



Borough of Douglas

Town Hall,

Douglas,

14th April, 2021

At a MEETING of the COUNCIL of the BOROUGH OF DOUGLAS, duly convened and holden at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, the 14th day of APRIL, 2021, held VIRTUALLY, by VIDEO CONFERENCE, 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 J.E. Skinner

Ms K. Angela

Mrs E.C. Quirk

Ms J. Thommeny

Apologies were submitted by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl.

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Housing and Property and the Assistant Chief Officer (Regeneration) were in attendance.

1. **Minute Silence**

The Council observed a one minute silence as a mark of respect for His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Sir Prince Phillip.

2. **Standing Order 39 – Question**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner, seconded by Councillor Ms K. Angela, “That the private questions 1 to 9 be moved into public for consideration.”

Question put; a vote was taken and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs H. Callow, Mr S.R. Pitts, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela – **7**

Against: Councillors; 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, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **10**

Motion fell.

3. **Standing Order 39 – Question**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor S. Hamer, seconded by Mr Councillor D. Watson, “That private question 18 be moved into public for consideration.”

Question put; a vote was taken and there voted **For** the Motion, Mr Councillor S. Hamer, Mr Councillor D. Watson – **2**

Against: 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 A.J. Bentley, Mr F. Horning, Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **15**

Motion fell.

4. **Standing Order 39 Question**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D. Watson, seconded by Mr Councillor S. Hamer, “That private question 11 be moved into public for consideration.”

Question put; a vote was taken and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Mr S.R. Pitts, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr F. Horning – **4**

Against: 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 J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **13**

Motion fell.

5. **Minutes – 10th March, 2021**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday, 10th March, 2021, were approved for signature.

6. **Minutes – 11th March, 2021**

The minutes of the reconvened Council meeting held on Thursday, 11th March, 2021, were approved for signature.

7. **Minutes – 26th March, 2021**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on Friday, 26th March, 2021, were approved for signature.

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

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

In each of the last five years what has been the cost of asbestos surveys carried out in Council properties and apart from surveys what costs have been incurred in the removal of asbestos from Council properties?

Response by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

Part of the Landlord and Tenancy Act of 1985 states that property to let must be fit for human habitation, specifying that any asbestos material in unsafe condition must be dealt with prior to a tenancy beginning.

If there is suspected or suspicion of asbestos being present in a building - even if apparently undamaged, it is the responsibility of the duty holder to get a specialist asbestos survey commissioned to determine the location, condition and extent of the material within the property which could also include drawing up a plan for removal, if necessary.

Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 outlines that depending on the extent of the maintenance and repair, this will decide if the asbestos containing material needs to be removed for the works to be safely undertaken, and it has been found that in recent repair and void works, that a more intrusive type of repair is required. As such, as landlord and employer, the Council have a legal duty under

the Control of Asbestos Regulations to ensure the safety of tenants, and Council employees and Contractors. Any known or presumed asbestos within a building must be managed insitu or removed in full compliance with the regulations.

In essence, every duty holder has an obligation to:

- find out whether a building contains asbestos, and what condition the asbestos is in;
- assess the risk;
- manage that risk.

The Council's responsibility for the management of asbestos is to the whole building. For housing this is not restricted to the physical apartment or house that is let and includes all the 'common' areas the building may include, a landlord has responsibility to ensure that no one is harmed by any asbestos containing materials.

If a building was built before 2000, it should be suspected to contain asbestos unless it has been surveyed to clarify there is no asbestos.

Tables below show the costs of surveying and the removal of asbestos in Douglas Borough Council properties deemed to be in areas that could be hazardous to the health of employee, contractors or tenant.

Housing Maintenance

The housing maintenance service will more commonly investigate the presence of asbestos during more involving renovation works, often during VOID works.

Asbestos Surveys

<i>Year</i>	<i>Est Cost</i>
2020-2021	£15,540
2019-2020	£22,187
2018-2019	£3,916
2017-2018	£6,200
2016-2017	720
	£48,563

Asbestos Removals

<i>Year</i>	<i>Est Cost</i>
2020-2021	£5,399
2019-2020	£675
2018-2019	£4,597
2017-2018	£3,675
2016-2017	-
	£14,346

Capital Projects

Asbestos surveys are a general requirement of many of the Capital renovation schemes, examples would include the Willaston Refurbishment and the kitchen frameworks.

