



CITY OF  
*Lincoln*  
COUNCIL

SUMMONS  
SUMMONS  
SUMMONS

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# Council Summons

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For the meeting to be held on  
**Tuesday, 28 April 2020**

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## CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

Sir/Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the COUNCIL of the City of Lincoln to be held virtually on Tuesday, 28 April 2020 at 10.00 am.

### **Virtual Meeting**

This meeting will be held via conference call.

In order to join the conference call, please call: **0800 279 8543**

Please follow any instructions and, when requested, enter the code: **5533 712 329**

This is a public meeting and anyone wishing to join the meeting to observe proceedings can do so via the above telephone number and conference code.



Chief Executive and Town Clerk

Angela Andrews

### **A G E N D A**

#### **SECTION A**

**Page(s)**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Confirmation of Minutes - 3 March 2020  | <b>5 - 16</b>  |
| 2. Declarations of Interest  |                |
| Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary. |                |
| 3. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11 from Members of the Public and Provide Answers thereon  |                |
| 4. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12 from Members and Provide Answers thereon  |                |
| 5. Council Procedure Rules Relating to Remote Meetings   | <b>17 - 20</b> |
| 6. Covid19 - City of Lincoln Council Position Statement  | <b>21 - 30</b> |

7. Proposed Amendment to the Constitution - Financial Procedure Rules	<b>31 - 34</b>
8. Application of 'Remission' to Council Tax Charges for Long Term Empty Properties During Covid19	<b>35 - 38</b>
9. Annual General Meeting	<b>39 - 42</b>
10. Committee Membership Changes	
11. Equality Objectives	<b>43 - 48</b>
12. Extension of the 6 Month Attendance Rule for Councillors	<b>49 - 50</b>

- Present:** Councillor Sue Burke (*in the Chair*),  
Councillor Biff Bean, Councillor Bill Bilton, Councillor Alan Briggs, Councillor Kathleen Brothwell, Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Bob Bushell, Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor Thomas Dyer, Councillor Geoff Ellis, Councillor Gary Hewson, Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor Jackie Kirk, Councillor Rosanne Kirk, Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Councillor Rebecca Longbottom, Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor Councillor Bill Mara, Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Laura McWilliams, Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Councillor Neil Murray, Councillor Donald Nannestad, Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor Christopher Reid, Councillor Hilton Spratt, Councillor Edmund Strengiel, Councillor Ralph Toofany, Councillor Naomi Tweddle, Councillor Pat Vaughan and Councillor Loraine Woolley
- Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Yvonne Bodger and Councillor Andy Kerry

**34. Announcements**

The Mayor informed Council that Councillor Andy Kerry had recently been unwell and was making a steady recovery at home. Members wished Councillor Kerry well in his convalescence.

**35. Confirmation of Minutes - 21 January 2020**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020 be confirmed.

**36. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Ralph Toofany declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025'. Councillor Toofany was an allotment tenant. A dispensation by the Monitoring Officer had been granted to enable any member who was an allotment tenant to participate in proceedings relating to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the setting of the budget.

Councillor Pat Vaughan declared a Personal Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025'. Councillor Vaughan's granddaughter worked in the Council's finance department.

**37. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11 from Members of the Public and Provide Answers thereon**

No questions from the public had been received.

**38. Receive Any Questions under Council Procedure Rule 12 from Members and Provide Answers thereon**

**Question by Councillor Hilton Spratt to the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Spratt asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

“What arrangements has the Council made to celebrate VE Day?”

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council, reported that the Council was organising a Tri-Service Parade with the Navy, Army and Air Force similar to that held in 2018 for Armistice Day and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the First World War. The Parade was scheduled to commence at St. Martin’s Square, led by a marching band, and stop at the War Memorial for a salute and wreath-laying by civic dignitaries. There would be a short service at the War Memorial, following which the three Services would march to City Square where a bugler would sound the Last Post/Reveille at 2.55pm to coincide with the rest of the country. During the evening, a 1940’s style picnic with bands and military equipment on display would be held at Boutham Park.

As a supplementary, Councillor Spratt said that it was very fitting to celebrate the end of that war and the defeat it entailed regarding genocide and the holocaust, particularly in the context of the motion this Council had agreed at its previous meeting in respect of anti-semitism.

**Question by Councillor Thomas Dyer to the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing**

Councillor Dyer asked the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing the following question:

“What procedure does the Council have in place if an existing Council tenant wishes to have an electric vehicle charging point fitted? Do we signpost and support tenants with this? Do we have the appropriate local contractors in place to complete this work if requested?”

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing, reported that the Council had not appointed a specific contractor for this purpose. He made the point, however, that when people bought electric cars they would often be signposted to local firms who could undertake that work. New properties often did have electric charging points included and this was the case with the Council’s new-build properties. For those older properties that did not have charging points for electric vehicles, the Council would signpost people to a Government scheme which currently offered up to a 75% grant for the works to be undertaken. The Council would be looking at ways to encourage tenants to take up electric charging points in the future, should they be interested in switching to electric vehicles.

Councillor Dyer asked the following question as a supplementary:

“Is there a timeframe for when a Council policy or public-facing document will be made available for residents on this issue?”

Councillor Nannestad responded by saying that this would be looked into, but reminded Council that the Housing Strategy and thirty-year Business Plan were both in the process of being developed. The climate change agenda, including provision for the use of electric vehicles, needed to be reflected as part of the development of both documents.

**39. Receive Reports under Council Procedure Rule 2 (vi) from Members**

**(a) Report by Councillor Bob Bushell - Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place**

Councillor Bob Bushell, Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place, presented a report on the work of his portfolio and provided updates on the following areas:

- allotments;
- equipped play areas;
- parks;
- Boutham Park;
- Hartsholme Country Park and Camp Site;
- the Commons;
- volunteering;
- arboriculture;
- bereavement services and the crematorium;
- licensing;
- food health and safety;
- waste and recycling;
- sport, recreation and leisure services.

Councillor Pat Vaughan, promoted woodland burials as a sustainable alternative to cremation and use of cemeteries but acknowledged that this did not take place in Lincoln. He questioned how many people had recently been buried at the cemetery on Long Leas Road.

Councillor Bushell confirmed that woodland burials were not undertaken in the city, however, there were other agencies in Lincolnshire that did provide such a ceremony. The City Council was increasingly using the cemetery at Long Leas road, with 95 burials having occurred there in recent months. There were sustainable options available in Lincoln, with an increased use of wicker coffins as opposed to traditional wood. Additionally, enviro-board coffins could be used at the crematorium which released lower emissions when burnt.

Councillor Christopher Reid queried the section of the report in relation to bus shelters where it had been claimed that funding was withdrawn by necessity of government imposed cuts. He argued that the withdrawal of funding for bus shelters had not been imposed by the government and had in fact been a decision of the administration.

