

COUNCIL

Virtual Meeting held on Thursday, 9th July, 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Andy Meakin in the Chair;

Councillors John Baird, Chris Baron, Jim Blagden, Christian Chapman, Ciaran Brown, Melanie Darrington, Samantha Deakin, Dale Grounds, Arnie Hankin, Andrew Harding, David Hennigan, Tom Hollis, Trevor Locke, Rachel Madden, Sarah Madigan, David Martin, Lauren Mitchell, Keir Morrison, Warren Nuttall, Matthew Relf, Kevin Rostance, Phil Rostance, Dave Shaw, John Smallridge, Helen-Ann Smith, David Walters, Lee Waters, Caroline Wilkinson, Daniel Williamson, John Wilmott and Jason Zadrozny.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Kier Barsby and Andy Gascoyne.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Carol Cooper-Smith, Ruth Dennis, Theresa Hodgkinson, Peter Hudson, Mike Joy and Andy Slate.

C.23 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

C.24 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 23 April and 4 June 2020, as now submitted, be received and approved.

C.25 Announcements from the Chairman, Leader, Members of the Cabinet and the Head of Paid Service.

The Leader of the Council, the Head of Paid Service and the Portfolio Holder for Streets, Parks and Town Centres all took the opportunity to speak about the commencement of the Council's response to the Covid-19 recovery phase and the fantastic work that had been undertaken and was continuing to be delivered by Council employees over the preceding four months during the lockdown.

A heartfelt thank you was given to all staff for their continued commitment and hard work and it was reiterated how proud the Council was of all its achievements delivered under very difficult and challenging circumstances.

Best wishes were also given to Charles Edwards, the Council's Environment and Cemeteries Manager, who was due to leave the Authority within the next month for a new employment opportunity with Derby City Council. Charles's work had been exemplary throughout his time with the Council and he would be sorely missed by everyone.

C.26 Questions from the Public

No questions were received from the public.

C.27 Petitions

No petitions were submitted for consideration.

C.28 Report on Urgent Key Decision

The Leader of the Council advised as follows:-

"In accordance with Rule 17.2 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules it is necessary for me to inform the Council when an executive decision has been taken pursuant to Rule 16 (Special Urgency Provisions.) I can confirm to the Council that two such decisions have been taken by me as a matter of urgency, one in March 2020 and one recently.

The decisions related to the acquisition of a commercial investment property and a renewed lease agreement.

The decisions were key and contained exempt information but the full 28 days' notice could not be given due to the need to proceed with the transactions without delay.

The Rule 16 Notice and the non-exempt elements of the decisions have been duly published."

C.29 COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel and Political Balance and Committee Changes

Council was recommended to approve the Cabinet recommendations for the establishment of a COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel, in accordance with the rules of political balance and to consider the further consequential changes to other Panels and Committees.

To assist with the debate and recommendations, the Director of Legal and Governance (and Monitoring Officer) took the opportunity to explain the voting process in relation to the allocation of the Unaligned Member to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel and the subsequent appointment of the Panel's Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Following a series of votes, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) a new COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel be established, made up of 7 Members including a Chairman and Vice-Chairman (to be reviewed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021);
- b) the Terms of Reference for the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel, as set out in Appendix A of the Council report, be approved;
- c) it be noted that the appointments to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel be made in accordance with the rules of political balance;
- d) it be confirmed that the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel receive the same Special Responsibility Allowance as the Scrutiny Panel Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen (£5,956 and £1,687 respectively), having duly consulted with the Independent Remuneration Panel;
- e) the membership of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel (including Chairman and Vice Chairman) and the consequential changes to Panel and Committee memberships, be approved as follows:-

Scrutiny Panel A (7)

(6 Ashfield Independents, 1 Labour)

Jim Blagden
Trevor Locke
Lauren Mitchell
Warren Nuttall
Dave Shaw (Chairman)
John Smallridge (Vice Chairman)
David Walters

Scrutiny Panel B (7)

(5 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Non-Aligned Independent)

Ciaran Brown
Christian Chapman (Chairman)
Melanie Darrington
Dale Grounds
Trevor Locke (Vice Chairman)
Phil Rostance
David Walters

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel (7)

(5 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Non-Aligned Independent)

Jim Blagden (Vice Chairman)
Dale Grounds
David Hennigan (Chairman)
Kevin Rostance
Dave Shaw
John Smallridge
Caroline Wilkinson

Planning Committee (11)

(9 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Labour)

Chris Baron
Ciaran Brown (Vice Chairman)
Samantha Deakin
Arnie Hankin
Rachel Madden
Sarah Madigan (Chairman)
Lauren Mitchell
John Smallridge
Helen-Ann Smith
Daniel Williamson
Jason Zadrozny

Local Plan Working Group (11)

(9 Ashfield Independents, 1 Conservative, 1 Labour)

Keir Barsby
Samantha Deakin
Arnie Hankin
Rachel Madden (Chairman)
David Martin
Keir Morrison
Matthew Relf
Kevin Rostance
Helen-Ann Smith
Daniel Williamson
Jason Zadrozny

C.30 Recommendations from the Cabinet and the Council's Committees

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 2(ix), Council considered the following recommendation:-

Minute No. CA.6

Cabinet – 30 June 2020

Leisure Transformation Programme

RESOLVED

that the total budget of £15.5m and the funding basis for the development of a new Leisure Centre in Kirkby in Ashfield, as outlined in the Cabinet report, be approved.

C.31 Updates from Members of the Cabinet on their Portfolio Activity

The following Members gave updates in respect of their portfolio activity:

Councillor Tom Hollis - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing

- The Davis Avenue social housing development initiative;
- Council accolade for entry into national top 50 housing landlord list;
- The Council's exemplary repairs and maintenance programme;
- Recent Chartered Institute of Housing nomination for the Council's Housing Maintenance Team.

