



## Borough of Douglas

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**MR COUNCILLOR JONATHAN JOUGHIN, JP  
MAYOR**

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Town Hall,

Douglas,

7<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend a MEETING OF THE COUNCIL to be held on WEDNESDAY, the 12<sup>th</sup> day of MAY, 2021, at 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon, in the COUNCIL CHAMBER within the TOWN HALL, DOUGLAS for the transaction of the hereinafter mentioned business.

I am,

Yours faithfully

Town Clerk & Chief Executive

# Order of Agenda

I - Election of a person to preside (if the Mayor is absent).

II - Any statutory business.

III - Approval as a correct record of the minutes of the last regular and any intermediate Meetings of the Council.

IV - Questions of which Notice has been given by Members of the Council, pursuant to Standing Order No. 39.

V - Consideration of the minutes of proceedings of the Council in Committee.

VI - Consideration of the minutes of proceedings of Committees of the Council in the following order:

- (i) The Executive Committee;
- (ii) The Pensions Committee;
- (iii) The Standards Committee;
- (iv) The Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee;
- (v) Any other Joint Committee;
- (vi) The Housing and Property Committee;
- (vii) The Regeneration and Community Committee;
- (viii) The Environmental Services Committee;

VIII - Consideration of such communications or petitions and memorials as the Mayor or Chief Executive may desire to lay before Council.

IX - Notices of Motion submitted by Members of the Council in order of their receipt by the Chief Executive.

X - Any Miscellaneous Business of which Notice has been given pursuant to Standing Orders.

The above Order of Agenda is in accordance with Standing Order No. 16(1); under Standing Order No. 16(2) it may be varied by the Council to give precedence to any business of a special urgency, but such variation shall not displace business under I and II.

# AGENDA

III – Chief Executive to read minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

VI(i) - The proceedings of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE as follows:

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

Members Present: Mr Councillor D.W. Christian (Chair), the Mayor, Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts, Mr Councillor I.J.G. Clague, Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl.

In Attendance: Chief Executive (Miss K.J. Rice), Director of Finance (Mr A.J.T. Boyd), Director of Environment and Regeneration (Mrs D. Eynon), Director of Housing and Property (Mr D. Looney), Executive Officer (Mrs J.M. Keig) (taking minutes).

### REPORT

#### **PART A –**

#### ***Matters within the scope of the Executive Committee's delegated authority***

##### **A1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were submitted.

##### **A2. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were submitted.

##### **A3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were approved and signed.

##### **A4. Matters Arising From Previous Minutes**

Clause A11 – Proposed ‘Wind Tree’, Loch Promenade, Douglas: it was noted that the Isle of Man Treasury had declined funding for this proposed project.

Resolved, “That particulars be noted on the minutes.”

##### **A5. Referrals from the Environmental Services Committee**

There were no referrals from the minutes of the Environmental Services Committee meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

##### **A6. Referrals from the Regeneration and Community Committee**

There were no referrals from the minutes of the Regeneration and Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

##### **A7. Referrals from the Housing and Property Committee**

There were no referrals from the minutes of the Housing and Property Committee meeting held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

##### **A8. Implications of Covid-19 Lockdowns – January to April 2021 – Chief Executive's Department**

The Committee considered a written report by the Chief Executive in relation to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns in January 2021 and March – April 2021 on services within the Council and those within the remit of the Executive Committee.

When the Covid-19 pandemic had first impacted the Isle of Man in March 2020, the Council's Emergency Plan had been invoked, and the Serious Incident Management Team (SIMT) had been set up to manage the Council's response to the crisis and the first lockdown. When the Isle of Man Government placed the Island into Lockdown 2 in January 2021, and most recently into Lockdown 3 in March 2021, the SIMT had again been mobilised.

While the Council and Chief Executive's Department had met all statutory functions in respect of Services, following and adhering to all legislation, regulations, and guidance imposed by the Isle of

Man Government, a number of very major statutory and constitutional issues had arisen during the two lockdowns in 2021, which had serious consequences for the Council as a local authority. These were:-

- The statutory deadline for the setting of rates under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2006;
- The statutory deadline for approval of accounts for the Isle of Man Local Government Pension Scheme as required by the Audit Act 2006;
- The legality of virtual meetings (particularly in respect of the above two statutory meetings);
- The local authority elections and the continuation of tenure of office; and
- Annual Meetings.

Under the legislation and regulations imposed by the Isle of Man Government, the Council could only operate essential services, with everyone else being required to stay at home and work from home. All staff within the Chief Executive's Department had been operational, either working from home or, in some cases, undertaking other duties. As a Department comprised of support services, officers had been working across other Departments to provide assistance on employment and staff matters, health and safety matters, and technological and digital matters; and had provided support in respect of governance and decision-making issues and communication with Members.