Asbestos Surveys

<i>Year</i>	<i>Est Cost</i>
2020-2021	£3,835.00
2019-2020	£56,020.00
2018-2019	£43,295.00
2017-2018	£45,315.00
2016-2017	£67,150.00
	£215,615.00

Asbestos Removals

<i>Year</i>	<i>Est Cost</i>
2020-2021	£19,117.28
2019-2020	£27,872.07
2018-2019	£62,686.18
2017-2018	£3,639.60
2016-2017	£3,434.10
	£116,749.23

Non-social housing stock (Commercial and Council property assets)

Asbestos Surveys

Year	Est Cost
2020-2021	£0.00
2019-2020	£0.00
2018-2019	£70.00
2017-2018	£640.00
2016-2017	£5,425.00
	£6,135.00

Asbestos Removals

Year	Est Cost
2020-2021	£150.00
2019-2020	£0.00
2018-2019	£1,720.00
2017-2018	£8,598.00
2016-2017	£12,000.00
	£22,468.00

Supplementary Question:

The question request the costs of asbestos surveys and removal and the figures provided appear to indicate that these are estimated costs, can the Chair confirm this and provide actual costs or if they are estimates?

Reply:

The costs that have been provided are actual costs and have been paid already. However I think they have said it was estimates because there may be some costs that the officers weren't able to put together for this particular briefing because of the vast amount of paperwork they had to go through to get the details that are in front of you so the details that have be given are already accurate, they have been paid out, but whether or not they have managed to pick up every cost from every single project isn't 100% certain which is probably why is was worded in the way that it was.

9. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner

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

Pursuant to a question on 10th March 2021 regarding the ground reparation works in Nobles Park in and around the area of the VIP Hospitality and “Trackside Bar” the Chair replied “reparation work was undertaken by a Contractor employed by the Department for Enterprise at their sole cost.” What work was actually carried out by the contractor and on what dates?

Response by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

The contractor was employed by the Department and so exact dates would not be held by Douglas Borough Council. The officers' recollection is that the work took place over the week commencing 14th October 2019, and the following was undertaken:

- *Remove bark chipping, used in some sections of the temporary road/path when it was muddy during the events;*
- *Rotovate the damaged/word areas to relieve compaction and ruts;*
- *Over seed and roll.*

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

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

Has the impact of the recent lockdown had a noticeable effect on the state of rent arrears by the housing tenants of Douglas Borough Council?

Response by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

Arrears report prior to the lockdown of the 3rd March 2021:

	<i>Number of Tenants</i>	<i>% of Tenants</i>	<i>Amount of Arrears</i>
<i>Less than £500</i>	290	12.7%	£51,840.15
<i>£500 - £1,000</i>	44	1.9%	£30,862.71
<i>£1,000 - £2,000</i>	23	1.0%	£32,123.37
<i>Over £2,000</i>	8	0.4%	£21,246.78
<i>Over £500</i>	75	2.2%	£84,232.86
Total	365	16%	£136,073.01

Current arrears as of 9th April 2021:

	<i>Number of Tenants</i>	<i>% of Tenants</i>	<i>Amount of Arrears</i>
<i>Less than £500</i>	390	17.1%	£67,735.54
<i>£500 - £1,000</i>	73	3.2%	£52,652.72
<i>£1,000 - £2,000</i>	22	1.0%	£30,371.30
<i>Over £2,000</i>	8	0.4%	£21,759.51
<i>Over £500</i>	103	4.5%	£104,756.53
Total	493	21.7%	£172,492.07

Overall the number of accounts in arrears has increased by 5.7%, the biggest impact has been on those with arrears of less the £1000 which has gone from 334 accounts (14.6% of tenants) to 463 accounts (20.3% of tenants).

The value of the arrears overall has increased by £36,419.06 which equates to approximately 26.77%.

Housing Officers have continued to review all rent accounts weekly and where appropriate have tried to make contact with tenants to see if assistance or support can be offered to the tenants.