Councillor Bushell, in response, highlighted that significant cuts in local government funding as part of the government's austerity measures had led to the Council having to make difficult decisions regarding its prioritisation of resources.

Councillor Toofany highlighted the problem of fly-tipping, which he felt had significantly increased in some areas. He asked what more could be done to identify those responsible and take necessary action.

Councillor Bushell acknowledged that fly-tipping was a persistent problem but that the Council did try to prevent this where possible and prosecute accordingly where it could.

Councillor Thomas Dyer referred to residents on Hykeham Road last week not having their green bins emptied, which was as a result of sickness absence and a national shortage of HGV refuse collection drivers. He therefore asked what plans were in place to ensure that this situation was managed locally.

Councillor Bushell reported that residents on Hykeham Road had their green bins collected the next day, with messages having been sent out via social media to keep residents as updated as possible. The retention of HGV refuse collection drivers was a national problem, with one of the key issues being that drivers attained their HGV licence but then often moved on to more lucrative jobs such as long-distance lorry driving, for example. Officers were working on ways in which this could be addressed.

Councillor Ronald Hills was concerned that Hartsholme Country Park was rapidly becoming dilapidated, together with bungalows and houses located within its boundary.

Councillor Bushell highlighted that the Council had a good record with the Arboretum and Boutham Park in respect of the restoration and maintenance of parks and was very positive about the future of Hartsholme Country Park. He acknowledged that this would require a bid via the National Heritage Lottery Fund in the same way that had been the case with Boutham Park and was sure that this would be achieved in due course.

The report was noted.

**(b) Report by Councillor Donald Nannestad - Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing**

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing, presented a report on the work of his portfolio and provided updates on the following areas:

- the centenary of Council housing in Lincoln and a series of events involving tenants to mark the anniversary;
- homelessness;
- tenancy management;
- new build and allocations;
- the right to buy scheme;
- vehicle fleet and a potential move towards use of electric vehicles.

Councillor Vaughan reported that, in respect of tenancy management, the number of cases considered by the Housing Appeals Panel had dropped in the last year.

Councillor Nannestad reported that lots of work had been undertaken with tenants of the sustainability of their tenancies and that feedback from the Housing Appeals Panel had assisted in this.

The report was noted.

**(c) Report by Councillor Jane Loffhagen - Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Jane Loffhagen, Chair of the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee, presented a report on the work of the Committee, particularly in respect of the Scrutiny Review into Social Isolation. It was noted that a further Scrutiny Review into Community Integration had now commenced.

The report was noted.

**(d) Report by Councillor Lucinda Preston - Sustainability Advocate**

Councillor Lucinda Preston, Sustainability Advocate, presented a report on her advocacy role, which included updates on the following areas:

- sustainability and the City of Lincoln Council;
- tackling climate change;
- the Lincoln Climate Commission;
- the scope of Lincoln's roadmap to zero carbon;
- sustainability in respect of housing;
- sustainability in respect of reducing single use plastic;
- sustainability in respect of waste and recycling;
- sustainability in respect of improving the environment;
- sustainability in respect of transport;
- sustainability in respect of food.

Councillor Chris Burke highlighted the excellent information available on the City Council's website regarding sustainability and felt that it was important for this work to continue.

Councillor Ronald Hills encouraged all members of Council to take advantage of the technology available to them and adopt paperless working in respect of the Council's meetings.

Councillor Christopher Reid asked whether the Western Growth Corridor development included carbon neutral initiatives and whether the scheme itself was considered as carbon neutral. He questioned how this development would help the Council contribute to its net reduction in carbon emissions. Councillor Reid was also of the view that more work needed to be done on the sustainability section of the Council's website by way of offering suggestions and help to residents rather than solely providing information.

Councillor Preston reported that a statement of carbon neutrality would form part of the planning application associated with the Western Growth Corridor which, as a development, would be designed to be as carbon neutral as possible.

In respect of the website, Councillor Preston acknowledged that this was a work in progress and that other authorities, such as Cambridge City Council, had adopted online toolkits which residents could use. It was the aim to have something similar on the Council's website in due course as the content grew and developed.

The report was noted.

**40. To Consider the Following Recommendations of the Executive and Committees of the Council**

**(a) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 17.4 regarding the content and length of speeches be suspended to allow the Leader of the Council and a representative of the Opposition unlimited time to speak on this item.

Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Leader of the Council, proposed the recommendations contained within the report, subject to amendments to specific fees and charges as set out on the supplement which had been published and circulated.

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

Councillor Thomas Dyer, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, proposed a number of amendments by way of an alternative budget which comprised:

- investment in further managed workspaces. These were particularly needed in the South of the City where there was already a lot of investment in North Hykeham by North Kesteven District Council;
- an increase in sheltered bus stops throughout the city ensuring, where practicably possible, a sheltered bus stop was available comprising an initial investment of £50,000 - £75,000;
- investment to create more electric vehicle charging stations across the City comprising an initial investment of £50,000;
- all Council Housing Revenue Account vehicles which were procured after 2025 to be electric;
- a free garden waste bin for residents under a new, reformed service - £300,000;
- a 10% increase in public waste bins across the city - £20,000;
- payment of initial rent guarantees in the form of a loan to allow people to rent private housing – cost neutral;
- maintenance cost of increasing sheltered bus stops throughout the city - £20,000;
- the creation of ‘pop-in’ parking, to encourage more people to shop locally and use the city centre – cost neutral;
- a full review into the staff management structure to save £250,000 per annum;
- further staffing investment in online services, to make the digital face of the authority the easiest and most efficient way to do business with the Council – cost neutral;
- more shared services with neighbouring Councils;
- a full review into the Sincil Bank neighbourhood working scheme;
- developing unused Council owned buildings and/or land where possible;
- reforming the amount Councillors received who had additional responsibility;
- fundamentally review all outsourced contracts when they were due for renewal;
- a full review of external grants the Council issued. The current spend was over £400,000 per annum;

- a green audit to investigate the usage of utilities (gas, electricity and water). The current bill stood at over £850,000;
- a full review of what the authority posted and, where statutorily possible, use of email rather than hard copies.

Councillor Hilton Spratt, Leader of the Opposition, seconded the amendment.

