



Borough of Douglas

Town Hall,

Douglas,

11th November, 2020

At a MEETING of the COUNCIL of the BOROUGH OF DOUGLAS, duly convened and holden at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, the 11th day of NOVEMBER, 2020, in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, within the TOWN HALL, at which Meeting the following Members were present, that is to say: -

The Mayor

MR COUNCILLOR JONATHAN JOUGHIN, JP

Councillors

Miss N.A. Byron

Mrs H. Callow

Mr S.R. Pitts

Mrs R. Chatel (from 2.40pm)

Mr I.J.G. Clague, MBE

Mr D.W. Christian, MBE, JP

Mrs C.E. Crawley

Mrs C.L. Wells

Mr A.J. Bentley

Mr S. Hamer

Mr D. Watson

Mr F. Horning

Mr R.H. McNicholl

Mr J.E. Skinner

Ms K. Angela

Mrs E.C. Quirk

Ms J. Thommeny

Apologies for absence were submitted by the Director of Environment and Regeneration and for late attendance by Councillor Mrs R. Chatel.

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

1. **Minutes – 14th October, 2020**

The minutes of the monthly Council meeting held on Wednesday, 14th October, 2020, were approved and signed.

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

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

The wooden mast recently removed from Derby Square was originally a ship's mast and had both historical and nautical interest value.

What date was the mast last inspected and found to be unsafe?

What date was it removed from Derby Square?

Prior to removal when was the mast last inspected and the last time there was any maintenance carried out including the application of any exterior preservative or varnish?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

The mast was found to be unsafe when inspected on 29th October, 2020, and removed on 30th October ahead of forecast high winds and storms.

The structure is on the asset register and is inspected according to a schedule. Maintenance was undertaken in June 2020 and before that January 2019. The mast itself has been coated with a protective application, however, the rot on this occasion was found mostly below ground and rose upward (this happened approximately 25 years ago also). Similarly there was rot around the area where the cables and chains are connected to the mast. When looking to repair the mast, a possible solution to these areas of rot will be investigated.

Supplementary Question:

Is there sufficient length of the mast remaining to be put back, are there any plans to replace the mast with anything similar and has the weather vane been damaged beyond repair?

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

Thank you Mr Mayor, I don't know the answer to any of those questions but I will find out and circulate to all Members.

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

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

1. *In each of the past five years how many complaints regarding damp in Council owned properties have been received from tenants to the Housing Department and how many, if any, are outstanding?*
2. *What is the average response time to property complaints received from tenants in Council properties?*

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

1. *No complaints have been received through the Council's formal complaint system in relation to dampness in housing properties. However, in total 1031 enquiries have been made in relation to dampness during the five-year period. These were all investigated and reported upon, and where required, action taken. It is important to place that total figure in the context of a total 20,296 enquiries received about housing repairs.*

The breakdown for each year is:

*2015 – 40 *from November 1st to December 31st*

2016 – 260

2017 – 179

2018 – 215

2019 – 166

*2020 – 171 *from January until November 1st*

These figures are made up of the following enquiry categories

- *Damp*
- *Condensation*
- *Ingress*
- *Insulation*

2. *Response time for initial examination is dependent on the evaluation of the task and is based upon the risk to the tenant and property. These response times are defined as :-*
- *Emergency – 24 hours*
 - *Urgent – 7 days*
 - *Routine - 28 days*

An example of an Emergency repair would be a burst pipe that is causing water damage or loss of power.

The Housing Department is measured against the success of these defined response times quarterly and this is reported to the Housing and Property Committee and the Department of Infrastructure.

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

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

1. *Was the Leader aware that similar to another local authority area the Official Poll Cards for the recently held Derby Ward by-election contained information relating to House of Keys Elections?*
- Who was responsible for ensuring that the text and information printed on the card was correct?*
- Were any proofs of Poll Cards sent to Council Officers to ensure they were correct?*
- Who was responsible for ensuring that all the information on the card was correct?*
- Who was responsible for sending out the cards to the electorate?*
- Who was responsible for printing the cards?*
2. *What dialogue has taken place between officers of the Department of Infrastructure and the Council regarding the Department's Policy and introduction of 20mph speed limit in Douglas residential areas to date?*

