



**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL
18 MAY 2020**

Agenda No

10

Responsible Officer: Helen Ball - Town Clerk

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE & CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLND & WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

Purpose of Report

1. To inform members of the publication of the new Regulations;
2. To consider impact of those Regulations on business of Council

Report

On 23 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced a series of measures placing the country in lockdown. One of those measures restricted groupings of individuals outside a domestic household.

Members had previously become anxious about meeting and provisions were made for Full Council to take place on 16th March to enable Councillors to meet with adequate distancing.

Provisions were put in place at that meeting to ensure business of Council could continue without the need for meetings.

On 4 April the above Regulations came into force allowing the following:

- Council Meetings to be held virtually rather than all councillors having to be present, subject to various conditions;
- Suspension of the Annual Meeting of Council

The above have a number of implications for Council

Full Council Meetings

Council meetings can resume in a virtual format. There are a number of conferencing media bit given the Council pays for Microsoft 365 packages for all Councillors and Staff this media would seem appropriate.

Staff have been exploring the ability to present in Microsoft Teams and whilst it does have its restrictions it can operate virtual meetings which conform with the requirements on the Regulations.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That Full Council be convened on the following dates:

Monday 29th June 2020

Monday 14th September 2020

Monday 16th November 2020

Monday 25th January 2021

Monday 22nd March 2021

Committee Meetings

During recent discussions with the Group Leaders it was first suggested that Council Meetings should be limited to meetings of Full Council. The Chairman of Finance & General Purpose Committee was however keen to convene meetings of F&GP. On discussions with the Chairmen of both Planning and Recreation & Leisure Committee, they would wish to follow suit. There will have to be further work to facilitate meaningful meetings, particularly Planning which does involve switching between the Town Council's Website, the Planning Portal and Google Maps; Teams does not work well in toggling between such applications. Details of the proposed Meeting Schedule which was due to be presented to Annual Council is attached.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk explore the logistics of holding Virtual Committee Meetings with the Chairmen of the Standing Committees and that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to convene any Virtual Committee Meetings in conjunction with the relevant Committee Chairman in order for that Committee to discharge any functions.

Annual Council (Mayor Making)

The Regulations suspends the need for Annual Council in May 2020, deferring any future decisions to the Annual Meeting in May 2021. This in effect means:

- Councillor Phil Gillam continues as Mayor until 2021
- Councillor Burgess continues as Deputy Mayor until 2021
- Membership & Chairmen of Standing Committees as elected in May 2019 continue until 2021
- Membership on Outside Bodies as agreed in May 2019 continue until 2021
- Bank Signatories agreed in May 2019 continue until 2021
- Standing Orders & Financial Regulations would be next reviewed in May 2021

Discussions have taken place with the Mayor & Deputy Mayor regarding the Mayoralty and the fact that Councillor Gillam hasn't fulfilled some of his Mayoral activities (like Mayor's Awards).



Councillor Burgess wouldn't be able to benefit from attendance in some of the traditional summer events as all have been cancelled. They have looked to potentially changing over in November 2021 with Councillors Burgess (subject to being re-elected in the May 2021 elections continuing until May 2022).

Discussions with Group Leaders has suggested that there is a collective willingness to maintain the status quo on Committee Membership despite recent changes in political make-up of the parties. Committees work well together.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That provision be made for election of a new Mayor in November 2020**
- (ii) That existing Committee Membership & Chairmanship continue until May 2021**
- (iii) That existing External Membership continue until May 2021**
- (iv) That existing Bank Signatories continue until May 2021**