To date 53 tenants have advised that they are keeping cash to pay when restrictions are lifted and the counter service is available.

It is important to note that figures shown in March 2021 are still showing higher arrears than a normal year, this due to the fact that tenants were still recovering from the Impact of the first lockdown in March 2020 and the short circuit breaker in January 2021.

Supplementary Question:

As a result of the impact of the third lockdown on rent arrears how many notices to quit for non-payment have been issued?

Reply:

None. We have suspended all Court action in relation to arrears during lockdown. There are currently four people due in Court but this relates to arrears that were issued before the original lockdown of March 2020.

11. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S. Hamer

Mr Councillor S. Hamer asked the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

Has there been any investigations into the viability of holding online events during the lockdown period to try and help promote Douglas businesses that are still operating with social distancing measures such as takeaways and delivered retail?

Response by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

Between 3rd March and 12th April the Douglas Town Centre Management Facebook page, the Council's main communication tool for promoting and supporting town centre businesses, posted 68 posts in support of local businesses during the lockdown. Subject matter included;

- *Information about click and collect and delivery services*
- *Free car parking*
- *Measures businesses have put in place to keep customers safe*
- *Special lockdown offers*
- *Opening hours*
- *Promotion of take away services*
- *Passing on goodwill messages from businesses*
- *An advert for a temporary delivery driver*
- *Information on using Shopmobility for visiting the vaccination hub.*
- *Competitions*

The Town Centre Manager also ran a competition to win one of three £50 vouchers for a town centre business.

Supplementary Question:

Would the Committee consider looking into hosting online events such as gigs from local singers in lockdown, mixed with local messages from local businesses etc. if we were in a similar position again?

Reply:

I am sure the Town Centre Manager would be only too helpful in this sort of matter if we do or are unfortunate enough to be locked down again. Anything that would benefit the Town Business I am sure we would all welcome but subject to the ongoing costs against what the benefits would be.

12. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S. Hamer

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

I have asked questions previously about the decision to stop recycling and was told that it was not a statutory requirement but I don't believe I am the only Councillor who considers recycling a core component of waste management. Before the decision to stop recycling services during lockdown was made were the options of supplying extra PPE or offering hazard pay explored?

Response by the Leader of the Council:

The kerbside service is not a statutory service under the Public Health Act 1990. The Direction from government around closure of business and Exception Notices for when the public may leave their home states that Local Government should only undertake those functions that are statutory or directly in support of combatting the virus. The Exception Notices allow for residents to access recycling facilities but these are clarified as Bring Banks and Civic Amenity Sites. Therefore, the Council cannot, by law, undertake the kerbside service while the Direction is in place. This will only change when (a) the Direction is finally lifted and (b) the Exception Notice includes for the kerbside service.

13. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S. Hamer

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

As I would have liked to direct some of my questions to the Chief Executive and as we often call on her expertise within the chamber, can I ask whether a change to standing order 39 could be considered to allow councillors to ask written questions not just to the Leader and Committee Chairs but to the chief executive as well?

Response by the Leader of the Council:

I would be reluctant to change that Standing Order at the moment, when the Council is already committed to some major changes in the near future, although obviously consideration can be given when next Standing Orders are reviewed. In the meantime, Members need to be aware that they can address the Chief Executive, and any other Officers, with any question at any time and can expect a response as soon as possible. The purpose of this Standing Order is to provide Members with a platform for raising issues at a political level which Committee Chairs are much better placed to respond to than officers would be.

14. Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S. Hamer

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

While I believe our officers have done a brilliant job of moving our meetings online during lockdown, I am concerned that the public are not able to attend or see recordings of our 'public' sittings. Is there any plan to change this should we need more online meetings?

Response by the Leader of the Council:

I concur that Officers have excelled in facilitating virtual Council and Committee meetings. Alongside that, and although it could not be achieved for our last Council meeting, they have been looking into means to facilitate the press and public in viewing and hearing our proceedings. Access to today's meeting has been provided on a trial basis to a small number of press representatives. If that is found to have worked consideration will be given to expanding the facility in case of further virtual meetings.

15. Executive Committee – 26th March, 2021

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Councillor C.L. Wells, "That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Friday, 26th March, 2021, be received by the Council."