In voting on the amendment, the amendment was lost.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7 a recorded vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
Councillor Briggs	Councillor Bean	
Councillor Dyer	Councillor Bilton	
Councillor Hills	Councillor Brothwell	
Councillor Mara	Councillor C Burke	
Councillor Reid	Councillor S Burke	
Councillor Spratt	Councillor B Bushell	
Councillor Strengiel	Councillor L Bushell	
	Councillor Ellis	
	Councillor Hewson	
	Councillor J Kirk	
	Councillor R Kirk	
	Councillor Loffhagen	
	Councillor Longbottom	
	Councillor Mair	
	Councillor McNulty	
	Councillor McWilliams	
	Councillor Metcalfe	
	Councillor Murray	
	Councillor Nannestad	
	Councillor Preston	
	Councillor Toofany	
	Councillor Tweddle	
	Councillor Vaughan	
	Councillor Woolley	

In voting on the original motion it was RESOLVED that the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2025 and Capital Strategy 2020-2025, including the following specific elements, be approved:

- a proposed Council Tax increase of 1.9% for 2020/21;
- a housing rent increase of 2.7% for 2020/21, as agreed at Council on 21 January 2020;
- the inclusion of the Council as a member of the Lincolnshire Business Rates Pool in 2020/21;
- the General Fund revenue forecast 2020/21-2024/25 as shown in Appendix 1 of the report and the main basis on which the budget has been calculated, as set out in paragraph 4 of the report;
- the General Investment Programme 2020/21-2024/25 as shown in Appendix 2 of the report and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated, as set out in paragraph 6 of the report;

- the draft Housing Revenue Account forecast 2020/21-2024/25 as shown in Appendix 3 of the report and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report;
- the draft Housing Investment Programme 2020/21-2024/25 as shown in Appendix 4 of the report and the main basis on which the programme has been calculated, as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7 a recorded vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
Councillor Bean	Councillor Briggs	
Councillor Bilton	Councillor Dyer	
Councillor Brothwell	Councillor Hills	
Councillor C Burke	Councillor Mara	
Councillor S Burke	Councillor Reid	
Councillor B Bushell	Councillor Spratt	
Councillor L Bushell	Councillor Strengiel	
Councillor Ellis		
Councillor Hewson		
Councillor J Kirk		
Councillor R Kirk		
Councillor Loffhagen		
Councillor Longbottom		
Councillor Mair		
Councillor McNulty		
Councillor McWilliams		
Councillor Metcalfe		
Councillor Murray		
Councillor Nannestad		
Councillor Preston		
Councillor Toofany		
Councillor Twedde		
Councillor Vaughan		
Councillor Woolley		

**(b) Council Tax 2020/21**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Council:

- (1) Accepts the 6 January 2020 Executive recommendation that the Council Tax Base for 2020/21, as calculated in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, be 24,689.50.
- (2) Calculates the following amounts for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
  - a) £105,217,640 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

- b) £98,302,610 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- c) £6,915,030 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31A (4) of the Act).
- d) £280.08 being the amount at 2(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act
- f) £280.08 being the amount at 2(c) above less the amount at 2(e) above, all divided by the amount at 1 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year

g) **City of Lincoln Council**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
£186.72	£217.84	£248.96	£280.08
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
£342.32	£404.56	£466.80	£560.16

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 2(f) above by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular band divided by the number which in proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different bands.

- (3) Note that for the year 2020/21 Lincolnshire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

**Lincolnshire County Council**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
£891.72	£1,040.34	£1,188.96	£1,337.58
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
£1,634.82	£1,932.06	£2,229.30	£2,675.16

- (4) Note that for the year 2020/21 the Police and Crime Commissioner has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
£167.58	£195.51	£223.44	£251.37
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
£307.23	£363.09	£418.95	£502.74

- (5) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2(g), 3 and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the following as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2020/21 in accordance with the dwelling bandings shown below:

**Total Council Tax Charge 2020/21**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
£1,246.02	£1,453.69	£1,661.36	£1,869.03
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
£2,284.37	£2,699.71	£3,115.05	£3,738.06

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7 a recorded vote was taken, the result of which was as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstention</b>
Councillor Bean		
Councillor Bilton		
Councillor Briggs		
Councillor Brothwell		
Councillor B C Burke		
Councillor S Burke		
Councillor B Bushell		
Councillor L Bushell		
Councillor Dyer		
Councillor Ellis		
Councillor Hewson		
Councillor Hills		
Councillor J Kirk		
Councillor R Kirk		
Councillor Loffhagen		
Councillor Longbottom		
Councillor Mair		
Councillor Mara		
Councillor McNulty		
Councillor McWilliams		
Councillor Metcalfe		
Councillor Murray		
Councillor Nannestad		
Councillor Preston		
Councillor Reid		
Councillor Spratt		
Councillor Strengiel		
Councillor Toofany		
Councillor Twedde		
Councillor Vaughan		
Councillor Woolley		

**(c) Prudential Indicators 2019/20 - 2022/23 and Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED:

- (1) That the prudential indicators, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the revised Minimum Revenue Position Policy, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.
- (3) That the Treasury Management Strategy, including the treasury management prudential indicators and the Investment Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved.
- (4) That the revised Treasury Management Practices and Schedules, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report, be approved.

**(d) Vision 2020 Strategic Plan**

The Vision 2020 Strategic Plan was noted.

**(e) Vision 2025 Strategic Plan**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the Vision 2025 Strategic Plan be approved.

**(f) Pay Policy Statement 2020/21**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be approved.

**41. Annual Timetable of Meetings 2020/21**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the annual timetable of Council meetings for 2020/21 be approved.

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES RELATING TO REMOTE MEETINGS</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>CAROLYN WHEATER – CITY SOLICITOR</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the adoption of Council Procedure Rules relating to remote meetings of the Council. These are to cover the period in which the Council members are unable to meet in person, due to the impact of the coronavirus.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 make provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to, council meetings held on or before 7 May 2021.
- 2.2 The regulations enable the Council to hold meetings without all, or any, of the members being physically present in a room. This allows for remote meetings through electronic, digital, virtual locations, live webcast, live interactive streaming, video and telephone conferencing.

## 3. Procedure Rules

- 3.1 The 'place' at which the meeting is held may be a council building, or where the organiser of the meeting is located, or an electronic, digital or virtual location, a web address, or a conference call telephone number.
- 3.2 In order for members to be able to attend meetings of the council remotely, they need not be physically present, provided they are able to hear and be heard (and, where possible, see and be seen by) other councillors and members of the public attending remotely or in person.
- 3.3 Council Procedure Rules relating to remote meetings, as appended to this report, set out how remote meetings will be facilitated at the City of Lincoln Council. These procedure rules will apply to remote meetings in the same way as they do for other meetings of the council except where they conflict, in which case this procedure rule takes precedence over other procedure rules in relation to the governance of remote meetings. For example, the requirement to stand whilst speaking at meetings of Council will clearly not apply for a remote meeting of Council.

3.4 Access to information rules will still apply to remote meetings, such as the publication of agendas and reports at least five clear working days prior to the date of the meeting.

