



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2020
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON

Committee Members Present:

Provost J McMillan (Convener)
Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor L Bruce
Councillor S Currie
Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor N Gilbert
Councillor J Goodfellow

Councillor N Hampshire
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor C Hoy
Councillor S Kempson
Councillor G Mackett
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor F O'Donnell
Councillor J Williamson

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Patterson, Chief Executive
Ms A MacDonald, Director of East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership
Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources
Mr D Proudfoot, Head of Development
Mr T Reid, Head of Infrastructure
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Ms L Brown, Chief Operating Officer – Education
Ms L Byrne, Group Service Manager – Children's Services
Mr S Cooper, Team Manager – Communications
Ms K MacNeill, Service Manager – People and Governance

Visitors Present:

None

Clerk:

Mrs L Gillingwater

Apologies:

Councillor J Findlay
Councillor W Innes
Councillor K Mackie
Councillor C McGinn
Councillor K McLeod
Councillor T Trotter

1. COVID-19 – EMERGENCY RECESS PROCEDURES

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services), seeking approval to put in place procedures for the democratic decision-making process to continue in the event that East Lothian Council committee meetings are unable to be convened as a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak.

The Head of Council Resources, Jim Lamond, presented the report, advising that the recommendations set out in the report would allow the Chief Executive to invoke an Emergency Recess that would effectively cancel all or any of the Council's scheduled committee meetings from 18 March until further notice. He drew Members' attention to the proposed arrangements for dealing with necessary business, as set out in Sections 3.3 to 3.6 of the report. He pointed out that it was likely that additional special provision may be required for specific committees, and sought delegated authority for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the three political group leaders, to make such provisions as necessary. Mr Lamond also requested that the group leaders nominate deputies to act on their behalf in the event that they were unavailable to take decisions.

Councillor Hampshire stressed the seriousness of the situation, and urged all Members to come together during this difficult period. He also highlighted the importance of Council communications being consistent with national communications.

Councillor Currie echoed Councillor Hampshire's sentiments. He thanked Council staff and their partners for their efforts in continuing to deliver services and assist communities. He also recognised the need for certain types of business to continue, and hoped that emergency changes to legislation would allow this to happen.

Councillor McLennan asked if the Council would be setting up a central point of contact for members of the public. The Chief Executive advised that information was already available on the Council's website and through newsletters, and that a central point of contact would be introduced soon.

Councillor McMillan made reference to the Council's Elected Members' Emergency Guidance leaflet, and urged Members to read this document. He asked group leaders to inform the clerk of their deputies by the close of business on 17 March.

Decision

The Council agreed:

- i. to approve the COVID-19 Emergency Recess Procedures as outlined in Sections 3.3 to 3.6 of the report;
- ii. to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the three political group leaders, the decision to invoke the COVID-19 Emergency Recess Procedures, as and when necessary;
- iii. to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the three political group leaders, the application of specific provisions for the approval of certain types of business, as set out in Section 3.7; and
- iv. to note that a summary of all business carried out during the Emergency Recess will be brought to the next full Council meeting and that copies of all reports will be lodged in the Members' Library.

Signed

Provost John McMillan
Convener of the Council

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