Councillor Matthew Relf - Portfolio Holder for Place, Planning and Regeneration

- Future High Street Fund bid submission and imminent submission of business case in July 2020;
- Good response to recent Future High Streets public consultation exercise;
- Progress of work undertaken by the 'Discover Ashfield Board' relating to the development of the Council's vision and priorities for the funding bid;
- Receipt of £750,000 funding advance for Kirkby and Sutton initiatives;
- Town Centres Station Masterplans progress and next steps.

Councillor Daniel Williamson (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Communications, Governance and Cross Portfolio Support)

- Excellent support service delivery continued during lockdown;
- Vital role played by Communications Team to keep everyone updated with latest information;
- The publication and delivery of the latest 'Ashfield Matters' booklet;
- The excellent work undertaken by the Democratic Services Team to advance Council meetings successfully into the virtual arena;
- The Legal Team consistently interpreting new legislation and offering pertinent advice as required;
- The establishment of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Panel.

Councillor Rachel Madden - Portfolio Holder for Finance

- The successful allocation of nearly £18 million business rate relief grants to nearly 1600 businesses;
- 142 applications received to date for the more recent rate relief discretionary scheme;
- Appropriate discounts on Council Tax facilitated where required;
- During the outbreak the Council has met all its financial performance indicators including prompt payments to suppliers;
- Recent announcement of £44 million to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with the Council awaiting updates as to its allocation;

- Recent Government announcement of £500 million injection to assist local authorities with economic recovery but the Council's allocation not yet known.

Councillor David Martin - Portfolio Holder for Streets, Parks and Town Centres

- Local shops, Indoor and Outdoor Markets were now safely open for business;
- Free car parking continuing in town centres until September 2020 and then two free hours thereafter;
- Recycling targets had been exceeded with the excellent 'Bag It' campaign contributing to the success;
- Digital transformation continuing to enhance the efficiency of the Waste and Recycling teams;
- All street cleaning and grass cutting requirements had been undertaken during lockdown;
- Parks and playgrounds were now reopen for responsible, socially – distanced use;
- Welcome news that fly-tipping incidences were down by 11%.

(During the portfolio updates and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23 (Conclusion of Proceedings), a motion was moved and seconded to extend the conclusion of the meeting to 9.30 p.m. The motion was put to the vote and duly carried.)

C.32 Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion submitted by Members.

C.33 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

There were no questions submitted by Members.

C.34 Questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.2 - In relation to Cabinet and Committee Meeting Minutes published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council

There were no questions submitted by Members.

C.35 Emergency Notice of Motion

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5 (Urgent Items), the Council received an emergency notice of motion moved by Councillor Jim Blagden and seconded by Councillor David Walters as follows:-

"In the week of the 72nd Birthday, Ashfield District Council would like to pay tribute to our wonderful NHS.

This Council is proud of the work of all our NHS staff. Our clinicians, managers, and all other NHS staff have done an amazing job. Ashfield District Council would like to pay tribute their work, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. In particular, this Council would like to thank staff at King's Mill Hospital, Nottingham City Hospital, Newark Hospital and Queens Medical Centre for the courageous way in which they have dealt with residents in our District who suffered from COVID-19.

This Council also thanks key workers and all practitioners of healthcare. This includes care workers who have put their lives at risk in our care homes. We are therefore appalled at Prime Minister Boris Johnson's recent comments about care workers. We recognise the anger caused by his comments that undermined the courageous work of hundreds of care workers in the Ashfield District. We therefore congratulate every care home worker for their work the COVID-19 crisis.

This Council notes that at least 312 UK members of NHS and social care staff have died of coronavirus. We further note that the NHS response to the pandemic was only possible only because of the delays to non-urgent patient care – cancelled operations, delayed scans and diagnostic tests. We further note that two million people are currently waiting for cancer screening, tests or treatment and that 1,600 cases of cancer are currently left undiagnosed every month. It is critical that people have confidence to return to our hospitals. That is why the routine weekly testing of NHS staff is critical and therefore weekly testing for all NHS staff is urgent.

This Council is therefore disappointed that last week 331 Conservatives MPs including Ashfield's Lee Anderson and Sherwood's Mark Spencer voted against routine weekly testing of NHS staff. We believe it is urgent that this decision be looked at again especially as the Parliamentary Recess starts on 29th July and MPs will not have a chance to revisit this decision until 2nd September.

We therefore call:

- 1) For the Chief Executive and all 3 party leaders on Ashfield District Council to write a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock MP to reverse the decision not to test NHS staff for COVID-19 weekly as a matter of urgency.*
- 2) For the Chief Executive and all 3 party leaders on Ashfield District Council to write to Richard Mitchell, Chief Executive of the Sherwood Forest NHS Hospitals Trust and Tracy Taylor, Chief Executive of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust setting out our appreciation for the work of all NHS staff at the trust.*
- 3) For the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Committee to look at a permanent memorial to our NHS in this District."*

Having been duly debated, the emergency motion was put to the vote and it Was

RESOLVED that

- a) for the Chief Executive and all 3 party leaders on Ashfield District Council to write a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock MP to reverse the decision not to test NHS staff for COVID-19 weekly as a matter of urgency;
- b) for the Chief Executive and all 3 party leaders on Ashfield District Council to write to Richard Mitchell, Chief Executive of the Sherwood Forest NHS Hospitals Trust and Tracy Taylor, Chief Executive of Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, setting out our appreciation for the work of all NHS staff at the trust;
- c) for the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Committee to look at a permanent memorial to our NHS in this District.

(During consideration of the motion, Councillor Chris Baron left the meeting at 9.10pm.)

The meeting closed at 9.29 pm

Chairman.