Question put; Motion carried unanimously.

16. Pensions Committee – 24th March, 2021

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 Friday, 24th March, 2021, be received by the Council."

Question put; Motion carried unanimously.

17. Housing and Property Committee – 17th March, 2021

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, 17th March, 2021, be received by the Council."

Question put; Motion carried unanimously.

18. Regeneration and Community Committee – 16th March, 2021 – Clauses A1 to A13

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 Clauses A1 to A13 inclusive of report of meeting held on Tuesday, 16th March, 2021, be received by the Council."

Question put; a vote was taken 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 A.J. Bentley, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr F. Horning, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **16**

Against: Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – **1**

Motion carried.

19. Regeneration and Community Committee – 16th March, 2021 – Clause C14

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 Clause C14 of report of meeting held on Tuesday, 16th March, 2021, be received, approved and adopted by the Council."

Question put; a vote was taken 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 A.J. Bentley, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr F. Horning, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **16**

Against: Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner – **1**

Motion carried.

20. **Environmental Services Committee – 15th March, 2021 – Clauses A1 to A13**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor F. Horning, seconded by Councillor Miss N.A. Byron, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A13 inclusive of report of meeting held on Monday, 15th March, 2021, be received by the Council.”

Question put; Motion carried unanimously.

21. **Environmental Services Committee – 15th March, 2021 – Clause C14**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor F. Horning, seconded by Councillor Miss N.A. Byron, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in Clause C14 of report of meeting held on Monday, 15th March, 2021, be received, approved and adopted by the Council.”

Amendment moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Councillor Mrs C.E. Crawley, “That the Council requests the Committee to come forward with a programme to install lights in all adopted lanes and that any requests for unadopted areas be reported to Environmental Services Committee for consideration.”

Amendment Motion put; a vote was taken 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 S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **15**

Against: Councillors; Mr A.J. Bentley and Mr F. Horning – **2**

Motion carried.

22. **Adjournment and Resumption**

The meeting adjourned at 5.50pm and resumed at 6.05pm with the same Members and Officers present.

IN PRIVATE

23. **Standing Order 39 – Questions – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner**

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner submitted ten questions for response by the Leader of the Council. The questions and responses were noted on the minutes.

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner submitted supplementary questions on questions two and three. The questions and responses were noted on the minutes.

24. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor D. Watson**

Mr Councillor D. Watson submitted two questions for response by the Leader of the Council. The questions and responses were noted on the minutes.

Mr Councillor D. Watson submitted a supplementary question on question eleven. The question and response were noted on the minutes.

25. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S. Hamer**

Mr Councillor S. Hamer submitted eight questions for response by the Leader of the Council. The questions and responses were noted on the minutes.

Mr Councillor S. Hamer submitted supplementary questions on questions fifteen and seventeen. The questions and responses were noted on the minutes.

26. **Executive Committee – 26th March, 2021**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Councillor C.L. Wells, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Friday, 26th March, 2021, be received by the Council.”

27. **Standing Order 9**

During discussion The Mayor drew attention to the provisions of Standing Order 9, a vote to continue after 6.30pm to consider the outstanding business was taken, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Mrs R. Chatel, Mr I.J.G Clague, Mr D.W. Christian, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr F. Horning, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **11**

Against: Councillors; Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs H. Callow, Mr S.R. Pitts, Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela – **6**

Attendance

Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts submitted his apologies and left for the remainder of the meeting at 6.35pm.

28. **Executive Committee – 26th March, 2021 Continued**

Question put; a vote was taken 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 S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr F. Horning, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **14**

Against – Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner and Councillor Ms K. Angela – **2**

Motion carried.

29. **Pensions Committee – 24th March, 2021**

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 Friday, 24th March, 2021, be received by the Council.”

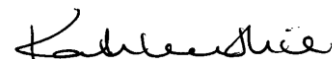
Question put; Motion carried unanimously.

30. **Housing and Property Committee – 17th March, 2021**

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 private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 17th March, 2021, be received by the Council.”

Question put; Motion carried unanimously.

The Council rose at 7.10pm.



Town Clerk & Chief Executive