



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP.

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Minutes of the Two Hundred and Ninetieth **MEETING of the COUNCIL** held in the Remote meeting (Zoom) <https://zoom.us/j/99909076692> on Wednesday, 20th May, 2020 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT:

Mr K Bool	Mr J Dale
Mr O Hemsley	Mr G Brown
Mr R Coleman	Mrs L Stephenson
Mr A Walters	Mr D Wilby
Mr P Ainsley	Mr E Baines
Mr N Begy	Mr D Blanksby
Mr A Brown	Ms J Burrows
Mr W Cross	Mrs J Fox
Mrs S Harvey	Miss M Jones
Mr A Lowe	Ms A MacCartney
Mr M Oxley	Mrs K Payne
Mrs R Powell	Mr I Razzell
Miss G Waller	Mr N Woodley

APOLOGIES: Mrs S Webb

OFFICERS	Mrs H Briggs	Chief Executive
PRESENT:	Mr M Andrews	Strategic Director for People & Deputy Chief Executive
	Mr S Della Rocca	Strategic Director of Resources
	Mr P Horsfield	Monitoring Officer
	Mr A Nix	Head of IT
	Mrs H Bremner	Head of Communications
	Mrs E Powley	Governance Manager

614 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Webb.

615 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman confirmed that his engagements had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

616 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Councillor Hemsley, as Leader of the Council reported that Covid -19 had presented everyone with a unique set of circumstances and welcomed the transition to virtual meetings. He

thanked the continued work of officers of the Council during the pandemic and urged Council to support officers in achieving the best for Rutland.

617 VIRTUAL MEETING STANDING ORDERS

Councillor Hemsley elaborated on his report which sought Councils approval to amend the Constitution following the introduction of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 392) (The Virtual Meeting Regulations).

Councillor G Brown seconded the report.

In response to a question asked, it was confirmed that the regulations would be in place until May 2021 but kept under review should there be changes in circumstances.

It was noted that the proposal to amend the Procedure Rules required that recorded votes be taken for all votes taken at virtual meetings.

There voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Burrows, Coleman, Cross, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Wilby and Woodley.

The vote being unanimous, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.
2. That the corresponding amendments had been made by the Leader to the Procedure Rules for Cabinet be noted.
3. That the Virtual Meetings Protocol at Appendix B be noted.

618 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

619 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman proposed that the minutes of the Two Hundred and Eighty Ninth meeting of the Rutland County Council held on 9th March 2020, be confirmed with the abstention of Councillor Jones, Dale, Coleman and Woodley from voting having submitted their apologies for the previous meeting.

Councillor Razzell seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 9th March 2020 be confirmed.

620 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were none.

621 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Powell submitted the following question:

I would like to congratulate officers on putting in place the technology so that this Council meeting and Cabinet can now take place virtually. As this way of meeting becomes the new normal for the foreseeable future I would like reassurance from the Leader of the Council that the schedule for all committees especially Planning and Licensing and Audit and Risk will now resume from June. And that the vital function of Scrutiny in developing policy, holding Cabinet to account and driving improvement in public services, will be reinstated imminently. Now seems to be an opportunity to make better use of Scrutiny *'to support policy and decision making through focused commissions and deep dives into strategic challenges'* as recommended in the recent Peer Review and I ask the Leader to advise members what specific plans he has to enable this to happen.

Councillor Hemsley responded as follows:

Thank you for the question, I am sure that the Strategic Director of Resources will pass on the thanks to both the IT team and the Governance Team.

I share (as I am sure that we all do) the desire to get to the "new normal" as quickly as is practicable that living with the corona virus will demand. I recognise that setting out what this looks like and how we get there is an important piece of work to ensure that we emerge from the crisis as a better organisation than when we went into it.

I also agree whole-heartedly that this crisis does present an opportunity to look at roles and the way we operate right across the Council and this includes our role as elected representatives. We should review our arrangements, see what works, how we work and what we might change. I would very much value input and thoughts from all members to this process. I did send out an invitation to informal scrutiny to all members last week. As you suggest we should be looking to "drive improvement in public services" and this includes the way in which we as councillors operate.

However, this process will have to take place in a context where we are still dealing with a serious health crisis, together with the associated effects on our community and our management of this horrible disease. We are finding the demands on services and the leadership continues to increase and our first priority must always be directing all available capacity to supporting our communities through these unprecedented times.

