficult. Although matters were a little more settled, there would be more changes. She said that the Mayor is committed to ensuring that members receive the most up to date information.

The Director of Law said that there were no scheduled meetings of the scrutiny committees. However, she said that this Council has a statutory duty in relation to scrutiny on health. If, for example, there were any significant variations in relation to health services proposed, the Healthier Select Committee is the consultation body and would be called upon to respond.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the AGM of the Council be held on 15 July 2020;
- (ii) the schedule of meetings attached to the report at Appendix A for the period to 15 July 2020 be agreed;
- (iii) the provisional dates for meetings from 15 July 2020 to the end of August 2020, attached to the report at Appendix B, be received;
- (iv) it be noted that the calendar of meetings may be subject to review and change; and
- (v) officers be asked to bring a report to the Annual General Meeting to confirm a programme.

5. Council Pay Policy

The Acting Chief Finance Officer presented the report.

Councillor Bonavia asked what impact the current corona virus crisis is having on pay for next year. He also asked about current negotiations. The Acting Chief Finance Officer said that the current pay negotiations were continuing. The LGA lead on these negotiations and the last update was in mid May. The union's original demand was for a 10% increase for all staff but this was rejected. The next proposal was for a 2% rise and this was the current position as published this morning by the LGA.

Councillor Best asked about the financial position of the Council at the moment. She asked whether central government are meeting their guarantees with regard to meeting the pay awards and any other future demands that this Council could face. She said that this Council always honours the pay settlements and she asked whether central government are giving us guarantees. The Acting Chief Finance Officer said that a guarantee is never given in that money is hypothecated to salaries. Within the funding settlement this Council will set the budget for the year. This Council is receiving additional costs for the covid response. It is not expected to cover the full costs and discussions continue because the situation is dynamic. To date this Council has received £20m from the government towards costs.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report be agreed.