

Executive

7th May 2020

Report of the Monitoring Officer

- 1. Amendment to Standing Orders of the Constitution for the provision of Remote Meetings**
- 2. Reporting of Decisions Made using the Urgent Decision Making Guidance**

Summary

To amend the Constitution following the publication of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (the “Regulations”) which came into force on 4th April 2020, and provide for alternative arrangements for Local Authority meetings which are required to be held between 4th April 2020 and 7th May 2021.

In accordance with the Council’s constitution to report the decisions made using the Urgent Decision Making Guidance for the period 23rd March 2020 to 7th April 2020.

Background

Remote meetings

Prior to publication of the Regulations, all constitutionally prescribed meetings were held in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 which meant that all meetings were to be held with members being physically present with associated rules requiring publication of notices at Council Offices and enabling members of the press and public being able to physically attend to observe and or participate.

The coronavirus outbreak and central government guidance in response has meant that it has been impossible to convene council meetings without a change to legislation. On 4th April 2020, the aforementioned Regulations were issued and these provide for remote meetings with remote attendance and participation for all meetings until 7th May 2021. As such it has been necessary for the Monitoring Officer to draft Standing Orders to facilitate the Council’s delivery of remote meetings.

These additional Standing Orders relate to all constitutionally prescribed meetings of the Council and additional guidance has been provided to facilitate the regulatory meetings of Licensing and Planning.

If at some point before 7th May 2021, restrictions are lifted and subject to relevant advice, the Council will remain able to return to meetings whereby Members are physically present.

The Monitoring Officer will ensure the Standing Orders remain under review so as to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Publication of Decisions

In accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution, any decisions made using the urgent powers of the Chief Executive / Deputy Chief Executive shall be reported to the next appropriate and available meeting.

The decisions which have been required are listed below:

- COVID 19 - Services at the Crematorium – 07/04/20
- COVID 19 - Postpone licensed vehicle inspections for existing taxis – 02/04/20
- COVID 19 - Enhance existing arrangements through YFAS to allow more residents to receive support – 31/03/20
- COVID 19 - Emergency Hardship Fund for local SMEs – 31/03/20
- COVID 19 - Emergency Loans for Businesses – 31/03/20
- COVID 19 - Waive Car Parking Charges for Key Workers – 24/03/20
- COVID 19 - Financial Relief for Suppliers – 24/03/20
- COVID 19 - Defer implementation of increased fees & charges and offer of licensing fee holiday for 3 months – 24/03/20
- COVID 19 - Debt Recovery Activity – 24/03/20
- COVID 19 - Defer commercial rent income due for 3 months – 24/03/20
- COVID 19 - To pay providers of LD Supported Living an additional 3% - 31/03/20
- COVID 19 - To defer the HRA rent increase for 3 months – 31/03/20

Full details of these decisions are available to view on the Council's website.

Implications

Financial

Not applicable to this report.

Human Resources (HR)

The Council is currently required to follow the social distancing and other Public Health guidance about working practices at this time.

Equalities

The Council must ensure that its arrangements for remote meetings ensure that council meetings remain transparent and accessible to all who wish to observe or participate.

Legal

As detailed within the report.

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

The Council will utilise recognised ICT platforms for the delivery of remote meetings and live stream meetings via the existing YouTube channel.

Recommendations

To note the Monitoring Officer's amendment to the Council's Standing Orders for the provision of remote meetings.

To note the decisions made under the urgent decision making guidance between 23rd March 2020 and 7th April 2020.

Author & Chief Officer responsible for the report:

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Director of Governance &
Monitoring Officer

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Report
Approved

Date

07/05/2020

Specialist Implications Officer(s):

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Local Government Act 1972
- The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020
- City Of York Constitution

Annex:

Annex 1 - Standing Orders for the provision of remote meetings