I do acknowledge that we need to set out a clear 'road map', for restoration of an effective democratic framework, that will set out how we will:

- deliver against our priorities,
- develop new ideas and ways of workings
- manage the current crisis not just in the next few months but probably over the next couple of years; and
- deal with essential business

We have our first Scrutiny meeting being held on the 11th June at the request of the Scrutiny Committee and Commission and it will be single item agenda on a report published for Cabinet on the 16th June and I expect we should be able to outline the transition plan in more detail at Annual Council and I welcome a dialogue on this issue with all members. Councillors Oxley, Waller and I will continue to liaise with senior officers to ensure that interim measures are put in place to ensure that all Councillors are included in this process and to ensure the scrutiny of essential policy decisions is enabled.

My own view is that we will likely have to go through 3 stages:

1. A limited provision as we deal with the crisis (based on circumstances); I see this as a place for us as elected members to gather information on topics that can help inform the future of the Council.
2. A phased return looking at priorities of the Council and balancing the need to provide capacity to consider and shape what any new arrangements will look like.

3. Implementing and embedding the new ways of working for Council and Councillors
I look forward to working with you all on this, it is a real opportunity to do what we got elected to do and make a difference.

Councillor Hemsley, in response to a supplementary question from Councillor Powell stated assurance would be given that the approach proposed would be laid out at the Annual Meeting.

622 REFERRAL OF COMMITTEE DECISIONS TO THE COUNCIL

There were none.

623 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS FROM CABINET MEETINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM 18TH FEBRUARY TO 12TH MAY 2020 (INCLUSIVE)

There were none.

624 REPORTS FROM THE CABINET

Council received Report Nos.66/2020 and 67/2020 from the Cabinet on recommendations referred to the Council for determination.

625 CONTRACTS EXTENSION

Councillor G Brown elaborated on the report that sought Councils approval to delegate authority to Officers in conjunction with Portfolio Holders to extend existing contracts which would ordinarily be approved by Council (relevant contracts and Officer/Portfolio Holders). It was noted that at the Cabinet meeting held on the 21st April 2020, Cabinet agreed to the report seeking Council's approval.

Members were informed that the Council had found itself in a position where a number of significant contracts were due to end in the near future and contract activity was either underway or due to commence but has been put on hold. The Council was therefore now seeking to extend a number of contracts through delegation.

Councillor Hemsley seconded the report.

In response to comments made, Councillor G Brown explained that due to the long lead-in and the complexity of some contracts, it had been a necessity to seek the extension.

A recorded vote was held:

There voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Burrows, Coleman, Cross, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Wilby and Woodley.

The vote being unanimous, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That authority be delegated to Officers in conjunction with Portfolio Holders to extend existing contracts which would ordinarily be approved by Council (relevant contracts and Officer/Portfolio Holders)

626 COVID 19 UPDATE & CONTINUED USE OF EMERGENCY POWERS

Councillor Hemsley elaborated on a report which sought Council to note the contents of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1 of the report and the approval of the recommendations at the meeting held on the 21st April 2020.

It was established on March 16th 2020 that the opinion of the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer was that COVID-19 crisis activated the Constitutional provision that the Chief Executive would take any urgent action necessary in the event of a civil emergency and deal with matters relating to civil protection/emergency planning arising from the Council's powers and duties under the appropriate legislation. It was noted that a decision log was being maintained which was shared with Group Leaders.

Councillor G Brown seconded the report.

In response to questions asked, it was reported that should Group Leaders be asked about specific decisions taken, they must seek confirmation from the Monitoring officer prior to the information being disclosed to their Group Members. Officers were working collaboratively with Members as much as possible by sharing information with Group Leaders and through the Councillor briefings.

In response to a question asked about the financial implications and whether the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was adjusted in terms of the impact on finances and trajectory, Councillor G Brown explained that estimates of income streams and expenditures were being examined. Whilst it was predicted that there would be a shortage of reserves at the end of year, MHCLG were being updated regularly and it was anticipated that the impact of Covid 19 on the financial costs to the Council would be more apparent next year. It was reported that information on financial implications were currently a little vague, but that a report would be brought to Council in the near future to update members and it was hoped that all Councillors would engage in discussions with the Chief Finance Officer budget options in Autumn 2020.

A recorded vote was held:

There voted in favour:

Councillors Ainsley, Baines, Begy, Blanksby, Bool, A Brown, G Brown, Burrows, Coleman, Cross, Dale, Fox, Harvey, Hemsley, Jones, Lowe, MacCartney, Oxley, Payne, Powell, Razzell, Stephenson, Waller, Walters, Wilby and Woodley.

The vote being unanimous, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Cabinet report at Appendix 1 of the report and the approval of the recommendations at the meeting held on the 21st April 2020 be noted.

627 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

There were none

628 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMISSION / SCRUTINY PANELS

There were none.

629 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The Chairman informed members that one written updates on Joint Arrangements had been received and would be appended to the minutes.

630 NOTICES OF MOTION

There were none.

631 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.49pm
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