As set out in the written report, Members noted the effect that the two lockdowns in 2021 had had on Services within the specific remit of the Executive Committee and the Chief Executive's Department, including in particular, but not restricted to -

- The Digital and Information Services Team had provided equipment to and supported over eighty staff working from home with full functionality; enabling members of the Management Team, Finance, Rents, Rates, Housing, and other Services to continue to operate during the lockdown periods.
- The Human Resources and Health and Safety Team had kept the workforce engaged, productive, and resilient, ensuring their wellbeing and safety. Covid-19 had been the Team's main focus, and had initially impacted nearly all other duties, requiring the communication of regular, timely, and informative updates to all employees.
- The Council Advocate had undertaken daily monitoring of the regulations and guidance being issued; and had provided legal advice and support on all matters across the range of Council functions – this within a back-drop of quickly-changing high-level legislative and regulatory changes brought about by the pandemic.
- The Reception Service had been provided with home desk telephones, enabling them to be immediately operational from home and to provide a vital line of communication with the public. They also continued to process and distribute incoming mail, including the significantly increased volumes generated by the issue of the 2021 / 2022 Rates Demands.
- The Democratic Services Team, crucially, had ensured the smooth running of the decision-making function of the Council, so that it acted constitutionally, within its legal framework, and at no risk of challenge. This included facilitating and hosting via video conference the Rate-setting Council Meeting in January, a Special Pensions Committee Meeting in January, and three further Council Meetings during March and April 2021, as well as the normal Committee cycle of meetings.

Members were advised that a further effect of the lockdowns was the potential increase in contractors' costs, and the impact this could have on contracts and projects throughout the whole Council. It was noted with concern that a shortage of contractors, coupled with an abundance of development work on the Island, was already driving prices upwards, which would lead to serious cost implications for the Council. It was therefore agreed that schemes would need to be reviewed and prioritised, with those deemed not essential being deferred. A further consequence of this was that there could be a financial impact on planned housing maintenance costs, as the cost of materials had also increased significantly.

The implications of the lockdowns for other Services had already been presented to their relevant Committees during the April 2021 cycle of meetings, and it was proposed to circulate copies of all these reports to all Members.

Resolved, "(i) That particulars of the report be noted on the minutes;

- (ii) That the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in January 2021 and March – April 2021 on services within the Council and within the remit of the Executive Committee also be noted; and
- (iii) That the Executive Committee, on behalf of the Council, thanks all officers and staff of all Services and Departments of the Council for their exemplary performance throughout these difficult periods in maintaining services."

**A9. Implications of Covid-19 Lockdowns – January to April 2021 – Finance Department**

The Committee considered a written report by the Director of Finance in relation to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services delivered by the Finance Department (excluding the Henry Bloom Noble Library, as this had been reported separately to the Regeneration and Community Committee).

With the exception of the closure of the payments counter, the two periods of lockdown restrictions had had a very minimal impact upon the Finance Department's delivery of services and performance of its statutory functions. A high level of Departmental resilience had been developed following the first lockdown in 2020, with many of the systems and processes used across the Department having been fully adapted for digital or online activities. These included the payroll systems, creditor payments, treasury management, and the exchequer function.

Although a number of significant challenges to operations had been experienced, there had been no alternative but to find ways of overcoming these due to the statutory nature of most of the activities of the Finance Department. Members noted the main challenges as set out in the report, including in particular:-

- Closure of the payments counter – the mandatory closure had again contributed towards a worsening social housing rent arrears position for the Council. However, despite cash payments not being catered for, the Income Services Team had been kept extremely busy with telephone and online payments.
- Rate-setting deadline – in order to comply with the Local Government Act 2006, there had been a need for the Council to set the Rate by the 31<sup>st</sup> January. This had been overcome by a combination of 'Zoom' meetings and a strictly numbers-limited formal physical rate-setting meeting in the Council Chamber.
- Annual Report and Accounts of the Isle of Man Local Government Scheme - a similar challenge had been faced in respect of the need to formally approve the Accounts by the 31<sup>st</sup> January in line with the Audit Act 2006.
- Rates demands – there had been a need to undertake the statutory issue of the 2021 / 2022 rates demands to all businesses and households in the Borough. Since their issue, there had been a substantial demand by ratepayers to make payment by telephone and with other queries.
- Incoming post – issues around the delivery of incoming post (out-with the control of Council officers) had generated delays in the banking of cheques and the processing of Direct Debit mandate forms.
- Year-end accounts closure – despite the fact that some processes would have been more straightforward if officers had been office-based, it was envisaged that the key project milestones would still be met and the annual reports to Committees would be in accordance with the usual timetable.
- Pension Scheme – the Council's administration of the Scheme had been ongoing on a business-as-usual basis, with meetings conducted with consultants over 'Zoom' and 'Teams' video conferencing facilities.

