

COUNCIL

Date and Time: Thursday, 26 November 2020 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet

Present:

COUNCILLORS –

Kennett - (Chairman)

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

Officers Present:

Patricia Hughes	Joint Chief Executive
Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Celia Wood	Committee Services
Gill Chapman	Committee Services

47 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

It was unanimously agreed to suspend Standing Orders 9.3 (Show of Hands for Voting, 22.1 (Standing to Speak) and 22.2 (Chairman Standing).

48 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 September 2020 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Davies. Councillor Wheale was not in attendance.

50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

51 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 – QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

A question had been received from Mr Steve Forster, details of which are set out in Appendix A attached to these Minutes.

52 COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14 – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Questions put by Councillors are detailed in Appendix A attached to these Minutes.

53 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following the announcement today that Hart are in Tier 2 (Covid response measures) the Chairman took the opportunity to wish everyone a happy Christmas.

54 CABINET MEMBERS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, **Councillor Neighbour**, announced

Business rates schemes – there are two schemes, the Closure scheme which covers the second lockdown and the Discretionary scheme. We have had 207 applications for the Closure scheme, of which the first 78 were paid this morning and another 32 will be paid on Monday, the final hundred or so are in the process of being paid. The Discretionary scheme opened Monday and to date we have had 44 applications. The first tranche closes 6 December with payments made soon after that, and the last payment will be on 22 December, ensuring that recipients will receive their money before Christmas.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, **Councillor Radley**, reported:

Following successful recruitment, Hart Community Safety has now been complete and fully functioning since the start of November. Efforts have been concentrated on sharing contacts for the team, and what they can support with, as far as possible across the community including Councillors, Town & Parish Council Clerks, schools, Neighbourhood Watches and local Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT). Responses to the team have been very positive so far and some great connections have been made.

A couple of local Anti-social behaviour issues have already been tackled:

- Edenbrook Country Park and bike track issues are being looked at in partnership with Hart Countryside services
- Youth nuisance noise in Yateley has prompted visits to residents to assess the situation and has been alerted to the detached youth workers of Vision 4 Youth to address whilst out and about
- ASB caused by vehicle nuisance on the Blackbushe Industrial Estate is also being looked at with the local NPT with Community Safety leading on evidence gathering for Police to serve section 59 notices where possible. Contact has also been established with the landowner to

request measures be taken to prevent the site being used as a racetrack e.g., the installation of rubber humps or similar

Feedback was provided last week to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for their latest Bid Funding round and projects providing support across the Hart area addressing the Community Safety Partnership priorities were supported.

Safeguarding continues to be handled by Community Safety and there have been three referrals since taking the service back in house.

The Cabinet Member for Digital, **Councillor Ambler**, announced

We are now close to the rollout of modern.gov to members. This is a cloud-based app that provides secure access for Members to view and annotate the latest documents along with automatic download of agendas, reports, decisions and meeting minutes.

The package provides for full meeting management, from production and publication of agendas and minutes to register of interests, all in one platform. The plan is to have a 'soft launch' involving a small group of Members. Those of you involved will already have received an invitation from Steve Bennett to a training session. Following those sessions your feedback will be used to structure training for all Members prior to a full rollout which is anticipated for the New Year.

The Cabinet Member for Community, **Councillor Bailey**, reported

Hart Response Hub - So far we have received over 50 referrals into hub since second lockdown and many more referrals are being passed to hardship team for assistance and support this time round – needing more practical support – financial, food, medicines.

Recovery - A small team is working on community recovery and 19 groups have been supported with a small grant to help them restart face to face activity. Also supported Hart Food Bank with 2 orders on things they were running low on.

Revocation Notice - After almost 2 years of work on a property in Hook, we are pleased to be able to serve a "revocation notice" to all parties as work is now complete. The property was seriously at fault in terms of fire safety and the work of the Private Sector Housing Team has led to a great result. There are a good number of leaseholders who want to rent out or sell and they can now do so.

Rough sleepers head count - This is an annual England wide count. Ours is an estimate; a joint effort across all agencies in Hart. For many years we have reported a zero count but this year we had 2. We are aware of both and have been working with them to engage and come in. One now in B&B; the other one, work is still under way. (They were in a tent in Ewshot and in a pill box at Fleet station).

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory, **Councillor Kinnell**, updated Members on what the Environmental Health team had been up to recently:

Environmental Health have been out and about ensuring businesses are complying with the current lockdown restrictions. They have been patrolling Harts businesses, providing support and advice, as well as ensuring that they are adhering to Covid guidelines. As part of this work, we have been building, (and web publishing), a database that shows which local businesses remain open, which includes any changes to their normal way of trade, so for example, a food business that has moved from “eat in”, to takeaway or delivery service during the lockdown.