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

1. *I am aware that the poll cards issued in connection with the recent Derby Ward Bye Election carried an error in that a heading above the text referred to "House of Keys Election" instead of "Derby Ward Bye Election". However that was not material to the content of the card which detailed the polling stations and the number of vacancies, and which was accurate.*
- It is the Council's responsibility to ensure accuracy and to have the cards printed and sent. Proofs were provided and checked by several officers without the error being picked up. The officer overseeing the process has accepted responsibility for the error and taken steps to ensure it will not happen again.*
- The situation was very different to that of our neighbouring authority where there had been misleading information about the number of vacancies within the text of the card.*
2. *None.*

Supplementary on Question 2:

Following a serious accident involving a motor vehicle and a teenage pedestrian on a zebra crossing does the Leader agree that a default 20mph speed limit in all and particularly older residential areas within the Borough should be pursued with the Department of Infrastructure as a matter of urgency?

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

"Thank you Mr Mayor, I wouldn't necessarily agree with what the Councillor is saying that there should be a default 20mph speed limit I think that debate is still to be had. I can recall when the first 20mph speed limits were brought in on all our residential estates and we all had the pleasure of putting the speed humps in and the 20mph signs put up on loops and the humps became damaged and broken and some of the signs disappeared, they were never enforced, the signs weren't replaced and the speed humps never repaired so they were never a success on the estates at all.

The accident that the Member is referring to, I would say is a main route through Douglas rather than a residential area, but I do agree that this is something which should be pursued by the Department of Infrastructure. Members will recall that the 15 year plan for Douglas has been sent out by the Department of which we feel that there had been next to no consultation with this Council. A briefing note is being done on the 15 year plan to go out to all Members of which we will be asking Members for some feedback and I would say that is a perfect opportunity for any Members who feel this item should be pursued to put it in their feedback and then we can take it forward through the relevant Committee onto the Department of Infrastructure. Thank you Mr Mayor."

5. **Standing Order 39 – Question – Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts**

Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts asked the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

How many notices/letters have been issued to tenants for each of the past three years for the following;

1. *Anti-Social Behaviour*
2. *Rent Arrears*
3. *Drug Convictions*
4. *Other Issues*

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

Antisocial behaviour:

59 warning letters sent in total, the number sent in each year:

2017 = 33

2018 = 5

2019 = 7

2020 = 14

10 Notices to Quit issued for antisocial behaviour, the number sent in each year:

2017 = 6

2018 = 0

2019 = 2

2020 = 2

Rent Arrears

6212 Rent arrears letters

2017 = 1855

2018 = 2426

2019 = 1667

2020 = 264

517 Notice To Quit letters due to rent arrears

2017 = 161

2018 = 194

2019 = 14

2020 = 22

In 2017, 546 letters were sent to tenants who were paying weekly in arrears to encourage them to pay in advance.

Drugs Convictions

These are included in Antisocial Behaviour.

Other Issues

953 Letters that relate to more Council Tenant conduct issues i.e. poor condition of garden, dog fouling, waste management, parking issues etc.

2017 = 280

2018 = 256

2019 = 231

2020 = 186

Supplementary Question:

How many in each case have been followed by a repossession notice

1. *Anti-social behaviour*
2. *Rent arrears*
3. *Drug Convictions*

4. *Other issues*

Reply by the Chair of the Housing and Property Committee:

“Thank you Mr Mayor, I wonder whether Mr Councillor Pitts could be more specific as to which case he is referring perhaps outside of the Public Council meeting to avoid a breach of confidentiality. I am sure that we are all aware that the systems we are working on are not easy to navigate and finding the answer to the question is not straightforward and will take up an awful lot of time for officers and I am not massively convinced that it is a good use of officer time, if there is something specific about a specific case that you would like answering I would be more than happy to sit with an officer and go through it with him.”

6. **Standing Order 41 – Urgent Business Question – Mrs E.C. Quirk**

My question concerns the removal of the mast in the centre of Derby Square, an iconic landmark in a conservation area of Douglas.

I want to ask why the decision to remove the mast because it was reported dangerous was not placed in front of the Regeneration Committee.

Reply by the Chair of the Regeneration and Community Committee:

“Very similar answer as to what Councillor Skinner has already asked about the mast on Derby Square, I was told the day before the same as the answer in Councillor Skinners, that the mast was dangerous and the next day there was going to be high winds and storms and we were shown photographs of the rot at the base of this mast. To me it is a great pity that we weren’t informed before if there had been any way and certainly I think it could have been dealt with in a better way, if all Members of the Regeneration had been informed that this was going to happen, I don’t think that they were so I am very disappointed in that respect and I totally agree with Councillor Skinner we need to know what is left of this mast and is it going to be replaced I also asked that question before and have not received any answer I think something needs to be put back there and I think we need a full report on this because it happened far too quick, thank you Mr Mayor.”