The full impact of Covid-19 on the 2020 / 2021 financial year would not be known until after the accounts close-down exercise had been completed, however, business risks for the whole Council had been generally mitigated through the ongoing effective performance of all finance functions during the period of both lockdowns.

As above, the one exception to this had been the closure of the payments counter, and the impact this had had on some cash-paying housing tenants' ability to pay their rent. The Director of Finance reported, however, that since the re-opening of the payments counter following the lifting of the Lockdown 3 restrictions, the rent arrears position had improved significantly since the report was written. The Director of Housing and Property advised that the actual number of tenants with housing rent arrears had also reduced.

It was noted that cross-Departmental support had been provided by the Library Assistants, the Directors' Central Support Team, the Health and Safety Officer, and the Digital and Information Services Team.

Resolved, "That particulars of the report be noted on the minutes, including in particular:-

- (i) The worsening of the housing rent arrears position for the Council during the two periods of lockdown – a situation not helped by the closure of the payments counter;
- (ii) The actions otherwise taken by the Department in covering the significant challenges faced due to the lockdown restrictions; and

- (iii) The effective operation of the Finance Department so far this year, regardless of the restrictions in place.”

#### **A10. Monthly Financial Review**

The Committee considered a written report by the Director of Finance setting out details of progress made against key performance indicators for finance together with related key financial monitoring information.

It was noted that a Rent and Rates Appeal Commissioners’ Tribunal had been held during April 2021 via video conference. Although there would be no additional financial impact on the 2020 / 2021 rates income as the total allowance awarded by the Tribunal for the year was less than the amount provided for as a commitment against the General Revenue Reserve, the total impact for that year stood at £19,500. Additionally, because the refurbishment works on Douglas Promenade had been delayed and extended, there was already a financial implication for the 2021 / 2022 year - currently thought to be in the region of around £15,000; bringing the total estimated cost to the Council of awarded allowances to date of nearly £46,000.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report be noted on the minutes, including in particular:-

- The 99.5% rates collection figure for the April 2020 to March 2021 period, compared against the target figure of 99.0% for that period; and
- The total estimated cost of almost £46,000 rate allowances awarded so far by the Rent and Rates Appeal Commissioners’ Tribunal in connection with the Douglas Promenade Scheme.”

#### **A11. Isle of Man Municipal Association**

The Committee had been circulated with a number of documents received from the Isle of Man Municipal Association.

The documents included the agenda for the previous evening’s meeting of the Association, at which the subject of Rates Reform had been tabled for discussion. The update following the meeting was that there had been very little discussion about the matter, with those present being of the view that little was likely to happen before the House of Keys General Election in September 2021.

Discussion also took place in relation to the item on civic amenity sites. The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that the Eastern Civic Amenity Site had been over-whelmed on a number of occasions since re-opening following the most recent lockdown (March – April 2021), forcing the site to close as capacity had been reached. One of the main materials being deposited by the public had been brown cardboard and it was agreed, in an attempt to reduce the amount of cardboard that was being brought to the site, that a reminder be issued to those who were able to avail themselves of the Council’s kerbside collection service, that brown cardboard could be taken.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration also reported on an incident of fly-tipping at the Grandstand. On examining the materials left, the identity of the offender had been established and a Fixed Penalty Notice issued accordingly. A similar situation had arisen in the Castlemona Avenue area, which had been dealt with similarly.

Resolved, “(i) That particulars of the documents be noted on the minutes; and

- (ii) That a statement be released via social media that brown cardboard could be taken as part of the Council’s kerbside collection service.”

#### **A12. Items for Future Report**

The Committee considered a written report by the Chief Executive identifying those issues on which further reports had been requested or which were outstanding, so that Members and officers were aware of them and could monitor progress.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report be noted on the minutes and that it be considered and monitored at each meeting of the Executive Committee.”

#### ***PART C –***

#### ***Matters subject to Council approval***

No matters subject to Council approval were considered.

The Committee rose at 3.15pm.

VI(vi) – The proceedings of the HOUSING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE as follows:

# HOUSING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

HOUSING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE – Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021.

Members Present: Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells (Chair), the Mayor, Councillor Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner, Councillor Mrs E.C. Quirk, Councillor Ms J. Thommeny.

In Attendance: Housing Manager (Mr V. Zivave), Assistant Chief Officer (Income) (Mrs C. Pulman), Democratic Services Officer (Mrs D. Atkinson), Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Miss C. Cullen).

## REPORT

### **PART A –**

#### ***Matters delegated to the Committee***

##### **A1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

##### **A2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

##### **A3. Minutes – 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021, were approved and signed.

##### **A4. Matters arising**

No issues were raised as arising from the previous minutes.

