

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2020

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2	Coronavirus Update - Emergency plan - Business Continuity	<i>Agreed Version 5 – Suggested Actions</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN CIVIC HEADQUARTERS, COLERAINE ON
WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2020 AT 6.50 PM**

In the Chair : The Mayor, Councillor Bateson

Members Present : Alderman Boyle, Duddy, Fielding, Finlay, McCorkell and Robinson

Councillors Anderson, Baird, Beattie, Chivers,
Dallat O'Driscoll, Holmes, McAuley, McCaw, McLean,
McMullan, McQuillan, C McShane, P McShane, Nicholl,
Schenning, Scott, Wallace, Watton and Wilson.

Officers Present : D Jackson, Chief Executive
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services
R Baker, Director of Leisure & Development
W McCullough, Head of Sport & Wellbeing
J Welsh, Head of Community & Culture
P Thompson, Head of Tourism & Recreation
P Beattie, Head of Prosperity & Place
P O'Brien, Funding Unit Manager
D Hunter, Council Solicitor
J Mills, Council Solicitor
I Owens, Civic Support & Committee & Member Services Officer

In Attendance : J Anderson, Civic Facilities Manager

Public (1)

Press (2)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman McCandless, McKeown and S McKillop and Councillors Callan, Hunter, Knight-McQuillan, McGurk, McGlinchey, MA McKillop, McLaughlin, Mulholland, McMullan, Peacock and Quigley.

2. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

- **Emergency plan**
- **Business Continuity**

Suggested actions for Elected Member consideration and direction (Version 3), previously circulated was presented by the Chief Executive in

advance of the commencement of the meeting during party groupings as agreed.

The Chief Executive confirmed that all Members agreed subject to the following amendments: -

4. Further facility/service closures

Play parks to stay open for the time being.

5. Limit public access

Registration to continue but minimise face to face contact. Marriage /civil partnership registration by post.

Planning contingency – minimise face to face contact and review Planning Committee protocol at next meeting.

10. Elected Members

Planning Committee once per month, potentially scaled back or remote facility with every possible precaution taken to ensure the well-being of all involved.

Any key decisions for Covid-19 matters will be emailed to all Elected Members for response within a set timeframe.

Reinforce Democratic Services Team and provide a single point of contact /log for Elected Member queries.

Below (Version 5) outlines key actions for agreement by Members and incorporates amendments outlined above:

No	Item	Actions	Lead	Timeframe
1	Close the 6 leisure centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLC, JDLC, RVLC, Sheskburn, Garvagh, and Dungiven; Membership packages suspended; Redeployment a priority, including agency staff. 	DL&D	Done
2	Maintain critical functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste collection and disposal; Burials; and Registration. Train other staff for redeployment into these areas; Scale back waste operations if required – no brown bin lifts – food into black bins, no blue bin lifts, 4-weekly black bin cycle. No bulky waste collections. 	DES DCS DES	18 Mar