#### **4. Organisational Impacts**

4.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)  
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules  
As outlined in the report.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights  
The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

#### **5. Recommendation**

5.1 That the Council Procedure Rules relating to remote meetings, and to cover the aforementioned period, be approved.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** None

**List of Background Papers:** None

## CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

### Council Procedure Rules Relating to Meetings

1. The [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) make provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to, council meetings held on or before 7 May 2021.
2. The regulations enable the council to hold meetings without all, or any, of the members being physically present in a room. This allows for remote meetings through electronic, digital, virtual locations, live webcast, live interactive streaming, video and telephone conferencing.
3. The 'place' at which the meeting is held may be a council building, or where the organiser of the meeting is located, or an electronic, digital or virtual location, a web address, or a conference call telephone number.
4. In order for members to be able to attend meetings of the council remotely, they need not be physically present, provided they are able to hear and be heard (and, where possible, see and be seen by) other councillors and members of the public attending remotely or in person.
5. These procedure rules apply to remote meetings in the same way as they do for other meetings of the council except where they conflict, in which case this procedure rule takes precedence over other procedure rules in relation to the governance of remote meetings.

### Process

6. The council facilitates remote attendance and access to its meetings through the medium of Daisy Conferencing Services, which enables the following to take place:
  - (a) Contributions to be received from people using a wide variety of devices, not all of whom are on the council network.
  - (b) Being accessible to both participants and members of the public who are not taking an active role but just observing.
7. Before the meeting, any document to be referred to during the meeting should be shared with participants and published (where appropriate) in advance on the council's website, and ensure that every page and slide is numbered, wherever possible.

8. Before the meeting, all participants should be made aware of the following etiquette:
  - (a) Join the meeting promptly to avoid unnecessary interruptions.
  - (b) Mute microphones when not talking.
  - (c) Only speak when invited to by the Mayor or person presiding over the meeting.
  - (d) Anyone speaking should state their name before making a comment.
  - (e) If referring to a specific page on the agenda pack, mention the page number.

### **Questions by members of the public**

9. Only written questions from the public, submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.1 – 11.10 of Council Procedure Rules Relating to Meetings, may be considered at remote meetings.

### **Voting**

10. Named voting will be used to record votes at remote meetings.
11. To record a vote, the Chief Executive and Town Clerk or her nominated representative will perform a roll-call of all members present and ask them to state their voting intention (For, Against or Abstain). These will then be counted and recorded. At the conclusion of the voting the Mayor, or person presiding over the meeting, shall announce the numbers of votes cast for, against and abstentions and announce whether the motion has been passed or lost.

### **Access to information**

12. The requirement to ensure meetings are open to the public includes access by remote means, including video conferencing, live webcast and live interactive streaming. Where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means, the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person.
13. Any requirements for the authority to ensure publication, posting or making available a document for inspection at offices of the council include publication on the council's website.

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>COVID19 – CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL POSITION STATEMENT</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>ANGELA ANDREWS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Council on the current position with service delivery in response to the COVID 19 pandemic and future ongoing planning.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The key Priorities during the emerging crisis for the City of Lincoln Council were agreed in early March 2020 as:

- 2.2
- protect the most vulnerable in our city
  - Supporting Businesses
  - deliver our public protection/health and statutory responsibilities if we can
  - protect our staff and elected members
  - provide community leadership to our residents and businesses

- 2.3 As a Council we identified business-critical services which will ensure the delivery of the above and these are

- Homelessness/rough sleeping
- Sheltered accommodation
- Lincare
- Emergency Repairs
- Customer Services
- Communications
- Revenues and Benefits
- Bereavement Services
- CCTV
- Parking
- Refuse Collection/Street Cleansing
- Food Safety/Enforcement

We have utilised the capacity we have available in our workforce to try and continue to deliver these in some form and provide resilience. In addition, as part of our Community Leadership role we have created new teams to support the community (a new befriending service and community helpline) and a business support service (ensuring grants are paid and appropriate advice is given)

We have undertaken a financial impact assessment of the implications of the emergency together with a forecast – the shortfall in income and increase in expenditure is significant. We have submitted our forecasts to government, to the Local Government Association and to other lobbying bodies to ensure that any new resources released by government are allocated appropriately to all tiers of local government.

### **3. Background**

3.1 As the COVID 19 emergency began to emerge the City Council began to implement its business continuity plan. As the guidance and situation changed on a daily basis, the staffing and service delivery had to respond to the changing situation. Priorities were agreed as:

- protect the most vulnerable in our city
- Supporting Businesses
- deliver our public protection/health and statutory responsibilities if we can
- protect our staff and elected members
- provide community leadership to our residents and businesses

3.2 Over the course of a week in mid March, normal service delivery across all services moved to, limited face to face, vulnerable staff being sent home, new technological solutions being developed, new risk assessments being undertaken, and then on to the current operating model of over 400 staff being given the capability to work and take calls from home. Many staff have been retrained and refocused on critical service delivery. Others have provided essential support to ensure businesses have been paid grants, invoices have been paid, advice has been given and the most vulnerable in our City have been supported through our new Community helpline and befriending service.

3.3 In addition, the City Council is a partner of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum provides capacity and support to this partnership 7 days a week assisting in a coordinated county wide response.

### **4. Critical Services**

4.1 As part of the Council's business continuity arrangements detailed plans were already in place to operate in emergency situations – due to the nature of this particular emergency these plans were reprioritised and refocused. Attached at Appendix A is an overview of the current operational situation with Council Services.

#### **Service Delivery**

4.2 Although the door at City Hall has closed, we are still very much open for business. Our customer services team are working from home to deal with a heightened number of enquires with many more teams delivering critical services from home.

- 4.3 All our waste services are currently operating as normal. Although with more people at home we are experiencing some access issues due to parked cars on some streets. In addition, with more people at home, household waste has also increased so we are advising residents to think about how they use their bins.
- 4.4 The “rent free” two weeks for tenants which are normally during the Christmas period were brought forward to the first two weeks of this month. In addition, we have set up a hardship fund, using Housing Revenue Account money, to help tenants who cannot pay their rent.
- 4.5 Our tenants’ gas checks and emergency repairs are still going ahead with strict social distancing and handwashing measures in place. Our staff have and use PPE where required and we ask all callers if they are shielding to better inform their requirements prior to visiting.
- 4.6 A Discretionary Housing Payment is available to those receiving Universal Credit and we are offering help to those who are struggling in paying council tax.
- 4.7 Homelessness is a continuing issue. We followed the directive from Central Government to provide a bed space for all our rough sleepers under the “everyone in” campaign. Initially there were 17 individuals who were provided with accommodation. Many of these people have very complex needs and although they have been given support, they have not all remained at their allotted accommodation which has created some difficulties. We have been working closely with other agencies including the YMCA, P3 and Framework. Some of these providers have made arrangements for self-isolating. For example; the YMCA has created a number of units for rough sleepers who need to self-isolate.
- 4.8 The work to bring void properties back into use has been prioritised for use with the homeless. We are only dealing with the highest priority allocations and all other allocations applications are on hold. We are also working with a number of private sector landlords to increase the supply of temporary accommodation.
- 4.9 Lincare which operates for vulnerable people signed up to the lifeline service as well as being the call centre for the County Wellbeing Service and our Out of Hours call centre, continues to be fully operational. This is a critical 24/7 service and we have trained additional staff to cover when required and have set up a system that enables remote working.
- 4.10 To comply with Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (England) Regulations, we have currently enacted a number of changes in Bereavement Services which limits the numbers that attend funerals, and they must follow the social distancing rules and not attend if they show symptoms. The reception room and Book of Remembrance at Lincoln Crematorium is closed until further notice and entries but can be viewed online at: [Lincoln.bookofremembrance.uk](http://Lincoln.bookofremembrance.uk). Our cemeteries in the city will remain open but social distancing rules apply.