##### **A5. Vacant Properties Update**

The Committee considered the monthly report submitted by the Assistant Housing Manager (Maintenance) to update on the number of vacant social housing properties.

Appended to the officer's report was the void properties schedule, which showed that as at the end of March 2021 there were twenty-three vacant properties receiving attention. Members were presented with a summary chart showing the number of properties returned in each month, together with details of the category repair type for each property.

The Housing Manager advised that as of 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021, there were twenty-six vacant properties, ten of which are ready for allocation.

Resolved, "That particulars of the discussion and the number of void properties be noted on the minutes."

##### **A6. Housing Rent Arrears**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Housing Manager to monitor the progress made on rental income collection.

It was noted that since the outbreak of coronavirus in March 2020, Council officers had carried out a significant amount of work conducting welfare checks and calls to all tenants who were in rent arrears due to the effects of the pandemic. For any tenants who do not have payment plans, officers were engaging with and linking them to charities and Government organisations that offer debt counselling.

Members were advised that due to the frequency of rent payments there is a constant fluctuation of tenants in arrears of under £500 and as such, Housing officers were targeting tenants in the over £500 category noted at 4.4% of all tenants, an increase from 2.2% the previous month.

Appended to the officer's report was a table setting out the rent arrears statistics for February 2021 and March 2021, Members noted that as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March, the level of rent arrears was £165,341.68.

Members were reminded that the public payments counter had been closed during the January and March, 2021 lockdowns, as such, those who would normally pay in person were unable to do so. The Assistant Chief Officer (Income) reported that on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021, £24,000 in cash had been received by the payments counter, and eighty-five rent payments had been made on that day.

The Assistant Chief Officer (Income) advised that as of 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021 the level of rent arrears is £181,291.63 and that between Monday 19<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2021 £84,070.31 in rent payments had been received, over £37,000 of this was cash payments.

Members requested that the following table detailing a comparison of payment types, as at 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 be noted;

<b>Payment Type</b>	<b>19/20</b>	<b>20/21</b>
Direct Debit (at end Feb)	990	999
Standing Order	59	73
Online	388	706*
Debit Card	243	203
Telephone (estimated)	500	500
Cash	820	516
DSC	345	420
Cheque	56	36

Resolved, “That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes and that the progress made on rental income collection be noted.”

#### **A7. Implications of Covid-19 Lockdowns, January – April 2021**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Director of Housing and Property to provide an update on the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services within the remit of the Housing and Property Committee.

Members were advised that the Housing and Property service had been impacted significantly by the original lockdown of March 2020, and that these issues had been compounded by the more recent circuit breaker lockdowns during 2021, the first in January, lasting 25 days from 6<sup>th</sup> January until 31<sup>st</sup> January and the second being imposed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and lifted on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2021. It was noted that day to day operations, capital projects, housing maintenance and cyclical works, commercial and housing rental income had all been adversely affected.

The Committee were presented with a comprehensive report setting out an explanation of how each of the following services had been impacted; Housing Maintenance, Cyclical Maintenance, Capital Housing Projects, Housing Services, Rent Collection, Rent Arrears, Allocations, Inspections, Sheltered Accommodation Complexes and Resident Service and Commercial Properties.

Appended to the officer’s report was a table detailing the impacts to the capital housing projects together with graphs showing the average weekly figures from the January and March 2021 lockdowns and the intervening non-lockdown period, for 24 hour (emergency), 7 day (high priority) and 28 day (lower priority) maintenance jobs being raised and completed.

Of particular note, during the March 2021 lockdown the Housing team had focussed on positive care calls to the Council’s more vulnerable tenants, making several hundred support calls during this period. These calls were simply focussed on the well-being of the individual and on many occasions the team were able to assist the tenants with additional advice. It was noted that these calls had been very well received.

The Committee requested that a copy of the report be provided to all Members of Council for information.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report and the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services within the remit of the Housing and Property Committee be noted.”

#### **A8. Items for Future Consideration**

The Committee noted the monthly report and schedule setting out items which will be brought forward for consideration to future meetings.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report and schedule be noted on the minutes.”

#### **A9. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting was due to take place at 10.00am on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

Resolved, “That particulars of the next meeting be noted on the minutes.”

#### **PART B –**

##### ***Matters requiring Executive Committee approval***

There were no items requiring Executive Committee approval.

***PART C –***

***Matters requiring Council approval***

There were no items requiring Council approval.

The meeting ended at 11.16am.

VI(vii) – The proceedings of the REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE as follows:

# REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

Members Present: Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts (Chair), the Mayor, Councillor Mrs H. Callow, Councillor Mrs R. Chatel.