I am pleased to advise that the general level of compliance within Hart’s businesses has been found to be remarkably high and reflects well on the responsibility of our local business community.

So, going forward from the national lockdown restrictions that are due to end on the 2nd December, Environmental Health will continue to provide support and advice to businesses, community groups, towns/parishes etc. for undertaking safe festive period events. Whilst we are not yet fully clear what events may ultimately be proposed, Environmental Health will be working behind the scenes to ensure event organisers have undertaken suitable Covid risk assessments, as well as helping to ensure compliance with Covid controls.

Councillor Forster asked if all complaints about premises being open during the current lockdown were being investigated. Councillor Kinnell invited Councillor Forster to forward any complaints he had received so that they could be cross-checked.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, **Councillor Oliver**, reported:

Firstly, I am pleased to update the Council and residents of Hart that all of our waste and recycling services have been maintained throughout the second Covid-19 lockdown. As members will remember, during the first Covid-19 lockdown we had to reduce or suspend some services (most notably Green Waste collections) due to staff shortages. Well done to our Waste and Recycling team and our partner Serco.

Secondly, we will be issuing a leaflet to all Hart residents detailing the collection arrangements for the 2020 Christmas period (collection days will change). We will also take this opportunity to remind residents on what we can currently recycle in Hampshire and what can be placed in our Blue bins.

55 JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES’ REPORT

The Joint Chief Executives’ reported that it had been announced we are in Tier 2 in terms of Covid controls and an email had been sent to all Councillors earlier with the details. Many of the areas of work have been referenced by the Portfolio Holders, demonstrating the approach is touching all parts of the Organisation. Included in the Council’s work are:

- Social isolation payments to support residents who have to socially isolate and are on Universal Credit, and who cannot work from home. Information is available on the Hart website
- Supporting the Track and Trace system that will be going live with the County next week
- Grant funding support from the Hart economic development team for businesses to enable them to access grant funding from the LEP, Government or elsewhere
- Council offices car park is a regular site for mobile testing unit
- The hardship fund - for those residents who may be really struggling
- Identifying vaccination sites within Hart and the roll out of broader testing across the communities in the district.

56 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The Minutes of the following Committees, which met on the dates shown, were submitted.

Meeting	Date
Overview and Scrutiny	15 September 2020
No questions asked	
Overview and Scrutiny (draft)	20 October 2020
No questions asked	
Audit (Draft)	27 October 2020
No questions asked	
Cabinet	1 October 2020
No questions asked	
Cabinet (draft)	5 November 2020
No questions asked.	

Minute 56 – Revised Financial Regulations

Councillor Neighbour, seconded by Councillor Radley, put the recommendation.

DECISION

That the revised Financial Regulations be adopted.

Minute 57 – Revised Draft update to Contract Standing Orders

Councillor Neighbour, seconded by Councillor Radley, put the recommendation.

DECISION

That the updated Contract Standing Orders be adopted.

Licensing (draft)

3 November 2020

No questions asked.

Standards

13 August 2020

No questions asked.

Standards (draft)

3 November 2020

No questions asked.

Minute 4 – Members’ Code of Conduct Update (see item 12 below)

Minute 5 – Guidance on the Code of Conduct – Public Interest Test (see item 13 below)

Planning

14 October 2020

No questions asked.

Planning (draft)

11 November 2020

No questions asked.

57 PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN EVENT OF A GRIEVANCE AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL

Members considered an updated procedure to be followed in event of a grievance against a Member of the Council.

Members sought assurance that the Monitoring Officer was comfortable with regard to the accumulation of minor transgressions, and that he would be able to act fairly and consistently, and were advised that the role of the Independent Person appointed by the Council under Section 28 of the Localism Act as a check and balance would act as a control on a number of issues and remain within the boundaries.

DECISION

That the procedure to be followed in the event of a grievance against a member of the Council be adopted.

58 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – UPDATE

Council considered the recommendations of the Standards Committee (Minute No 4) that adjustments be made to the Hart District Council Members Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer stressed that the updated document was not about stopping freedom of speech, but about civility, and the manner and way things were done in an open and transparent way.

Members discussed issues around confidentiality and the treatment of items of an exempt nature, and the need to reflect in the terms of reference of working parties etc how confidential items would be clearly highlighted to all parties, by Officers and Councillors.