## Business Support

- 4.11 The government announced a £330 billion package of measures to support business and we've been following their guidance to implement this locally.

We have been delivering £10,000 cash grants to our small businesses and £25,000 grants to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses and collating information from all eligible businesses to ensure no one misses out on this payment. To date, £15.12 million has been released to 1,218 local businesses, with more payments to come.

## Community Support

- 4.12 A community help phone line and email have been quickly created and staffed by redeployed staff to provide signposting support to those who needed help but aren't sure on where to turn. In four weeks, the team has received more than 500 calls, the majority of which have resulted in signposting to community support and referrals to foodbanks.
- 4.13 We have supported the Food in School Holidays Project (FiSH) to help children who would normally receive free school meals access food vouchers during the Easter holidays.
- 4.14 A digital map has also been set up to signpost people to support closest to their location and community groups can add their own details and services they can offer.
- 4.15 As well as a community help line to help those with physical needs, protecting the social and emotional wellbeing of those who may be vulnerable, or isolating has been deemed an essential priority.
- 4.16 We have written to approximately 12,000 people and called 2,500 to ask if they would like regular conversations with a chatty council worker to help prevent feelings of loneliness. The service also helps our own staff with socialisation benefits who may also be missing social contact while working from home.
- 4.17 Referrals for befriending are also being made through the community help line, with one worried daughter even calling from Australia with concerns about her elderly mother in Lincoln. The community help team were able to make contact and arrange a food delivery and pass along her details to the befriending service for regular light-hearted chats.

## Recovery Plans

- 4.18 Plans are currently being developed within the Council in relation to recovery. Using the learning and transformation from this Emergency situation to create a new normal for how we operate as a Council moving forward.
- 4.19 In relation to the Economic recovery of the City and wider County we are part of a team working within the LRF shaping the required workstreams and developing programmes and interventions together with 'asks' of government.

## 5. Financial Impacts

- 5.1 It is clear that COVID19 is taking its toll on the financial resilience of the City of Lincoln Council as income streams are reducing, debt recovery is being deferred and there is a growing necessity to incur costs to ensure services are being provided throughout this difficult period.
- 5.2 Although the Government has been responsive and brought a series of financial packages of support for businesses and the wider community the same commitment of financial support to Council's, specifically Districts, to recompense them for directly related financial losses has not been as forthcoming. Whilst the financial support from Government received to date is to be welcomed, as the allocation of this was primarily targeted to social care pressures with the balance distributed using the SFA methodology this has resulted in District Councils receiving insignificant amounts. The Council's own allocation was £67k which only covers approx. one week of lost carparking income. A further announcement was made on 18<sup>th</sup> April and at time of writing this is still to be allocated to local authorities
- 5.3 Further financial support from Government would ensure that unbudgeted costs and reducing income levels do not have a longer term detrimental impact on the Council, resulting in service reductions in subsequent years.

## 6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Council notes the position statement.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** One

**List of Background Papers:** Appendix A - Service Status sheet

**Lead Officer:** Angela Andrews  
Chief Executive & Town Clerk  
Telephone (01522) 873292

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**APPENDIX A**

<b>Current Status of Services</b>		<b>As at 20/04/20</b>
<b>Area</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Status</b>
Community Services	Play areas	Closed and padlocked as per Govt direction
Community Services	Camp site at Hartsholme country park	Closed down and bookings cancelled through to June
Community Services	Hartsholme county park	remains open but staff only undertaking daily health and safety inspection. All activities suspended
Community Services	Parks and open spaces	Open but notices erected reminding people to keep their distance from each other .
Community Services	CCTV	Open and operating from City Hall 24/7.
Community Services	Car Parks	Open and reduced staffing still further to a basic rota undertaking health and safety inspections and basic customer service functions. Free parking in place for NHS/social worker staff as per govt guidance-. 8 car parking staff redeployed to Yarborough swabbing site.
Community Services	Residents Parking	System now in place for residents to apply for RPS permit renewal. Telephone service and code provided for display in car window.
Community Services	Bus station	Remain open but City council reception desk and staff on main console removed
Community Services	Public toilets	Following Govt decision to close most city centre business - all public loos closed apart from Bus station, which remains open. Now free entry from today
Community Services	Street cleansing	City centre to receive daily morning cleanse then bin emptying in day. Rest of city receive usual mechanical sweep and litter bin emptying only. Contractor is getting caught up with channel sweeping as no traffic on roads
Community Services	Fly tipping	will continue this service with focus on urgent cases
Community Services	Dangerous street furniture	To be repaired/removed as soon as possible by Housing Repairs team
Community Services	Graffiti removal	Only offensive incidents to be removed
Community Services	Abandoned vehicles	Only processed if pose a health and safety risk
Community Services	Waste collection	All three services currently operating (domestic, recycling, green waste). Will keep under review. Difficult for refuse vehicles to get into terraced streets due to residents parked cars on street. monitoring missed collections with contractor doing multiple returns to streets for pick up waste collection.
Community Services	Clinical waste	Still operating as normal
Community Services	Bulky item collection	Service non urgent so suspended
Grounds maintenance :	John Dawber gardens	closed
Grounds maintenance :	cemeteries	Cemeteries now open following additional government guidance.
Grounds maintenance :	tree services	urgent works only including watering recently planted trees to ensure they do not die
Grounds maintenance :	grass cutting/ bed maintenance	suspended, apart from in cemeteries where grave diggers do this in between digging graves /Starting to think about when we might need to reintroduce grass cutting due to highway safety
Environmental Services	Private sector housing	Staff working from home - emergency referrals . Focussing on HMO licensing
Environmental Services	Environmental Health	Staff working from home - have also taken on additional enforcement role to ensure businesses covered by Covid 19 regs remain closed. Providing a lot of advice to businesses that are unsure if they can trade.
Environmental Services	Public protection and ASB	Staff working from home. Focus is on urgent Nosisie nuisance and Domestic abuse cases.
Environmental Services	Licensing	Staff working from home - limited service
Environmental Services	Central Market	Following govt direction only food stalls remain open -only two stalls now remain open - a fruit and veg plus butchers
Environmental Services	Recreational and leisure incl leisure centres	Following govt direction all closed .