In Attendance: Director of Environment and Regeneration (Mrs D. Eynon), Assistant Town Clerk (Mr P.E. Cowin), Assistant Chief Officer (Income) (Mrs C. Pulman), Assistant Chief Officer (Regeneration) (Mr C. Pycroft), Borough Librarian (Mrs J. Macartney), Democratic Services Officer (Mrs D. Atkinson).

## REPORT

### **PART A –**

#### ***Matters delegated to the Committee***

##### **A1. Apologies**

Councillor Mrs K. Angela submitted apologies for the meeting.

##### **A2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

##### **A3. Minutes – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 were approved and signed.

##### **A4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising raised from the previous minutes.

##### **A5. Implications of Covid-19 Lockdowns, January to April 2021**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Director of Environment and Regeneration to update on the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services within the remit of the Regeneration and Community Committee, and to seek agreement to a temporary alteration to the pollinator scheme for 2021 only.

The report summarised the service changes as a result of the lockdown, how and when services resumed following the easing of restrictions, and the ongoing impact on services and projects.

During both lockdown periods, Local Authorities were directed to undertake those functions which were imposed upon them by statute or which were essential in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak. In terms of the service under the remit of the Regeneration and Community Committee, this resulted in Parks services undertaking essential duties under public health, basic maintenance of certain areas, basic plant production and maintenance in the nursery, continuation of cremations and burial services (with restrictions), and emergency tree works. During the March lockdown, some works were further suspended temporarily due to high volumes of community cases in order to protect Council staff and essential services. As soon as restrictions allowed, Parks recommenced maintenance works within the Borough.

The Town Centre Manager worked from home and as in the 2020 lockdown, was a lifeline to retailers.

Members noted a list of impacts on the Parks Service, Town Centre Management and regeneration projects as a result of the lockdowns. The report highlighted that the Parks Service will continue to catch up on the missed maintenance during the spring lockdown, which is usually the optimum period for grass cutting, weed containment and flower bed preparations. In 2020, the Parks Section received complaints of the town's green and floral areas being unkempt during the catch up period. The same criticism may be forthcoming this spring as Parks are 6 to 8 weeks behind the preparation schedule due to the lockdown coupled with the lack of interest in seasonal gardening posts. To assist with the backlog of work, the report recommended altering the 2021 pollinator schedule by changing some of the pollinator zones to regularly mowed lawns for this year only.

Resolved, "That;

- (i) particulars of the report and the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services within the remit of the Regeneration and Community Committee be noted on the minutes, and;

(ii) the temporary alteration to the pollinator scheme for 2021 only be approved.”

#### **A6. Creation of a Community Orchard at Noble’s Park**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Head of Parks, following a request from the Committee, on the feasibility of a community orchard at Noble’s Park.

Following the report presented to the Committee at the March 2021 meeting on the creation of a community orchard at Ballaughton Park, Members requested officers to explore the possibility of creating an additional community orchard at Noble’s Park.

The Head of Parks advised that an area of land at Noble’s Park has been identified. The area, which is adjacent to the lower junior play area, can be maintained efficiently by staff based in the Park and already has the pathways and water infrastructure in place. The proposal is to include nine edible fruit trees and additional raised beds to accommodate soft fruits. The estimated cost of the project is £965 which will be funded through existing budgets.

Members noted that fruit trees are generally planted in the autumn and take two to three years to bloom.

The report advised that discussion will commence with the Rotary Club Douglas for the provision of fruit trees in Douglas to support those being provided by Parks Services.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes and a community orchard be created in Noble’s Park.”

#### **A7. Douglas Golf Course – FootGolf**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Head of Parks, following a query raised at the Special Executive Committee budget setting meeting in January, to consider whether there was still a need to develop the FootGolf course at Douglas Golf Course.

The project had initially been identified as a recommendation in the Golf Course strategy adopted by the Council during 2018 and a sum of £3,000 was allocated to the project through general revenue balances. FootGolf continues to be a popular sport in the UK, so there is merit in retaining the initiative as a future feature for the Golf Course, however, the report recommended that the project be postponed at this moment in time for two reasons. Firstly, as a result of economic pressure that Covid-19 placed on Council budgets and secondly, as a result of staffing shortages and an inability to recruit temporary seasonal staff. Staffing resources have been further strained as a result of the recent lockdowns, and at the present time there are not staff available to maintain the proposed area.

Members felt that the initiative would be an enhancement to the golf course, offering a wider use for the facility, and therefore agreed to leave the initiative in the budget to be commenced as and when resources are available.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes and the FootGolf course at Douglas Golf Course be kept in the budget to commence at a time that Parks services can allocate the necessary resources to the initiative.”

