

MINUTE
of
EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held at 2.00pm on 14 May 2020.

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Paul O’Kane

Councillor Buchanan, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; and Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1256. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

RECOMMENCING MEETINGS

1257. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council on 23 March when it had been agreed, amongst other things, to suspend formal meetings and to temporarily extend delegated powers to officers (Page 1161, Item 1253 refers), the committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive outlining and seeking agreement to proposals to restart formal meetings.

The report explained that it had been approximately 8 weeks since the temporary arrangements had been introduced and that over that time significant efforts had been required across all Council services to not only continue to deliver existing services, but also to deliver new services associated with tackling COVID-19.

Despite the additional work required, a degree of relative stability had been reached enabling the recommencement of formal meetings to be considered.

The report set out a proposed calendar of meetings to take place in June, explaining that these would be “virtual” meetings with all participants taking part remotely, as well as setting out some of the other issues to be resolved in respect of meetings of the Licensing Committee and Local Review Body before these meetings could restart.

The report further explained that it was intended for the normal calendar of meetings to resume after the summer recess with these meetings continuing to be held “virtually” until government guidance permitted otherwise.

The report also clarified that as a result of formal meetings restarting it would be possible for the extended delegated powers to be withdrawn with the exception of licensing matters in

respect of which the Chief Officer – Legal & Procurement would continue to exercise delegated powers until arrangements to recommence meetings of the Licensing Committee were in place.

Councillor Buchanan having welcomed the proposals set out in the report, Councillor Miller sought further information in relation to the recording of meetings and making these available to the public and how the Council's approach compared to other councils.

In response the Chief Executive explained that there were a variety of approaches being adopted across the country. She emphasised in particular to the need to ensure that the required technology and security was in place, referring to the issues that had occurred during a virtual meeting of another council in Scotland recently.

Councillor O'Kane supported the proposed approach suggesting that the meetings in June could be used to refine the process prior to the start of the normal schedule of meetings after the recess.

The Chief Executive having outlined some of the further challenges of remote participation in meetings, particularly the role of acting as meeting chair, the committee:-

- (a) approved the lifting of the suspension of delegations to committees and the proposals to recommence meetings as outlined in the report;
- (b) agreed that the temporary extension of delegated powers to officers be withdrawn on 30 June 2020 with the exception of licensing matters in respect of which the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement would continue to exercise delegated powers until arrangements to recommence meetings of the Licensing Committee were in place.

CHAIR