

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

Date and Time: Thursday 30 July 2020 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

COUNCILLORS -

Kennett (Chairman)

Ambler	Davies	Oliver
Axam	Delaney	Quarterman
Bailey	Dorn	Radley
Blewett	Drage	Smith
Butler	Farmer	Southern
Clarke	Forster	Tomlinson
Cockarill	Kinnell	Wheale
Crampton	Lamb	Wildsmith
Crisp	Makepeace-Browne	Worlock
Crookes	Neighbour	

Officers Present:

Mark Jaggard	Head of Place
Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Celia Wood	Democratic Services Officer

25 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Members agreed to the suspension of Standing Orders nos 9.3 (Show of Hands for Voting), 22.1 (Standing to Speak) and 22.2 (Chairman Standing).

26 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 25 June 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Farmer – declared an interest in the Motion proposed at Agenda Item 13 (Everyone Active: Leisure Centres), through his interests with the Hart Swimming Club and also Membership of Hart Leisure Centre but he has agreed with the Monitoring Officer that the interests are not prejudicial.

Cllr Crampton – declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Motion at Agenda item 13 (Everyone Active: Leisure Centres) through her membership of the Hart Leisure Centre.

Cllr Forster - declared in the Motion at Agenda item 11 (the temporary pedestrianisation of Fleet Road) due to his role as a Hampshire County Councillor, he too had agreed with the Monitoring Officer that the interests are not prejudicial.

Cllr Oliver - declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Motion at Agenda item 11 (the temporary pedestrianisation of Fleet Road) due to being a member of the Fleet BID Board.

Cllr Crookes - declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Motion at Agenda item 11 (the temporary pedestrianisation of Fleet Road) due to being a member of a local cycling group.

Cllr Wildsmith—declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Motion at Agenda item 13 through having a Hart Leisure Centre membership for his daughter.

29 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 - QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

No questions received.

30 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 - QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Questions had been received from Councillor Southern detailed in Appendix B.

31 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements.

32 CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Neighbour – Members may well have heard that the Government will be providing a White Paper on Local Government re-organisation in September. This appears to be aimed at further unitarisation and an expansion of the combined Authority System. They have asked for expressions of interest over the summer. I have been in communication with the Leader of the County Council as well as the other Hampshire Districts. Our collective view is that the current arrangement works and that this would be a distraction during the current public health crisis.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, Councillor Radley - Members will be aware later in this meeting we will be discussing the motion which I am bringing forward to adjust our budget in order to allow both Leisure Centres in the district to open tomorrow. While I regret that this item shall need to be discussed in confidential session due to the inevitable need to discuss the financial affairs of a third party organisation and because we touch upon

contractual negotiations, I do hope that all members will support the council's efforts to get these important facilities open again.

Cabinet Member for Digital, Councillor Ambler - You all received an email from me last with information about the rollout of the new Committee Services software Modern.gov. Thank you to all the members who responded but there are still quite a number who we haven't heard from. Please could you respond to Steven Bennett as soon as possible with confirmation as to whether you have access to a portable device and information about that device.

The reason that we are asking the question is, that the new software is in the process of being rolled out and we need to ensure that all Councillors are going to have a suitable device to run the software on.

This will streamline the work of Committee Services and improve members access to documents needed for meetings, as well as other exciting new features. Eventually, we will return to the council chamber for meetings, which is why it's essential that all members have access to a suitable mobile device.

We plan to start phased member training on the application from September and are keen to sign up 'early adopters' for the program so again, please can you contact Steven if you are happy to be included in this first phase for training.

The Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Bailey – No announcement.

The Cabinet Member for Place, Councillor Cockarill – No announcement.

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Councillor Kinnell – No announcement.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Oliver - New subscriptions for our Green Waste service will be accepted from the 3rd August. All Hart controlled waste and recycling services are now back in full operation. The Green Waste service can now be extended to new or re-joining residents as volumes being collected are starting to approach pre-pandemic levels and we can be confident of providing a reliable service to our current subscribers.

The Cabinet Member for Commercialisation, Councillor Quarterman – No announcement.

33 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORTS

The Joint Chief Executives had nothing substantive to report.

34 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

No questions on any of the meetings were raised.

35 NOTICE OF MOTION - THE TEMPORARY PEDESTRIANISATION OF FLEET ROAD, FLEET

Cllr Cockarill moved the following Motion and it was seconded by Cllr Neighbour:

“To ask full Council to endorse the proposal to temporarily pedestrianise the retail core of Fleet Road, Fleet in order to assist the businesses in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 crisis. The pedestrianisation would provide greater space for social distancing, and also allow activities to take place in the road space to attract people to Fleet and spend more while they are in Fleet.

- a) Members endorse the proposals to temporarily pedestrianise the retail core of Fleet Road, Fleet from its junction of with Church Road to the junction with Victoria Road/Upper Street;
- b) Members endorse the temporary blocking off of Upper Street at its junction with Clarence Road for traffic management purposes;
- c) Members endorse the working up and implementation of the Place Making elements of the Scheme (Phase 3 works); and
- d) Members endorse the improvements to the cycle lanes between the retail core of Fleet Road and Fleet Railway Station.”

Cllr Crookes requested that the Motion should be split a)-c) with d) debated separately.

Cllr Cockarill agreed this could be done.