#### **A8. Lester’s Yard, Isle of Play – Proposal to Extend Opening Times and Install Low Level Lighting**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Head of Parks to seek approval to extend the opening hours and the installation of low level lighting by Isle of Play at Lester’s Yard in Ballaughton Park, prior to the submission of a planning application.

Due to the popularity of the site, Isle of Play are seeking support to progress and submit a planning application to increase opening hours on weekdays for occasional use during the day and to install low level LED festoon lighting for use between November and February on weekdays to 6.00pm. All costs associated with the request will be funded by Isle of Play.

Members noted that the planning application will be considered by Executive Committee in due course.

Resolved, “That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes, and;

- (i) The Isle of Play request to extend the opening hours of Lester’s Yard, Ballaughton Park, and to install low level LED lighting be agreed, subject to planning permission approval;
- (ii) The lease for the site be amended to reflect the extended opening times.”

#### **A9. Media Partner for 2021 Public Events**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Democratic Services Officer to consider the media partner proposals submitted for the promotion of the Noble’s Park Fun Day, Fireworks Display and Christmas Lights Ceremony.

Three local radio stations submitted proposals to promote the three major public events. Members were presented with a matrix to compare the proposals. There was a lengthy discussion about the merits of

each proposal, and it was agreed that it would be helpful to receive a face to face presentation from each of the submissions.

Resolved, "That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes and the media partner report be deferred and the three submissions be invited to present their proposals to the special Committee."

**A10. The Henry Bloom Noble Library: Implications of Covid-19 lockdowns January to April 2021**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Borough Librarian to update on the implications to the library service as a result of the Covid-19 lockdowns from January to April 2021.

During the lockdown period, the digital offer of eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines had been available to enable people to access any time of the day. The Borough Librarian reported a significant increase in eBook downloads during both lockdown periods. The Library continued to offer an online joining feature and an additional 69 residents took advantage of this during the 2021 lockdowns to date.

The library continued to communicate with residents through the Council's social media accounts, responded to queries by telephone and e-mail, and staff were redeployed to other areas of Finance to assist with the issuing of rates demands.

Resolved, "That particulars of the report and the work that was undertaken by the library during Covid-19 lockdowns January be noted on the minutes."

**A11. Items for Future Report**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Democratic Services Officer regarding reports for future consideration by the Committee.

Resolved, "That particulars of the matters for future consideration be noted on the minutes."

**A12. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting was due to take place on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

Resolved, "That the date and time of the next meeting be noted on the minutes."

***PART B –***

***Matters for referral to the Executive Committee***

There were no items requiring Executive Committee approval.

***PART C –***

***Matters for Council approval***

There were no matters requiring Council approval.

The meeting ended at 10.35am.

VI(viii) – The proceedings of the ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE as follows:

# ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – Minutes of Meeting held on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

Members Present: Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl (Chair), the Mayor, Councillor Miss N.A. Byron, Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley, Mr Councillor S. Hamer, Mr Councillor F. Horning.

In Attendance: Director of Environment and Regeneration (Mrs D. Eynon), Assistant Chief Officer (Regeneration) (Mr C. Pycroft), Accountancy Manager (Mr M. Quayle) (Items A1 to A7), Dilapidation Enforcement Officer (Mr S. Salter) (Items A8 and A9), Senior Engineering and Waste Services Manager (Mr A. Crook) (Item A5), Assistant Town Clerk (Mr P.E. Cowin), Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Miss C. Cullen).

## REPORT

### **PART A –**

#### ***Matters delegated to the Committee***

##### **A1. Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received.

##### **A2. Declarations of Interest**

Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley declared an interest in item A8, **planning application 20/01545/B** and **planning application 21/00178/B**.

Mr Councillor S. Hamer declared an interest in item A8, **planning application 20/01545/B**.

##### **A3. Minutes – 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 were approved and signed.

##### **A4. Matters Arising**

*Clause C14 – Unlit Adopted Highways in the Borough of Douglas* – The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that following a Motion moved at the April 2021 Council meeting, a programme to install public lighting in all adopted lanes within the Borough would be the subject of further report to Committee. A Member asked that the report recommend the standard of light that should be applied to back lanes and paths.

##### **A5. Environmental Campaign Competition**

The Senior Engineering and Waste Services Manager joined the meeting for discussion of the item.

Following a request by Members at the March 2021 Committee meeting, the Committee considered a report submitted by the Senior Engineering and Waste Services Manager setting out the proposal to run a poster design competition for an environmental campaign.

The proposal is for a creative poster design competition concerning cigarette related litter that will be open to anyone wishing to enter, Members noted that a direct invitation would also be sent to schools and the Isle of Man College. Set out in the officer's report was the proposed advert which was reviewed and approved by the Committee.

