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EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting held on Thursday 04 June 2020 at 6.00 pm.

Under Regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the meeting was held virtually. Members of the public were able to view the virtual meeting via the District Council's website at www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk or via our YouTube channel.

PRESENT

Councillor Garry Purdy - In the Chair

Councillors Sue Bull, Paul Cruise, Graham Elliott, Chris Furness, Clare Gamble, Susan Hobson and Claire Raw.

Paul Wilson (Chief Executive), Sandra Lamb (Director of Corporate Services), Tim Brand (Director of Regulatory Services), Karen Henriksen (Director of Resources), Ashley Watts (Director of Community & Environmental Services), Steve Capes (Director of Regeneration and Policy), Giles Dann (Economic Development Manager), Rob Cogings (Director of Housing), Sally Rose (Waste & Recycling Contract Manager), Jim Fearn (Communications and Marketing Manager) and Jackie Cullen (Committee Assistant).

The Chairman called for a minute's silence in respect of the death of George Floyd in America.

363/19 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED

(unanimously)

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Emergency Committee held on 21 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

364/19 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In line with the Council's temporary suspension of direct public participation the following questions were submitted in writing:

From Kate Gard Cooke, Matlock Bath via email (also on behalf of CLIMB (CLimate MatlockBath))

Regarding allocation of Covid19 emergency support grants to businesses

I have concern for a just recovery in Derbyshire and more widely from both Covid19 and climate change emergencies. Will the council make choices consistent with its declaration of climate emergency one year ago in its choices of businesses to receive emergency funding support grants, by prioritising businesses which directly address both emergencies in their business to receive grants, or by attaching conditions which do so, to grants made to businesses which do not?

The following response was given by Councillor Garry Purdy:

- The District Council is following the guidance laid out by the Government. This sets out the national priorities for the Discretionary Grant Fund to be
 - Small and micro businesses;
 - Businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs (in properties of a certain size);
 - Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- The aim of this Fund is immediate business survival.
- Along with partners in Derbyshire, the District Council will in due course be planning for recovery, and in doing so we will, at that time, need to balance economic, social and environmental priorities.
- However, the grants we are concerned with today are to secure the short term survival of existing businesses and jobs in the face of the immediate Covid-19 crisis.
- The District Council does not consider it appropriate to place additional requirements upon business applicants at this unprecedented time.

From Dave Smith, Wardlow via email (3 questions) and also submitted by Councillor Clare Gamble:

1. In relation to the award of Government funding of £63,808 to the District Council to assist with the safe reopening of “High Streets”, can you tell me what discussion has taken place with Members, or is planned to take place, on priorities for this investment, given that this is a policy matter rather than purely operational; in the light of the issues recently experienced, can you confirm that Main Road in Hathersage will be considered as one of the priorities?

Councillor Garry Purdy advised that a report on this matter was to be considered by the Emergency Committee on 11 June.

2. At the last meeting it was stated that a more rigorous parking attendant profile would be present in hotspots. Can you confirm whether that took place, and state what action was taken?

Councillor Garry Purdy gave the following response:

At the last meeting, it was stated that there was to be an increased Police presence at expected hotspots and that Civil Enforcement Officers would also be patrolling. Those hotspots, most notably Matlock Bath and Bakewell, saw a higher than usual Police presence and a level of civil parking enforcement equivalent to that which we would normally deploy on a busy Bank Holiday

weekend. I'm pleased to report that parking remained fairly uneventful despite the high turnout of visitors, although there were areas of particular concern reported in adjoining districts, with serious parking and traffic congestion at Ladybower Reservoir and Harpur Hill in the High Peak, and Dovedale and Ilam in neighbouring Staffordshire Moorlands. Since the Bank holiday weekend NSL have continued to provide us with their full contractual level of Civil parking enforcement in our car parks, with a further commitment to enforce on-street hotspots at the direction of the Highway Authority.

3. Can you give any reason why the authority should not follow Gateshead's lead and stick with "stay home" messaging? Does the authority have any plans to lobby central government and MPs to get central government to change its exercise messaging to "stay local"? Does the authority plan to urge the police to use the powers the local MP, Sarah Dines, put in her press release to control visitor numbers? Has the authority contacted Sarah Dines to ascertain what these powers are?

Councillor Garry Purdy gave the following response:

From the start of the lockdown the District Council has used all its communications channels to urge visitors not to visit the Derbyshire Dales until local services are able to welcome them properly.

Our social media messages have to date reached almost 2 million people.

In the early weeks of the lockdown our campaign message was a very strong: "Don't Even Go There". This message alone reached a quarter of a million people via social media on the first weekend of the lockdown.