Environmental Services	Crematorium	Protected service - remains fully operational but reduced mourner numbers for services . Additional staff now being trained up. Closed to public on entering, and further reduction of mourners likely. Back office training to start shortly with redeployed staff. Now reduced attendance to 16 per service. Training for back office and cremator training continues.
Environmental Services	Events	Stopped and staff re deployed . 10km race now planned for 15th Nov 2020
Environmental Services	Visitor information centre	Closed currently
Environmental Services	community centres	closed as per govt direction
Planning and Building control	Development management	continuing - staff working from home. Site notices will still be erected
Planning and Building control	Building control	continuing - staff working from home but reduced staffing
Housing and Investment	HRS/Repairs	We are currently dealing with an average of 17 emergency repairs between the hours of 08:00-16:00. We are currently dealing with an average of 7 emergency repairs between the hours of 16:00-08:00. Any other operatives are working on Voids
Housing and Investment	Investment	Largely home working
Housing and Investment	Homelessness	Now a phone service where possible, we have provision for people who present at the door. Officers (Police and P3) working together. Director now chairing homelessness sub cell within LRF
Housing and Investment	Housing Solutions	Mainly at home, all non-committed allocations have stopped in order to prioritise homelessness.
Housing and Investment	Elderly Services	All Sheltered Accom covered, staffing in Lincare is resilient.
Housing and Investment	Tenancy	Mainly at home, phone service mainly reassuring tenants, working on hardship fund and additional DHP.
Housing and Investment	Safety Assurance Team	Mainly working from home.
Housing and Investment	Housing Strategy /Resident Involvement	Working from home, however resident involvement team to be redeployed to befriending service .
Chief Executives	Revs and Bens	Working from home/phones now up running. Monitoring impacts on increases in HB, CTS and UC claims. Significant demands on NNDR Team due to enquiries from businesses.
Chief Executives	Customer Services	7 staff picking up calls from home, other CSA's working from home picking up emails and providing support to revs and bens service with intake of claims etc.
Chief Executives	Business Management /Admin	Working from home - Support to CX, Leadership and Directors continuing with a mix being deployed to business support cell back office and befriending service.
Chief Executives	Audit	Redeployed to business support cell and Lincare
Chief Executives	Finance	Working from home /member of payments team picking up invoices when delivered by post and scanning indexing to ensure they get paid. Banking services provided remotely. Core finance team available to support budget holders, provide relevant advice
Chief Executives	Property and FM	All property team working from home . FM still providing on site presence at City Hall although not available all day, cleaning undertaken 3 days a week.
Chief Executives	Legal and Dem Services	Redeployed working on business support cell and civil society cell
Chief Executives	Civic	Redeployed to Lincare/some at home.
Chief Executives	HR / Work Based Learning (Apprentices)	Working from home
Chief Executives	Communications	Working from home
Chief Executives	Policy	Redeployed to business support cells/befriending service
Chief Executives	Procurement	Redeployed to Lincare
Chief Executives	IT	Some presence in City Hall at certain times , however mainly working from home - creating infrastructure to support home working and key service delivery.
Chief Executives	Org Change Lead	Redeployed to business support cell/IT support / creating remote working practices
Major Developments	Major Developments	Redeployed to business support cell.
Major Developments	Project Contract management	Minimum in place to fulfil contract requirements and control of contractors

Major Developments

Digital Strategy to support Town Fund

Work continuing to support future funding applications to improve Lincoln's future digital access, skills and resilience



**SUBJECT:                    PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION –  
FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES**

**DIRECTORATE:            CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**

**REPORT AUTHOR:        JACLYN GIBSON, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

## **1.        Purpose of Report**

- 1.1      To propose amendments to the Council’s Constitution in respect of Financial Procedure Rules and delegated powers in respect of Fees and Charges.

## **2.        Background**

- 2.1      The Council’s Financial Procedure Rules provide a framework for officers to work within to ensure compliance with the need to secure proper administration of the Council’s financial affairs as required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2.2      The Financial Procedure Rules set out the roles and responsibilities of the Council and officers across a range of financial matters.
- 2.3      In respect of fees and charges Financial Procedure Rules require these to be reviewed on an annual basis and submitted to the Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for approval. For amendments during the financial year, section 7.1.5 of the Rules states:

“In respect of services where fees and charges apply or may apply in circumstances where services are obliged through regulations to achieve cost recovery or where other market led factors influence the service and its charging structure, the relevant Assistant Director has the discretion to amend the set fees and charges by +/- 50%, after consulting with the Chief Finance Officer and the relevant Portfolio Holder. Such an occurrence shall be reported by the Assistant Director to full Council at the earliest opportunity”.

## **3.        Proposed Temporary Amendment to Financial Procedure Rules**

- 3.1      As a result of the current COVID19 crisis there is a need to amend the delegation to allow officers authority to reduce/waive fees and charges above the current 50% flexibility. This flexibility is required so that officers can respond to the current situation and where necessary reduce the fee/charge for services to nil, once such example being the waiving of the fee for live streaming of services at the Crematorium. This delegation will also apply to all fees and charges not just those in market or cost recovery situations.

### 3.2 The proposed, temporary, delegation would be:

“The relevant Assistant Director has the discretion to amend the set fees and charges by +50% or – 100% (effectively waiving the charge), after consulting with the Chief Finance Officer and the relevant Portfolio Holder”.

This delegation would remain in place for a period of six months at which time the existing delegation as per paragraph 7.1.5 of the Rules will be restored or a further report to consider an extension will be submitted to the Council.

## 4 Organisational Impacts

### 4.1 Finance

The impact of reducing any fees and charges on income budgets will be reported regularly to the Executive as part of the Financial Monitoring reports.

### 4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

The legal implications are as outlined in the report in respect of the Council's Constitution.

### 4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

## 5. Risk Implications

- 5.1 The ability to reduce set fees and charges creates a financial risk to the Council's income levels. This is being closely monitored and reported through to officers and the Executive and will be considered as part of the Council's overall financial response to the COVID19 crises.

