

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the special meeting held on 19 March 2020 starting at 9.30 am

Present:

Councillor Colin Smith (Chairman)
Councillors Graham Arthur, Peter Fortune,
William Huntington-Thresher, Peter Morgan and
Diane Smith

Also Present:

Councillor Nicholas Bennett MA J.P., Councillor Gary
Stevens, Councillor Melanie Stevens, Councillor Pauline
Tunncliffe and Councillor Angela Wilkins

153 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kate Lymer.

154 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**155 DECISION MAKING ARRANGEMENTS DURING
CORONAVIRUS DELAY PHASE**
Report CSD20059

This report was considered as a matter of urgency in order to ensure that effective decision making could continue whilst democratic accountability was preserved during the coronavirus pandemic.

During the coronavirus pandemic local authorities had to consider how they held their meetings and took decisions. There was not yet a prohibition on local authority meetings being held, but it was possible that this could change. At present, local authorities were expected to use the provisions already available in their constitutions to continue with necessary decision-making, but it was possible that new provisions might become available through the emergency legislation being promoted by the Government. This might include provision for virtual meetings and options for the annual meeting, which currently had to take place before the end of May.

The report presented a series of changes to allow most decision making to take place whilst preserving democratic accountability during the pandemic. The same report had been considered by the Urgency Committee immediately before this Executive meeting; with minor amendments, the Committee had approved the recommendations.

Councillor Graham Arthur reported that work was going on involving the IT Team and BT to develop the Council's capacity for remote meetings, including facilitating virtual committee meetings if legislation was changed to allow these. It was also confirmed that additional laptops were being rolled out to enable more Council staff to work from home.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett questioned whether school places were being allocated to the right key workers. The Leader confirmed that officers were working very closely with schools to ensure that places were available to all key workers who needed them.

In response to a question from Councillor William Huntington-Thresher, it was confirmed that the safeguard of call-in would remain applicable.

The Leader reported that Cllr Simon Fawthrop, as Chairman of Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee, was in support of the short-term emergency measures.

RESOLVED that

(1) The Leader considers whether executive decisions which are scheduled to be made by the Executive can be deferred.

(2) In addition to the executive decision making arrangements presently permitted by the Constitution, executive decisions which the Leader considers cannot be deferred are made either by the Leader or the relevant Portfolio Holder for the remainder of the Municipal Year and that decisions taken by the Leader or a Portfolio Holder are subject to virtual or written pre-decision scrutiny.

(3) All matters reserved to the full Executive in Part 3 of the Constitution and where relaxations are granted by the Urgency Committee (resolutions 6 and 7) are taken by the Leader.

(4) The Chief Executive to undertake expenditure which in his opinion is urgently required to protect the Council, its members, staff and residents during the Coronavirus outbreak to a maximum of £100k with the agreement of the Leader.

The Meeting ended at 9.42 am

Chairman