A further question was raised about the implications of the Local Government Association (LGA) consultation on a possible revised model Code of conduct. It was clarified that if there were substantial differences between the LGA recommended model Code and the Hart Code then the matter may be referred to the Standards Committee and brought back to Members for review if necessary. Members were also assured that sufficient safeguards were in place to ensure that allegations of harassment would be properly scrutinised with the involvement of the Independent Persons appointed under Section 28 of the Localism Act.

DECISION

That the adjusted Hart District Council Members Code of Conduct be agreed.

59 GUIDANCE ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT - PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Council considered the recommendation from Standards Committee (Minute No 5) that the public interest test for the assessment of allegations that there had been a Breach of the Code of Conduct, be adopted.

DECISION

- A. The public interest test be used in the consideration of allegations that a member had broken the Code of Conduct; and
- B. The Hart Code of Conduct Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations be amended to include:
 - Public interest – Any decision whether to investigate allegations that the Code of Conduct had been broken would be a proportionate response to the issues raised, and expected outcomes would take into account the wider public interest and the cost of undertaking an investigation. Complaints would only be investigated where the allegations were reasonably considered to be serious matters and follow the public interest tests as set out.

- Alternative course of action – a complaint would only be investigated where there was no other action which could be taken which would achieve an appropriate outcome in the circumstances of the case.

60 OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS

Councillor Quarterman reported that the Blackwater Valley Advisory Committee on Public Transport had resumed meetings in a virtual capacity, with a meeting on 21 October 2020. Responsibility for chairing meetings rotated around the Councils involved, and for the current Council year it was Hart's turn to chair, so he would be chairing these meetings for the remainder of the Council year. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 20 January 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.54 pm

DRAFT

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Steve Forster asked:

Why has the petition I submitted on behalf of over 1000 signatories, which was fully compliant with the Hart petition scheme, not been allowed to be presented at cabinet or full council.

Councillor Neighbour responded:

Under the constitution Petitions fall under an executive decision of the Council therefore it has been included in the Agenda for next week's December Cabinet meeting.

Mr Forster asked a supplementary question regarding why the petition had not been presented at the Cabinet meeting last month and Councillor Neighbour responded that it would be debated at the December Cabinet next week.

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Councillor Forster asked:

How much in total has been spent by Hart District Council on the pedestrianisation and closure project of Fleet Road and Upper Street, with a full breakdown of costs?

Councillor Neighbour responded:

We have collated all the paid invoices and estimates and the total is roughly £58K in works and surveys and £67k in fees. *(Details attached as Appendix B to these minutes).*

Councillor Forster asked a supplementary question on whether any other costs would come in, if the excess had to be repaid, or could the remaining funds be used for free parking over the Christmas period to help visitors and residents. Councillor Neighbour responded that discussions with the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) were ongoing regarding repayment of funds.

FLEET ROAD PEDESTRIANISATION - as at 26 November 2020

<u>Works & Surveys</u>	<u>Commentary</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
Externiture Ltd	Bus stop real time information	£340.00	Paid Invoice
Sign Wise (UK) Ltd	Signage	£1,065.37	Paid Invoice
Central Linemarking Ltd	Roadmarkings	£2,755.00	Paid Invoice
Nigel Jeffries Landscapes Ltd	Supply additional 10No. Planters	£9,000.00	Paid Invoice
Nigel Jeffries Landscapes Ltd	Supply 18No. Planters and Maintenance	£17,454.00	Paid Invoice
Nigel Jeffries Landscapes Ltd	Secure 18No. Planters and relocate	£1,374.00	Paid Invoice
Footfall Survey	Footfall survey	£1,000.00	Paid Invoice
Forest traffic management	Bay suspension traffic management	£14,973.86	Paid Invoice
Total Cost of works & surveys		£47,962.23	
<u>Fees</u>	<u>Commentary</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
Phil Jones Associates Ltd	EM3 LEP BID and DfT	£4,867.20	Paid Invoice
Phil Jones Associates Ltd	Development of Covid-19 measures Baseline Analysis & Design	£4,800.00	Paid Invoice
Phil Jones Associates Ltd	Placemaking outline design	£5,900.00	Paid Invoice
Phil Jones Associates Ltd	Design & : Construction support - Fees	£22,400.00	Cost Estimate
Phil Jones Associates Ltd	Principal : Contractor role	£5,376.00	Cost Estimate
Arcadis Consulting (UK) Ltd	Project management	£10,000.00	Cost Estimate
Rise Associates	Business engagement	£4,214.00	Cost Estimate
Total fees		£57,557.20	
Grand total of works and fees			£105,519.43