Members had requested that the cost of the proposed competition be equal to or less than the value of a twelve month membership with Keep Britain Tidy. It was noted that the estimated cost of £2,765 exceeded the £1,200 limit. The Senior Engineering and Waste Services Manager advised that if Members were minded to exclude the billboard at Pulrose Bridge and Newspaper advertising this would reduce the cost by approximately £1,200.

There was discussion on placing warning stickers on bins as a deterrent to littering and other anti-social behaviour, it was not recommended to proceed with this as research from the United Kingdom and Government Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) found that the public perceived stickers on street furniture as fly posting and having a detrimental effect on environmental quality, particularly as stickers fade over time. It was noted that the difference between advertising and stickers is that advertising would be removed and replaced at regular intervals.

Resolved, "That authorisation be given to proceed with the Competition but that the newspaper advertising and the use of Pulrose Bridge billboard which are cost prohibitive, be excluded."

The Senior Engineering and Waste Services Manager was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

**A6. Use of the Bottleneck Car Park as an Entertainment Venue for TT 2022 to 2026 inclusive**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Assistant Chief Officer (Regeneration) to determine whether expressions of interest be sought from potential operators for use of the Bottleneck Car Park as a potential event venue for TT 2022 to 2026 inclusive.

Members recalled that for a number of years the Bottleneck Car Park was home to Bushy's Beer Tent during the annual TT festival. Members were advised that in 2017, use of the Car Park had been tendered in order to test the market and following the procurement process, Hooded Ram / Clinch's Leisure Limited had been awarded a five-year agreement implemented through annual licences.

Members were reminded that at the March 2020 Committee meeting it had been resolved to withdraw from the five-year agreement with Hooded Ram / Clinch's Leisure Limited and invite expressions of interest for TT 2021 to 2026. When the matter was subsequently debated during the Council meeting in July 2020, it was agreed not to seek expressions of interest for use of the car park during TT 2021.

Members expressed some reservations about the need for a beer tent in the area following the success of the TT Village at the Villa Marina. However, Members were cognisant that having an event area close to the Town Centre would be an attraction for visitors and locals during the TT festival.

The Assistant Chief Officer (Regeneration) suggested that the invitation to tender could make it clear that the Council are keen to receive proposals of any nature and that the Committee may wish to consider awarding the tender for one year with the option to extend the contract for a further four year's based on the events success.

Resolved, "That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes;

- (i) That expressions of interest be invited from parties interested in operating the Bottleneck Car Park as an event venue during the 2022 TT festival, with the opportunity to extend the contract for a further four years, up to 2026 based on the events success;
- (ii) That the tender criteria stipulate that the proposal must be of benefit to the local economy."

**A7. Implications of Covid-19 Lockdown, January – April 2021**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Director of Environment and Regeneration to provide an update on the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services within the remit of the Environmental Services Committee.

Members were presented with a comprehensive report setting out an explanation of how each of the following services had been impacted; Electrical Services, Waste Services, Fleet Services, Stores, Engineers, Building Control, Community and Enforcement.

It was noted that during 2021 two lockdowns had been imposed. The first in January, lasting 25 days from 6<sup>th</sup> January until 31<sup>st</sup> January and the second being imposed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and lifted on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

Members were advised that during the lockdowns Local Authorities had been directed to only undertake those functions which were imposed upon them by statute or which were essential in dealing with the Coronavirus outbreak. In January 2021 a specific exception was included relating to the public accessing facilities for recycling. During the March lockdown, this exception was qualified to bring banks and civic amenity sites remaining open, and outside construction and horticulture were permitted provided activities could be undertaken wholly outside, social distancing of 2m could be maintained and face coverings were mandatory.

In March, although there were fewer restrictions imposed on Council services through the direction than the previous two lockdowns, a decision was taken by Chief Officers, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, on 3<sup>rd</sup> March that non-statutory and non-essential services should be suspended to protect staff and to protect the provision of essential services should the Council suffer staff shortages. At the time this decision was taken, daily new cases and transmissibility were high and it was considered that the Island had not yet reached the peak of infection of the latest outbreak, which was known to be the more virulent Kent variant. Two days later, on 5<sup>th</sup> March, all construction and related trades were suspended.

Members requested that the Director of Environment and Regeneration write to the Isle of Man government requesting that the Kerbside recycling service be included in any future exception notice.

The Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that since the lifting of restrictions four trade waste customers had contacted the Council to resume the service and that the Kerbside recycling service was due to resume today.

In response to question, the Director of Environment and Regeneration advised that the chewing gum campaign was due to commence in May 2021.

Resolved, "That particulars of the report and discussion be noted on the minutes and that the implications of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2021 on the services within the remit of the Environmental Services Committee be noted."