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency legislation from GRO for births & burials expected this week. Corona Virus Bill on Thursday. 		
3	Service continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing levels daily report by 10am; Maximise working from home; Split staff over locations; Split teams; Absolutely essential meetings only, both external and internal. 	CEx	Done
4	Further facility/ service closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TICs to close immediately; Flowerfield & Roe Valley Arts Centres to close immediately; Museums to close immediately; Community centres to close on a case by case basis; Playparks to stay open for the time being. Town halls to close immediately, less current scheduled weddings; Public toilets to close on a targeted basis; Events programme postponed until July and kept under review; Maximise reduction in energy costs / overheads; All facilities can be used to assist with the situation on an as required basis, for example, testing / vulnerable people in line with PHA guidance. 	DL&D	
5	Limit public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop public access to civic buildings with effect 9am Monday 23 Mar; Registration to continue but minimise face to face contact. Marriage / civil partnership registration by post; Suspend wedding ceremonies in Council buildings with effect 23 Mar. Planning contingency – minimise face to face contact and review Planning Committee protocol at next meeting; Building control contingency in place, home working; EH contingency in place, home working. 	DCS	
6	Economic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loans / cash for small business mechanism to be clarified; Rates relief communication from DfE; Assess Borough impact for DfE / INI; Assess supply chain impact; Lift deliveries restrictions (Planning); Economic recovery strategy required; Sensitive local Tourism marketing plan in due course; Establish business help line / media channel. 	DL&D	
7	Vulnerable people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on DfC direction, categories of support could include: Financial, access to food and connectivity. 	DL&D	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFC will work with the delivery partners in NICVA, Health and Social Care, Public Health Agency and Local Government to co-ordinate; • Community & Culture lead; establish helpline / media channel; • Foodbank options at Council locations. 		
8	HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redeployment to be discussed with TUS; • 5 days Parenting leave in place; • Redeployment of agency staff; • Vulnerable staff as per PHA guidance; • Staff health and well-being paramount – manager / buddy system – use of WhatsApp etc. 	DCS	
9	ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote working in place; • Conference calling facility in place. 	DCS	
10	Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCM on 18 Mar – meet in Party Group Rooms first to maximise social distancing; • Suspend statutory committees after L&D / 2 Council Meetings per month. Planning Committee once per month, potentially scaled back or remote facility. • Any key decisions for Covid-19 matters will be emailed to all Councillors for response within a set timeframe; • Reinforce democratic services team and provide a single point of contact / log for Elected Member queries. 	CEx	
11	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily SITREP to Stormont; • Daily updates to Elected Members by email; • Daily updates to staff; • As required updates to the public, using all channels; • Reliance on team leaders / buddy system to maintain contact; • Reinforce communications team. 	DCS	
12	Payroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split sites; • Reinforce staffing; • Remote working; • Option to move to monthly payroll. 	CEx	
13	Other services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise pitch maintenance; • Street cleansing to reduce as staffing dictates; • Harbours & marinas to minimise travel to Rathlin Island; • Finance function remains a priority. 	DES	

The Chief Executive clarified that Site Visits planned for Monday 23rd March will proceed as planned with the Planning Committee implementing best practice given current situation.

Discussion ensued regarding the remote voting system and the Chief Executive confirmed that, within an agreed timeframe, Members would continue to vote by the normal method, either Agreeing, Disagreeing or Abstaining the Proposal.

It is recommended that Members agree Version 5 of Key Actions above for implementation.

Proposed by Councillor Scott
Seconded by Councillor Schenning

- that Council agree Version 5 of Key Actions.

All Members present were in agreement.

The proposal was declared **CARRIED**.

Councillor C McShane described the situation as an unprecedented and a challenging time for everyone and felt that Members should encourage social distancing, the use of Skype, conferencing calls and other methods where possible.

Councillor Wilson felt that these were uncharted waters which staff were facing and for some, outside of their comfort zone. He wished to record his vote of thanks to staff at this time.

* **Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.15pm.**

Councillor Holmes expressed his concerns about damage to the economy and the tourist industry. He also enquired if rates relief to businesses was at local or regional level. The Chief Executive felt at this stage he believed it would be at both levels. He explained that measures would be in place to assist with economy recovery including a Tourism Marketing Plan. He further confirmed that Council would be working closely with the local Chamber of Commerce. Councillor Finlay sought clarity that this would be in all of the towns where a Chamber of Commerce functioned. The Chief Executive agreed this would be the case.

Councillor McCaw raised concerns about those vulnerable in the Community. The Chief Executive explained the Department of Communities were leading on this and that a meeting with NICVA would provide clarity around how Council could help. He explained that Council assistance would include supporting organisations delivering help to the vulnerable e.g. delivering prescribed drugs, food supplies or working in testing centres.

Alderman Hillis sought assurances that businesses locally would benefit equally to the assistance packages progressed on the mainland. The Chief Executive outlined that Council may be involved, but at this time there was no clarity around the delivery mechanism for this.

This being all the business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at **7.20pm**.

Mayor