## 6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That Council approves a revised section 7.1.5 of the Financial Procedure Rules, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of this report, for a period of 6 months.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** None

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer  
Telephone (01522) 873258

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>APPLICATION OF 'REMISSION' TO COUNCIL TAX CHARGES FOR LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES DURING COVID19</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>JACLYN GIBSON, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To propose an amendment to the Council's determination in respect of the additional charges made to long term empty properties for 2020/21 in accordance with Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, the Council has the power to extend the additional charge for any long term empty property that has been unfurnished for 5 years or longer to 200%. The Council agreed to use this power, at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020, with certain exclusions in place such as new purchasers, property being made habitable for a person with a disability or to increase energy efficiency or carbon footprint.
- 2.2 The legislation requires Councils to make a determination regarding the additional charges before the financial year in which they are to apply takes effect. However, this determination was made prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus in the UK.

## **3. Proposed Amendment to Determination**

- 3.1 Taxpayers subject to the additional charge (especially those subject to the new 200% addition) have been in contact advising that they are unable to prepare their properties for occupation because of the lockdown caused by the outbreak.
- 3.2 As the determination stands, there is no remission from the charge for this reason. Taxpayers would be able to make an application for remission of their charge under Section 13A LGFA92, but in accordance with the Council's policy, this could only be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship beyond the control of the taxpayer and when it is in the interests of the wider taxpayers to do so. It is unlikely that any taxpayer paying the additional charge would meet either of these criteria.
- 3.3 The Council could amend its determination for 2020/2021 by offering a form of remission for taxpayers who are unable to make their properties habitable as a result of the virus. It is proposed to reduce the additional charge by half with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 (to be applied retrospectively) for a maximum period of twelve months, but only in instances where the only reason the property cannot be made

habitable is as a consequence of the Covid-19 outbreak. If approved, the amended resolution is set out in full as Appendix 1 to this report.

## **4 Organisational Impacts**

### **4.1 Finance**

It is not possible to identify the specific loss of Council Tax income as a result of this amendment to the determination. The report to Council on 20<sup>th</sup> January estimated that the additional revenue that would be generated from applying the premium would be £58,659 of which the Council's share would be £9,269. Any lost revenue through applying this amendment will therefore be lower than £9,269. This will be a cost borne through the Collection Fund and taken into consideration when determining the surplus or deficit of the year.

### **4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

The legal implications are as outlined in the report

### **4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

## **5. Risk Implications**

5.1 There are no specific risks arising as a result of this report.

## **6. Recommendation**

6.1 That the Council's determination be amended regarding the imposition of additional charges for long term empty properties in accordance with Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 by inserting the following wording after paragraph 3(a)(iii):

(iv) Subject to sub-paragraph (e), the Council is satisfied that the that work required to make the property habitable and bring it back into occupation has not been completed as a consequence of delays attributable solely to the outbreak of Covid-19 in the United Kingdom.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** One

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer  
Telephone (01522) 873258

**Resolution from 1 April 2020 set out in full**

1. Pursuant to Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council resolves that it shall levy an additional charge on the Council Tax for long term empty properties for financial years commencing with the financial year 2020/21. The additional charge shall, subject to paragraphs 2 and 3 below, be the maximum permitted by the legislation for any class of property according to the length of time that it has been a long term empty property.
2. (a) The additional charge shall not apply in the first 12 months that a taxpayer becomes liable for the Council Tax for a property following the date of its purchase.
  - (b) This paragraph shall not apply if in the Council's view, the sale and purchase of the property was contrived in order to avoid the additional charges.
  - (c) For the purpose of this paragraph, a property will only be considered to have been sold if there is a conveyance leading to an amendment regarding the proprietorship of the property on the Land Register entry for the property.
3. (a) The amount of the additional charge shall be halved in the following situations:
  - (i) Subject to sub paragraphs (b) and (d), the Council is satisfied that the taxpayer is taking reasonable steps to return the property to a habitable state
  - (ii) Subject to sub paragraph (c), the Council is satisfied that the taxpayer is taking reasonable steps to bring the property back into occupation
  - (iii) Subject to sub paragraph (d), the Council is satisfied that the taxpayer is taking reasonable steps to make the property suitable for occupation by a person with a disability.
  - (iv) Subject to sub-paragraph (e), the Council is satisfied that the that work required to make the property habitable and bring it back into occupation has not been completed as a consequence of delays attributable solely to the outbreak of Covid-19 in the United Kingdom.
  - (b) This paragraph shall not apply in the following circumstances:
    - (i) The taxpayer has already received a local discount from the Council from the Council Tax for this property under Section 11A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Class D of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) Order 2003.
    - (ii) The taxpayer has at the time of the repairs commencing been liable for the Council Tax at the property for a period of 18 months or longer.
  - (c) This paragraph applies for a maximum period of 3 months.
  - (d) This paragraph applies for a maximum period of 6 months.
  - (e) This paragraph applies for a maximum period of 12 months

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>CAROLYN WHEATER – CITY SOLICITOR</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To determine not to hold the Annual General Meeting in May 2020, in accordance with the powers given to Local Authorities under new regulations.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 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 regs”) came into force on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020, under powers conferred by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.
- 2.2 The regs apply to local authority meetings that are required to be held, or held, before the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and are drafted to enable Local Authorities to properly function during the coronavirus crisis.
- 2.3 The Local Government Act 1972 requires Local Authorities to hold their AGM’s in either March, April or May of each year. Part 6 of the regs enables local authorities to disapply this requirement.
- 2.4 This therefore means that the Council has no obligation to hold the AGM at all this year and can instead defer this to May 2021. In this case all current appointments would continue until the next AGM.
- 2.5 The regs do allow for other options of the AGM to be held remotely in May 2020, or to defer a decision to hold the meeting until the current crisis enables meetings to return to their normal format.

## **3. Postponement of AGM**

- 3.1 Out of the three potential options in relation to holding the AGM, it would seem the most prudent course of action would be not to hold the AGM this year.
- 3.2 It is not considered feasible (nor entirely fair to the incoming Mayor) to hold the AGM remotely. In relation to holding the meeting date in abeyance until the crisis is over, this is also considered not ideal. There are no guarantees as to when meetings could take place as normal and would then cause unnecessary complications of how long the Mayor’s tenure would be and the fairness of this.

## 4. Elections

- 4.1 The regulations have also postponed the local elections (and Police and Crime Commissioner elections) from the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to the ordinary day of election in 2021.
- 4.2 For councillors this means that, a councillor who would otherwise retire on the 4<sup>th</sup> day after the ordinary day of election in 2020 will instead retire on the 4<sup>th</sup> day after the ordinary day of election in 2021.
- 4.3 For those councillors elected in 2021, as a result of the postponement, their term of office will be three years rather than four years, ending in 2024.