Cllr Oliver requested an Amendment to the Motion that to secure the installation of entry and exit traffic loops (volume and speed) during week 1 of the traffic diversion for Church Road, Albert Street, Clarence Road and Connaught Road to determine future mitigation actions.

Cllr Makepeace-Browne seconded the Amendment.

Members debated the Amendment and following a Recorded Vote the Amendment to the Motion was carried.

Members debated a)-c) of the substantive Motion as amended. The issues raised were:

Members sought reassurance that if the Scheme goes ahead the traffic impact will be actively monitored and any indication that the scheme requires changes will be evidenced and taken to Hampshire County Council to make improvements or remove.

It was generally acknowledged that the High street is in decline and Members discussed if this is a viable temporary measure to help businesses by creating more space and the feeling of a safe environment for visitors or cause greater disruption to businesses and residents.

Members discussed the importance of regular and careful monitoring with both retailers and residents to encourage feedback.

Following a Recorded Vote (Appendix 3) the Motion as Amended was carried.

Members then debated d) of the Motion: Member to endorse the improvements to the cycle lanes between the retail core of Fleet Road and Fleet Railway Station.

Members sought clarification on the background and were informed that the improvements form part of the Local Enterprise Partnership funding of the Green Grid to widen the route to make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

The need for local (cycling) groups to be consulted as part of the improvements to the cycle lanes was communicated to Officers working on the Project.

Following a Vote, the Motion was carried.

DECISION

Council agreed to endorse the proposal to temporarily pedestrianise the retail core of Fleet Road, Fleet in order to assist the businesses in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 crisis as agreed in the Motion as amended.

36 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Council agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting during item 13 (Notice of Motion Everyone Active: Leisure Centres) on the grounds that exempt information (as defined in Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972) of the following description was likely to be disclosed: Category 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including those of the Council).

37 NOTICE OF MOTION - EVERYONE ACTIVE: LEISURE CENTRES

The discussion on the Motion took place with the press and public excluded from the meeting.

DECISION

Following a Vote, the Motion was carried.

The meeting closed at 9.59 pm

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Cllr Southern asked:

We, as Councillors, are finding it difficult to do our job without easy access to all officers by telephone and email. With modern technology, all officers working from home clearly have telephones and access to the Council's systems. The current system of contact through a single source, such as elections@hart.gov.uk or any other method merely puts another stage into the process. As this was a temporary measure when Covid19 arose and, although many officers are taking well-deserved leave, when are Councillors going to have direct access to officers in the normal way?

Cllr Neighbour responded:

Many members have welcomed the more organised co-ordination of the councillor enquiries approach which have resulted in speedier and more effective Officer response. It is certainly an arrangement that has been supported by all three Group Leaders.

What has been enlightening has been to learn of the extent and depth of member enquires but more importantly, it has also demonstrated why there is a need to manage member engagement to ensure that officers are not overloaded with more than simply service requests.

One of the main strengths of the arrangement has been the ability to monitor response times and to ensure that enquires do not get missed. However, nothing within the arrangement seeks to restrict access to either Heads of Service or specific case officers, such as planning or environmental health officers.

All officers are still responding to specific case work and can be contacted by both email and telephone in the usual way. However, members must appreciate that if they chose to go direct to an individual case officer then that approach is not directly monitored and it cannot be guaranteed that you'll get the same level of response rate that you would otherwise get going through the councillor enquiry route.

We think that overall the arrangement is a success but it will be kept under review in the same way that it has recently been review and adjusted.

Cllr Southern asked:

With Covid19 clearly diminishing in Hart, when are the officers going to re-occupy the Council offices? The existing arrangement of work stations gives nearly all officers about two metres of space in each direction and the offices are large enough to enable all this to happen.

Cllr Radley responded

The first point to highlight is that unlike many Councils Hart has opened its Reception and is effectively providing a full suite of services. Service delivery to our residents is being maintained. Site visits, subject to social distancing, have recommenced and all

key officers can be contacted by both email and telephone in the usual way. The need to return to the Office is not one that is driven by any service delivery requirement.

The Officer Leadership Team is working on future plans for the office and the working environment because suitable work stations are not in place to accommodate intensive reoccupation. One also has to question the value of people travelling to office just to do all the things which can equally be done well from home. People will come into the office where scheduled face to face meetings are going to be productive but that will not be every day of the working week. This is not because of the need for social distancing (that will pass) but because we have now experienced the efficiencies of working from home.

This is not because of the need for social distancing (that will pass) but because we have now experienced the efficiencies of working from home.

Cllr Southern asked:

Zoom and Teams meetings are adequate, but unsatisfactory in many ways. Networking and other communications outside the meetings are being stifled. When are all Council meetings going to be run in the Council chamber as they were before Covid19 occurred?

Cllr Neighbour responded:

At this point in time we are not in a position to return to pre-COVID 19 arrangements and we are at the very limits of our current technological abilities in delivering the current arrangements. I personally would welcome a return to the 'cut and thrust' of face-to-face Council meetings but it will require careful planning to ensure that everyone feels that it is the right thing to do. Officers are already working on ideas to give us some options because the implementation of the new modern.gov Committee process extends to giving us a better and more sophisticated platform to develop our audio visual arrangements with a realistic opportunity to explore the potential of hybrid meetings. This may be something that we could look to assess later this autumn.