#### A8. Planning Applications

The Dilapidation Enforcement Officer joined the meeting for discussion of the item and item A9.

*Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley and Mr Councillor S. Hamer declared an interest in planning application 20/01545/B and retired whilst it was considered.*

Members considered a planning appraisal submitted by the Dilapidation Enforcement Officer of **planning application 20/01545/B** for the alterations and roof works, installation of replacement windows, the erection of a boundary wall, patio doors and Juliet balconies at 21 Derby Road, Douglas.

The Dilapidation Enforcement Officer advised that following concerns raised by council officers in relation to the upper floor flats access to the rear of the property, amended plans had been submitted which included access to the bin store.

A Member raised concern that the provision for recycling was insufficient for the number of proposed flats.

Resolved, "That support be given to planning application 20/01545/B and the Council requests that the applicant should provide a covered bicycle storage and gives consideration to the security of the rear yard and suitable lighting."

For: 2 Against: 1

*Mr Councillor F. Horning asked that his name be recorded as voting against the resolution.*

*Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985, Mr Councillor A.J. Bentley declared an interest in planning application 21/00178/B and retired whilst it was considered.*

Members considered a planning appraisal submitted by the Dilapidation Enforcement Officer of **planning application 21/00178/B** for the alterations and erection of a rear extension at 2 Cambridge Terrace, Douglas.

The report recommended that support be given to the application. Members were advised that the building falls within a conservation area and although the proposed design is contemporary, it is at the rear annex of the property along a quiet lane where there is currently a mix of designs with no apparent design brief for the area. The Dilapidation Enforcement Officer felt it prudent for Members to note that to date no objections had been made by any of the neighbouring properties or the Victorian Society.

Resolved unanimously, "That support be given to planning application 21/00178/B."

Members considered a planning appraisal submitted by the Dilapidation Enforcement Officer of **planning application 20/01530/B** for the conversion of a guest house (class 3.1) to provide four residential apartments (class 3.4) at 16 Belmont Terrace, Douglas.

Members were advised that Council officers had worked closely with the applicant to ensure that the waste and recycling storage area is both accessible and secure, this will allow for the Council's waste operatives to access the bins from the rear lane and ensure that after collection the bins are not left in the rear lane.

Members noted that the rear lane had been an area of concern given the limited space for bin storage which had resulted in Council officers having to explore alternative measures to what is currently available. The Committee requested that comment be included to the Planning Authority that the proposed bin storage area for this property is a vast improvement on the current situation and works to this property were very much welcomed.

A Member raised concerns over the suitability of Flat 1 for registration as it appears to contravene the Isle of Man Strategic Plan 2016 policy 17(b) due to its principal outlook being to the bicycle store. Concerns were also raised about the ventilation and lack of natural light and over the suitability of the bicycle store which appears to contravene policy 2(h) over the adequacy of space and manoeuvrability.

A discussion on flats registration ensued. It was agreed that a briefing note be circulated to the Committee setting out the current process for the registration of flats.

Resolved, "That support be given to planning application 20/0153/B."

For: 1 Against: 4

*Councillors, Mr R.H. McNicholl, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr S. Hamer and Mr F. Horning asked that their names be recorded as voting against the resolution.*

As the recommendation to support the application was not supported it was agreed that an objection be raised to the application on the grounds that the outlook of the ground floor flat is unsatisfactory.

**A9. Schedule of Neglected, Dilapidated, Ruinous and Dangerous Properties**

The Committee considered a schedule of properties in a state of dilapidation or disrepair, setting out three properties added since the last meeting; one property removed because work had been completed; and a total of fifty-five properties remaining on the list.

Members were reminded that the addition of any property to the list would first involve contact with the property owner to resolve the concern over its condition and to offer them reasonable opportunity to carry out the work willingly. Should that not happen, then Notice would be served that the work must be carried out, and failure then to comply with the Notice would involve the possibility of legal action being taken.

Resolved, "That the schedule of dilapidated properties be noted and approved and that the Director of Environment & Regeneration be authorised to progress improvements to the properties, by service of Notice and legal action where necessary."

The Dilapidation Enforcement Officer was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

**A10. Items for Future Report**

The Committee considered a report submitted by the Assistant Democratic Services Officer noting the reports listed for future consideration by the Committee.

Members noted that a programme for the installation of lighting in adopted lanes within the Borough would be added to the schedule of future reports.

Resolved, "That particulars of the matters for future consideration be noted on the minutes."

**A11. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting of the Environmental Services Committee was due to take place at 10.00am on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

***PART B –***

***Matters requiring Executive Committee approval***

There were no items requiring Executive Committee approval.

***PART C –***

***Matters requiring Council approval***

There were no items requiring Council approval.

The meeting ended at 1.05pm.