



Borough of Douglas

Town Hall,

Douglas,

9th December, 2020

At a MEETING of the COUNCIL of the BOROUGH OF DOUGLAS, duly convened and holden at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, the 9th day of DECEMBER, 2020, in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, within the TOWN HALL, at which Meeting the following Members were present, that is to say: -

The Mayor

MR COUNCILLOR JONATHAN JOUGHIN, JP

Councillors

Miss N.A. Byron

Mrs H. Callow

Mr S.R. Pitts

Mrs R. Chatel

Mr I.J.G. Clague, MBE

Mr D.W. Christian, MBE, JP

Mrs C.E. Crawley

Mrs C.L. Wells

Mr A.J. Bentley

Mr S. Hamer

Mr D. Watson

Mr F. Horning

Mr R.H. McNicholl

Mr J.E. Skinner

Ms K. Angela

Mrs E.C. Quirk

Ms J. Thommeny

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Environment and Regeneration and the Director of Housing and Property were in attendance.

1. **Minutes – 11th November, 2020**

The minutes of the monthly Council meeting held on Wednesday, 11th November, 2020, were approved and signed.

2. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

Pursuant to a question in the House of Keys on 10th November 2020, has the Council ever considered the addition of a discreet portal on any of its websites to provide support, advice and contact information for those at risk or experiencing domestic abuse and if not is this something which could be given consideration?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

“It has not been considered and it is doubtful that the Council’s Website would be an obvious place for people with such problems to refer to. However I will refer the suggestion to the appropriate Officers to examine.”

3. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

Further to a question submitted for answer at November’s Council Meeting, when and how did it come to light that the removal of the mast in Derby Square required Planning Permission?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

“Following notification from Property Services that the chains on the mast were sagging, the Parks Service contacted the planning authority on 27th October 2020 to seek advice on the planning status of the mast. The Conservation Officer replied that, because of the size of the mast, he considered it to be a structure and that consequently if it required demolition it would require Registered Building Consent. He added that he had no objection to its removal and that if Building Control advised it was dangerous then their advice should be taken. He further advised that replacement of the mast would require planning approval. Following a subsequent inspection on 29th October, it was found that the timber decay was worse than originally thought and that the mast posed an imminent danger. A Registered Building Consent application was submitted retrospectively following the mast’s removal.”

4. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Leader of the Council:

Following their country’s 2008 financial crash the people of Iceland were requested in an effort to maintain social and mental well-being to keep some Christmas lights illuminated in their homes through the dark depressive months of winter until February. Does the Leader agree that this is something which could be encouraged here during these unprecedented and difficult times which we are currently facing and which could have a positive effect on mental health and social well-being?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

“This is not a matter in which the Council has any powers or obligations and people are free to keep their domestic Christmas lights on all year if they wish. Whether that should be actively encouraged by the Council or any other official body is another matter, given the risks invariably associated with unwisely used Christmas decorations.

The Council’s own Christmas lights in public areas are currently planned to be removed according to the usual schedule. Certain Christmas decorations could be left on until February, however, it would be prudent to remove certain features such as Christmas trees or anything obstructing pavements. There will be a cost to leaving the Christmas decorations on longer, estimated to be £2,000. In addition, the Council may receive criticism from those more traditional residents who believe Christmas decorations should be removed by 12th night. It would be officers’ recommendations to remove any decoration specifically related to Christmas such as Christmas tree decorations and baubles, however, they will remain on until such time as they can be removed, which takes several weeks after the Christmas period.”

5. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S.J. Hamer**

Mr Councillor S.J. Hamer asked the Chair of the Pensions Committee:

If the Pensions Committee expressed the wish to divest from fossil fuel industries in the Local Government Pension Scheme what would be the easiest way to achieve this and how quickly could it be done?

Reply by the Chair of the Pensions Committee:

“The Question asks about a mechanism for divestment, which requires some discussion with the Consultants for which there has been insufficient time. I therefore invoke Paragraph (iv) of Standing Order 39, and will circulate a written answer to Members once those discussions have taken place and a mechanism and potential timescale identified.”

6. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S.J. Hamer

Mr Councillor S.J. Hamer asked the Leader of the Council:

The people in my constituency want us to be fighting for better solutions to parking. What data, if any, have been collected regarding people’s and businesses’ expectations in this regard?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

“The Department of Infrastructure undertook a detailed parking study in the last two years, and the Council as a stakeholder was consulted. The outcome of that study has yet to be published. On-street parking is a matter for the Department of Infrastructure. The Council has responsibility for off-street parking which it exercises through town centre car parks and certain estate car parks. These are contained within a car park order, which is renewed annually and any changes are publicised for consultation.”

Supplementary Question:

Can the Leader of the Council confirm that this study included expectations of our constituents and not just numbers on the amounts of spaces?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

“Thank you Mr Mayor, I am afraid I can’t answer that until such a time that the study is released. I do believe that it is long overdue and it should have come out by now so that we all know the findings of the study and to see who had actually taken part in it. The Council has been asked to give its view but how wide ranging that was and how many members of the general public actually took part in that study I do not know the answer. We are going to be approaching the Department of Infrastructure to see if the study can be released and that will give us greater information.”

7. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts

Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts asked the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

- (a) *Is there a policy not to install lighting columns in lanes in the Borough of Douglas?*
- (b) *If yes when was this introduced?*
- (c) *How many lanes in Douglas do not have lighting?*
- (d) *Have surveys been carried out in the lanes with no lighting with a risk assessment for each unlit lane?*

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

- (a) *Yes, since 2011, Electrical Services were informed that no lighting should be provided in lanes and no new lighting (there will be some lanes with historic lighting) without Committee approval. If such a request is received a formal process will be undertaken including public consultation.*
- (b) *2011/2012*
- (c) *Officers do not have this information readily to hand. It would be a major exercise to map out Douglas and survey those that do not have any lights at all. Some lanes have lights at the ends of the lane as these are part of the road scheme leading to the lane.*
- (d) *No.*

Supplementary Question:

“Thank you Mr Mayor, I would like to ask the Chairman, are lanes classed as Highway?”

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

“Thank you Mr Mayor, the answer that I have had is that some lanes are classed as Highway but not all lanes and we are not compelled to light back lanes and that has been the case for quite some years in this Council.”

8. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor D. Watson

Mr Councillor D. Watson asked the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

Does the Council believe that standards put forward in the upcoming landlords registration act should apply to public sector housing too?

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

“Public sector housing is already closely regulated, financially monitored and publicly accountable through housing and local Government legislation. In terms of property standards, the same standards apply to public sector landlords as to private landlords.”

Supplementary Question:

The Council is hesitant to issue fixed penalty notices for dilapidated properties because this removes the capacity for the Council to prosecute in the event of non-compliance but could this problem be avoided by repeatedly issuing additional fixed penalty notices because each option to prosecute is attached to an individual fixed penalty notice and the Council could additionally clamp down on neglected properties by repeatedly issuing fines until the problem is addressed?

Reply by the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee:

“Thank you Mr Mayor, fixed penalty notices are less used for one because they cost money to take to Court and we have seen in the past repeated notices don’t seem to favor the judiciary because some of the fines are pretty low and usually it costs more to put a notice through and to keep repeating it, is to stack up the amount it costs. What we try to do, is do it with dialogue, with the majority of people it works but some just ignore what happens and keep on leaving their property in a pretty bad state, so that is why we don’t keep issuing fixed penalty notices.”

9. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor D. Watson

Mr Councillor D. Watson asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

Does the Council possess the means to help accommodate those impacted by the potential increase in homelessness caused by the expiry of the ban on evictions?

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

“The Council’s housing provision is fully allocated with no provision for emergency housing, with the exception being those properties that are classified as VOIDS, however once ready for re-allocation, these will be allocated from the housing waiting list in line with the current housing allocation policy.

If a person finds themselves in a situation where they are in need of local authority housing they would need to make an application to the appropriate housing authority.

The Council housing team are available to assist applicants through the application process and will give clear advice and guidance where required and suitable.

If a person is in a requirement for emergency housing they should contact Housing Matters.”

10. Executive Committee – 27th November, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Friday, 27th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

11. Pensions Committee – 25th November, 2020

Motion moved by Councillor Ms K. Angela, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Pensions Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Wednesday, 25th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs H. Callow, Mr S.R. Pitts, Mrs R. Chatel, Mr I.J.G Clague, Mr D.W. Christian, Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr F. Horning, Mr R.H. McNicholl, Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **15**

Against: Councillors; Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson – **3**

Motion carried.

12. Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee – 12th November, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Thursday, 12th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

13. Housing and Property Committee – 18th November, 2020

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs C.E. Crawley, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing and Property Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Wednesday, 18th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

14. Regeneration and Community Committee – 17th November, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts, seconded by Councillor Mrs H. Callow, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Tuesday, 17th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

15. Environmental Services Committee – 16th November, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Monday, 16th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

16. Adjournment and Resumption

The meeting adjourned at 4.42pm and resumed at 5.00pm with the same Members and officers present.

IN PRIVATE

17. Executive Committee – 27th November, 2020 – Clauses A1 to A5

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A5 inclusive of private report of meeting held on Friday, 27th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

18. Executive Committee – 27th November, 2020 – Clause C6

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clause C6 of private report of meeting held on Friday, 27th November, 2020, be received, approved and adopted by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs H. Callow, Mrs R. Chatel, Mr I.J.G Clague, Mr D.W. Christian, Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr F. Horning, Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny – **13**

Against: Councillors; Mr S.R. Pitts, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr R.H. McNicholl, the Mayor – **5**

Motion carried.

19. Pensions Committee – 25th November, 2020

Motion moved by Councillor Ms K. Angela, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Pensions Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 25th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

20. Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee – 12th November, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Thursday, 12th November, 2020, be received, approved and adopted by the Council, and that the Council agrees to the replacement Site project proceeding in accordance with the approved specification.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

21. Housing and Property Committee – 18th November, 2020

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs C.E. Crawley, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 18th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

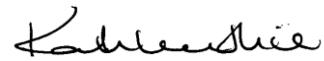
Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

22. **Regeneration and Community Committee – 17th November, 2020**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts, seconded by Councillor Mrs H. Callow, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Tuesday, 17th November, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and the Motion was carried unanimously.

The Council rose at 6.04pm.



Town Clerk & Chief Executive