## 5. Organisational Impacts

- 5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)  
There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules  
As outlined in the report.
- 5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights  
The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

## 6. Risk Implications

- 6.1 As outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

## 7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That Council determines not to hold the Annual General Meeting in May 2020, and to agree that current appointments will continue until the Annual General Meeting 2021.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?**

None

**List of Background Papers:**

None

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXTRACT FROM COMMITTEE: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY GROUP – 18 FEBRUARY 2020 - EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2020 - 2024</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>ALI HEWSON, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER</b>

**1. Matter for Council**

1.1 To approve the proposed Draft Equality Objectives 2020-2024.

**List of Background Papers:** Equality and Diversity Group– 18 February 2020, Minute.

**Lead Officer:** Ali Hewson, Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone – 873370

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**53. Equality Objectives 2020-24**

The Principal Policy Officer:

- a. presented a report to Equality and Diversity Group outlining the proposed Equality Objectives 2020-24 for members' consideration and comments prior to forwarding to Executive and Full Council for approval
- b. reminded members of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998, which included the annual publication of equality information and setting at least one measurable Equality Objective every four years
- c. highlighted that the Equality Objectives Action Plan had been monitored on a regular basis by the Equality and Diversity Group with actions being added and amended as necessary, over the 2016 – 2020 period the following progress had been made:
  - 59 Actions had been completed.
  - 49 Actions had been started and were ongoing.
  - 5 Actions had been removed.
- d. reported that only key actions in any one year were included in the annual action plan, therefore, some but not all ongoing actions were carried forward to the following year and those actions which had been removed either became redundant due to changes in procedures or due to investigation were found to be impractical to implement
- e. advised on a wide range of actions that had been completed over the four year period, as detailed at paragraph 4.4 of the report, further information was available in the annual Equality Journal which provided equality information and also a summary of equality work undertaken during the year
- f. drew members attention to paragraph 5.3 of the report detailing the development timetable for the 2020-2024 Equality Objectives
- g. advised that following feedback from members, staff, residents, tenant panels and the Third Sector, the Equality Objectives would remain broadly the same, to read as follows:
  1. Our services are accessible and do not discriminate on any unjustifiable grounds.
  2. Local communities, partner organisations and stakeholders are empowered to influence the way our services are provided to them.
  3. Equality and diversity is at the heart of decision making at all levels within the city council.
  4. Our workforce at all levels reflects the makeup of the local community.

5. Equalities, Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion have all improved within our communities.

- h. provided a general summary of comments received from the consultation process outlined at Appendices A and B of the report
- i. highlighted that the annual equality action plans would be developed through service plans, focussed on delivery of our new strategic plan Vision 2025, thus ensuring equality actions were closely aligned to our priorities and aspirations
- j. invited members' questions and comments.

Members commented and received relevant responses as follows.

- **Comment:** If a staff perception existed that employees were appointed to posts due to protected characteristics, it needed to be made clear this was not the case. This could lead to a particular person appointed being discriminated against due to this false perception.
- **Response:** The council would be acting unlawfully if it recruited staff in this way. The best person for the job was appointed to vacant posts.
- **Response:** A communication to all staff would emphasise that equality and diversity was practised at all times, however, this did not mean that certain applicants would be appointed to a particular post due to a protected characteristic. Our priority was at all times to operate a level playing field.
- **Comment:** Many people feeding back into the consultation questionnaire were not aware of the Equality Objectives.
- **Response:** The comments were received as anonymous.
- **Response:** The responses to the questionnaire had been reviewed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) and as a result it was agreed that a working group be set up to review the responses to the questionnaire including the comments received and to agree appropriate actions moving forward, including discussion with the Chair of Equality and Diversity Group. Awareness training would also be included.
- **Comment:** There had been limited response from the voluntary sector.
- **Response:** There had only been one response from the voluntary sector. Officers had offered a separate presentation to ask for further feedback.
- **Comment:** It was disappointing to see only 21 staff responses to the equality objectives consultation exercise.
- **Response:** Agreed. Sometimes people only responded to questionnaires if they had an issue or it could be that staff were not made sufficiently aware of the questionnaire. The Working Group would discuss this and identify how we could improve the response rate for the future.

- **Comment:** Perhaps the Citizens Panel needed greater youth representation on it.
- **Response:** The Citizens Panel was reviewed from time to time to ensure it was age balanced, however we could not dictate who chose to respond to questionnaires which tended to be older people. The issue was how to communicate most effectively in a manner to seek the views of both young and older members.
- **Question:** Was there a better way of communicating with staff other than by e mail?
- **Response:** City People was used to reach staff employees. Officers would look at consulting in a more meaningful way wherever possible
- **Comment by Chair:** There was a lack of engagement in Equality and Diversity across work forces in general, not just within this organisation. Consultation was the key to making an employee feel valued. Training and engagement was important to break down barriers to level up the playing field.
- **Response:** HR were in the process of conducting training sessions to staff at management level to be delivered by the end of March 2020. There was a dedicated focus on recruitment/selection at these workshops. Manager briefings had also been introduced.

RESOLVED that:

1. The proposed Draft Equality Objectives as set out in Paragraph 7.1 of the report for a four year period from April 2020 to March 2024 be forwarded to Executive for consideration and approval for adoption by Full Council.
2. Feedback from the Working Group set up to review the comments received from the Equality Objectives staff questionnaire be provided to the next meeting of the Equality and Diversity Group, also to be fed into the Equality Action Plan.

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**SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF SIX MONTH ATTENDANCE RULE**

**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**

**REPORT AUTHOR: CAROLYN WHEATER, CITY SOLICITOR**

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To consider a dispensation under the six month rule under the Local Government Act 1972 and to excuse the non-attendance of Councillors Yvonne Bodger and Andrew Kerry.

**2. Background**

2.1 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that “if a member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority.”

2.2 Attendance can be at any committee or sub-committee, or any joint committee, joint board or other body where the functions of the Authority are discharged or who were appointed to advise the Authority on any matter relating to the discharge of their functions. This requirement can be waived and the time limit extended if any failure to attend was due to a reason approved by the Authority, in advance of the six month period expiring.

2.3 Councillor Yvonne Bodger represents the Minster Ward and has not attended a Council meeting since 6 November 2019.

2.4 Councillor Andrew Kerry represents the Hartsholme Ward and has not attended a Council meeting since 21 January 2020 on grounds of ill health.

2.5 A decision was taken to suspend meetings of the Council until further notice in response to the latest guidance associated with the coronavirus. This means that it may not be possible for Councillor Bodger or Councillor Kerry to attend a meeting within their required six month period, with remote meetings only being held by exception in the current climate.

2.6 Should any member lose office through failure to attend for the six month period, the disqualification cannot be overcome by the member subsequently resuming attendance nor can retrospective approval of the Council be sought for an extension in time.

### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 To consider approval of a dispensation for Councillor Yvonne Bodger and Councillor Andrew Kerry from attending meetings of the Council in order to avoid both Councillors potentially ceasing to be a member of the authority under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** None

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:** Graham Watts, Democratic and Elections Manager  
Telephone (01522) 873439