7. **Executive Committee – 30th October, 2020 – Clauses A1 to A10**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A10 inclusive of report of meeting held on Friday, 30th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

8. **Executive Committee – 30th October, 2020 – Clause C11**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clause C11 of report of meeting held on Friday, 30th October, 2020, be received, approved and adopted by the Council”

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

9. **Pensions Committee – 28th October, 2020**

Motion moved by Councillor Ms K. Angela, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Pensions Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Wednesday, 28th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

10. **Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee – 8th October, 2020**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Thursday, 8th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

11. **Housing Committee – 21st October, 2020**

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs C.E. Crawley, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Wednesday, 21st October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

12. **Regeneration and Community Committee – 20th October, 2020**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts, seconded by Councillor Mrs H. Callow, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Tuesday, 20th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

13. Environmental Services Committee – 19th October, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in report of meeting held on Monday, 19th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

14. Adjournment and Resumption

The meeting adjourned at 4.47pm and resumed at 5.05pm with the same Members and officers present.

IN PRIVATE

15. Executive Committee – 30th October, 2020 – Clauses A1 to A6 and A8 to A10

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Executive Committee, as contained in Clauses A1 to A6 and A8 to A10 inclusive of private report of meeting held on Friday, 30th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

During discussion of the item Mr Councillor D.W. Christian advised that Clause A7 had subsequently been withdrawn from the agenda.

Question put on amended Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs H. Callow, Mr S.R. Pitts, Mrs R. Chatel, Mr I.J.G Clague, Mr D.W. Christian, Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr 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, the Mayor – **17**

Against: Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl – **1**

16. Pensions Committee – 28th October, 2020

Motion moved by Councillor Ms K. Angela, seconded by Mr Councillor F. Horning, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Pensions Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 28th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

17. Attendance

Mr Councillor J.E. Skinner and Councillor Mrs E.C. Quirk submitted their apologies for the remainder of the meeting and left at 6.00pm.

18. Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee – 8th October, 2020

Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Eastern District Civic Amenity Site Joint Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Thursday, 8th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

19. Housing Committee – 21st October, 2020

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs C.L. Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs C.E. Crawley, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Housing Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Wednesday, 21st October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

During discussion of the item and before the following vote Mr Councillor F. Horning submitted his apologies for the remainder of the meeting and left at 6.25pm.

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

20. Standing Order 9 – Duration of Meeting

The Mayor drew attention to the provisions of Standing Order 9. Motion moved by Mr Councillor D.W. Christian, seconded by Councillor Ms J. Thommeny, “That the Council continue after 6.30pm to consider the outstanding business.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs H. Callow, Mrs R. Chatel, Mr I.J.G Clague, Mr D.W. Christian, Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr A.J. Bentley, Mr S. Hamer, Mr D. Watson, Mr F. Horning, Mr R.H. McNicholl Mr J.E. Skinner, Ms K. Angela, Mrs E.C. Quirk, Ms J. Thommeny, the Mayor – **17**

Against: – Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts – **1**

21. **Regeneration and Community Committee – 20th October, 2020**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor S.R. Pitts, seconded by Councillor Mrs H. Callow, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Regeneration and Community Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Tuesday, 20th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

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

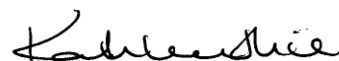
22. **Environmental Services Committee – 19th October, 2020**

Motion moved by Mr Councillor R.H. McNicholl, seconded by Councillor Miss N.A. Byron, “That the minutes of proceedings of the Environmental Services Committee, as contained in private report of meeting held on Monday, 19th October, 2020, be received by the Council.”

Question put on Motion, a vote was taken electronically, and there voted **For** the Motion, Councillors; Mr S.R. Pitts, Mrs H. Callow, Miss N.A. Byron, Mrs C.E. Crawley, Mr S. Hamer, Mr R.H. McNicholl, Ms J. Thommeny, Ms K. Angela – **8**

Against, Councillors; Mr I.J.G. Clague, Mrs R. Chatel, Mr D.W. Christian, Mrs C.L. Wells, Mr D. Watson, Mr A.J. Bentley, the Mayor – **7**

The Council rose at 6.50pm.



Town Clerk & Chief Executive