

Report of:	Meeting	Date
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment	Licensing Committee	26 March 2020

## Coronavirus – temporary meeting arrangements

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To agree temporary arrangements for the conduct of Licensing Committee meetings while Government advice is to avoid non-essential contact due to the spread of the coronavirus.

### 2. Outcomes

- 2.1 The risk of exposure to coronavirus will be minimised and councillors and officers safeguarded from COVID-19 to the greatest possible extent.

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That, until government advice relaxes the restrictions, all upcoming meetings of the Licensing Committee be conducted with the minimum numbers required to achieve both a quorum and approximate political balance.
- 3.2 That meetings of the committee continue to be held in the coming months only whenever an essential decision is required and in those instances with a maximum of five members of the committee participating, whilst remaining quorate, to achieve an approximate political balance (three Conservatives, one Labour and one Brexit).
- 3.3 That the authority to take decisions on any minor issues/applications which currently would have to be submitted to the Licensing Committee be delegated to the Head of Environment and Community Safety after consultation with the Chairman until such time as the government advice relaxes the restrictions.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1** The World Health Organisation has declared a pandemic and countries including the UK are taking action to contain and delay the spread of the coronavirus. The purpose of the measures the government is putting in place is to slow down the spread of COVID-19 to reduce pressure on health and other services. It is critical that we also take a precautionary approach and follow the strict advice already issued by Public Health England and Central Government.
- 4.2** Corporate Management Team and the Tactical Officer Group are looking at the council's critical services on an ongoing basis and putting business continuity arrangements into place in readiness. The council will issue further guidance as the situation develops. It is likely that national public health advice will develop further around "social distancing" measures, which includes maintaining at least 1 metre distance from anyone who may be infected.
- 4.3** Until further notice, the only committee meetings that the council will hold are those statutory or regulatory meetings where an essential decision is required. Democratic Services will continue to monitor the situation on a meeting-by-meeting basis and determine whether the council is required to hold the meeting or whether to postpone or cancel.
- 4.4** Any meetings held will be in the Council Chamber and subject to social distancing guidance. All councillors aged over 70 years and/or with an underlying health condition should not attend the limited meetings that will continue to be held.
- 4.5** To limit the risk of exposure and safeguard councillors and officers, meetings will be held with the minimum quorum required, which for committees of 14 members is four. However, as far as is possible, with the co-operation of the leaders of the three political groups, an approximation of political balance will be maintained if meetings are held with a maximum of 5 members. Some flexibility will be required as the situation develops.

## **5. Key issues and proposals**

- 5.1** The Democratic Services Team and Licensing Officer, in consultation with Corporate Management Team and the Political Party Leaders will continue to monitor the ongoing situation and review these arrangements with the intention of resuming normal committee business at the earliest possible opportunity.

<b>Financial and legal implications</b>	
Finance	There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.
Legal	The arrangements will ensure that the council's legal and statutory obligations continue to be met.

### **Other risks/implications: checklist**

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
community safety	✓
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	✓

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
asset management	x
climate change	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

### **Processing Personal Data**

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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<b>List of background papers:</b>		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

## **List of appendices**

None