

Proposed Arrangements

1. DURATION OF ARRANGEMENTS

- These arrangements shall remain in force until the end of July but may be reviewed by Council or the Policy & Resources Committee, or by the Chief Executive with the agreement of group leaders at any time.
- If any decisions need to be taken during the summer recess, they will be dealt with either using Officer Urgency Powers or by setting up an urgency sub-committee as appropriate, and using the same proposed arrangements as agreed below

2. Full Council Meetings

- The annual Council meeting and the one in July are to be held, but as a voluntary reduced attendance meeting at Hove Town Hall.
- The numbers attending will be limited to the minimum necessary for the quorum to hold a legal meeting. This is currently 14 and the seats are to be shared between the different groups in proportion to the number of seats each group has at Council and the Independent Members.
- The party split in terms of seats shall be Green 5, Labour 5, Conservative 3 and Independents 1.
- The above arrangements shall be voluntary and, should there be no agreement, Officers will have to identify an alternative venue as neither Hove Town Hall nor Brighton Town Hall can accommodate 54 Councillors and key Officers.
- Groups are encouraged to set up a substitute panel of members from their Group who can “stand in” if any Councillors are unable to attend for health or other reasons.

3. Policy and Regulatory Committees

- All Policy and Regulatory Committees, subcommittees and hearing panels will take place with the minimum number to satisfy the quorum. For a committee of 10, it is 3. A breakdown on the allocation of seats is attached as Appendix 4 to the report.
- An indicative list of the meetings coming up between 13 May and the end of July is attached as appendix 5 for information.
- Given the specialist quasi-judicial nature of its role it is not proposed to reduce the number of attendees at planning committee. Attendance at the Health and

Wellbeing Board needs to be agreed with the CCG and other attendees. This will be finalised before the first meeting on 27 July.

4. Precautionary Measures to Minimise Risk to Health

As part of the plan to minimise risk to health and safety, and having taken public health and health and safety advice the following measures , it is proposed to put in place the following arrangements:

- Anyone entering the meeting venue will be required to wear a mask. The Chief Executive, after taking advice from public health officers, may issue guidance about the appropriate masks to wear. There will be spare masks available in case they are needed because the mask that a person has does not comply with council standards. The minimum mask standards will be circulated in advance, but will most likely require ii R type masks or transparent masks.
- All those attending will be expected to have undergone a Lateral Flow Test for Covid with a negative result. Those attending will be supplied with test devices or they could collect them from the Customer Centre at Hove Town Hall. Members may have administered tests at authorised chemist shops if they prefer. There will also be a facility at Hove Customer Centre for an administered test until the end of June 2021
- Every effort shall be made to ensure that the meeting venue is sufficiently ventilated. All doors, including the entrance and exit doors and backdoor to the outside will be kept open with security presence as necessary
- The entry and exit routes and social distancing will be marked with signs and where possible people will be asked to use different entrance and exit routes.
- The arrangements will take account of equalities implications and every effort will be made to ensure reasonable adjustments are made when needed. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken and all actions implemented before the first meeting. These will include making reasonable adjustments, including, for example, people unable to hear masks for health reasons.

5. Officer attendance

- Officers, with the exception of the relevant Executive Director, the Legal Adviser and Decision support officer, shall join the meeting of Council, committee or sub-committee only remotely, unless specifically required to attend in person by the Chair or Executive Directors. Officers will follow risk assessments that are already rolled out as standard practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff.

6. Attendance of Co-optee and Standing Invitees

- It is expected that attendance by co-optees and standing invitees will be reduced by agreement with the co-optees or standing invitees.
- Voting co-optees will be expected to be present at the meeting in person. Non voting co-optes and Standing Invitees will be able to join remotely subject to any legal advice to the contrary.

7. Attendance by the Public and the Press

- The government's guidance on local authority meetings refers to local authorities having a legal obligations to ensure that members of the public have access to most of their meetings.
- For physical meetings, the government guidance actively encourages local authorities to continue to provide remote access until at least 21 June, at which point it is anticipated that all restrictions on indoor gatherings will have been lifted in line with the Roadmap. However, it is for individual local authorities to satisfy themselves that they have met the requirements
- The High Court case on local authority meetings considered the issue of public attendance and ruled that the public should be allowed to attend in person but the numbers may be restricted based on health risks.
- Given the above, and having regard to the health risks and advice received, the Council will make a facility for limited public attendance (currently expected to be between 5 and 7.) The Chief Executive and the Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law will be authorised to determine the numbers subject to consulting with the Chair and Public Health.
- Members of the public presenting questions, petitions, deputations or other representation will be allowed to attend in person in cases where there is no alternative reasonable arrangement. Those attending the meeting to make presentations will need to leave at the end of their item unless they have secured a seating in the public gallery.
- Seating available in the public gallery will be allocated by prior booking and a ticketing system will be put in place.
- A space will be made available for one member of the press. Member of the press will also be able to join meetings via the MS Teams system as now.

8. Reducing length of meetings

- In accordance with government and our own public health guidance, every effort will be made to reduce the length of time taken at meetings.
- This includes limiting items coming to meetings only to what is essential, offering those who ask questions the option of a written response. guidance from Public Health, assessments can be made for the duration that these arrangements are in place as to the necessity and time sensitivity of items
It is suggested that members work constructively to help reduce the length of time for meetings in order to minimise exposure for this period (and should there be support, a guillotine could be considered after a set time.)
- A suggested criteria for the selection of items for inclusion on the agenda is attached as Appendix 3.
- To support continuation of council business but minimise the need for meetings, government guidance also recommends use of officer delegated powers which are referred to below.

9. Delegations to Officers

- Subject to first consulting with relevant Group Spokespersons, Executive Directors shall have enhanced delegated authority to make decisions on matters related to their area of responsibility. This is in line with government advice and reflects the need to reduce the need for and duration of meetings.
- Executive Directors will consult the committee spokesperson from each political group to inform any decisions around whether to use the enhanced delegated authority in cases that would, in the past, have come to the committee. However it is considered essential that oversight and scrutiny still continues during the relevant period.
- A flowchart setting out this proposed decision making route and member oversight is set out as a guide.
- To facilitate Consultation with members of all groups, such consultation may take place during committee pre-meet, or separately if necessary.
- If spokesperson of a Group objects to the decision being taken by an officer and there is no power under the current scheme for officer delegations for officer to make the decision, it shall be referred to the relevant committee for decision.

- To comply with legal requirements such delegation shall be unfettered and, although the Officer is required to consult with Group Spokespersons, he/she shall not be obliged to follow the views of the consultees on the substantive decision.
- The above delegations require the approval of Policy & Resources Committee and it is proposed to take this to the 13th May P&R meeting.

10. Facilitating the tabling of amendments and Motions

- In the interests of facilitating a smooth and speedy dispatch of Council business and given the reduced attendance, Members will be expected to support the tabling of amendments by formally seconding it for the purposes of enabling it to be tabled but without prejudice as to how they may vote.

11. Working Groups and Non-Decision-Making Panels

- Given that these are not governed by legislation, it is proposed to continue to hold these meetings virtually for the duration of these arrangements

12. General Authority to Take Steps Necessary to Ensure Health & Safety and Operational Practicability

- The Chief Executive is authorised to make decisions regarding venue, time of meetings, any IT facility and any other measures (such as issuing guidance regarding social distancing, security etc) as he considers necessary in order to secure the health and safety of those attending.

13. A flowchart

A flowchart outlining the Officer decision-making route under the proposed additional powers is attached as appendix 4 for information for information.