The Government's subsequent announcement of unlimited travel for day trippers has undoubtedly put pressure on areas such as ours and the national profile enjoyed by the Government's message to open the door to previously locked-down households is almost impossible to counter. Even a stay-away message from the Peak Park National Authority's chief executive to a BBC Breakfast TV audience of 5 million seemed to have no impact.

Since the Government's announcement our own messaging has softened to one of "Respect & Protect" our communities – appealing to visitors to avoid hotspots - and into last weekend all agencies and councils in Derbyshire, including the Chief Constable and all local NHS Trusts, signed a joint statement urging visitors to stay away until later in the year. Despite the widespread coordinated release of that statement, visitors came into the Dales regardless.

As Leader, I have strongly conveyed the views of the District Council to Government through our MP, the forum of the Local Government Association and the District Councils' Network and Government is aware of the issues unlimited travel is having on areas such as the Derbyshire Dales. The police also have clearly expressed the limit of their powers, which really extend to no more than issuing dispersal orders to tackle any groups of more than 6 people and issuing advice on social distancing. Other than this, police have no legal powers to do anything about breaches of social distancing.

365/19 – COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS: DERBYSHIRE DALES DISCRETIONARY GRANT FUND

The Committee considered a report requesting approval of a policy for allocating discretionary COVID-19 support grants to certain businesses in the Derbyshire Dales that used local and national priorities to determine grants from the limited funding provided by the Government.

The District Council was closely monitoring the advice and updates from Government regarding support for businesses in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The Government had set out a package of temporary and targeted measures to support businesses through this period of disruption and the District Council had therefore been able to entirely remove business rates for 2020/21 for a range of businesses. More than 2,500 Derbyshire Dales businesses eligible for COVID-19 small business grants had been paid over £29 million by the District Council to date. Information for local businesses was updated regularly on the Council's website:

<https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/services-business/business-support-events-funding/business-news>

The Derbyshire Dales Discretionary Grants Fund widened access to support for businesses struggling to survive due to the Coronavirus shut down but unable to access other Government COVID-19 related grant schemes.

The District Council received final guidance from the Government on 24 May for a fund of the order of £1.7m. However, this Discretionary Grant Fund allocation was likely to meet only a fraction of potential demand and was therefore likely to be rationed. As a result of this, the criteria would have to be very strict, as set out in the report.

Subject to Members' approval it was proposed to launch the COVID-19 Business Support Grants Derbyshire Dales Discretionary Grant Fund on Friday 5 June, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, with applications opening on Monday 8 June. Core eligibility criteria were set out in full in the Guidance attached as Appendix 1 to the report, with a proposed amendment to Section 16, as follows:

16. Following a review of take up after the first call deadline from businesses prioritised in section 13, the District Council may, at its discretion, consider applications received from eligible businesses not in the priority categories occupying property with a combined rateable value or annual rent of less than £20,000 ineligible for support from other central Government COVID related grants should sufficient funding remain available.

Then, in line with Government guidance and following verification and eligibility checks, officers would assess applications according to the criteria set out in the report.

Due to the strictly limited pot of funding available, a deadline for applications would be set to allow each application to be assessed fairly in line with other applications. The deadline for applications under the first call was set at 5pm Monday 22 June 2020, which gave a two week initial window for applications, with grants likely to be paid in July.

There would be an appeals process for non-award of grants; however there would be no appeals against the level of grant awarded.

An Equality Impact Assessment, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, had been undertaken and had found no key issues.

It was moved by Councillor Susan Hobson, seconded by Councillor Sue Bull and

RESOLVED That the COVID-19 Business Support Grants: Derbyshire Dales
(unanimously) Discretionary Grant Fund as set out in the report is approved for immediate launch, taking into account the amended Section 16 in the Guidance (Appendix 1 to the report) as shown above.

366/19 – GREEN WASTE SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee considered an updating report on the situation regarding the restoration of the garden waste collection service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the 21st May this year, Members approved the provision of funds for the hire of an extra Refuse Collection Vehicle, fuel and two waste collection operatives at a cost of £2,829 per week. However, due to a change in Serco's working practices that meant that a Council employed HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) driver would be required to share a cabin with two Serco employees, this was contrary to the Council's current working practice of one person per vehicle and was thus deemed an unnecessary risk, for the reasons set out in the report.

It was therefore recommended that the £800 per week the Council had aimed to save by providing a qualified HGV driver be used to hire an agency driver who would be risk-assessed and deemed a suitable replacement. This would be a temporary measure for an estimated six week period, as outlined in the 21st May report. The situation would be regularly reviewed by the Waste & Recycling Manager together with her counterpart at Serco, and the progress of the garden waste clear-up would be reported back to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team.

The Chairman requested that his thanks, and those of all Councillors, to all Officers who had been working tirelessly under difficult circumstances, be placed on record.

It was moved by Councillor Chris Furness, seconded by Councillor Sue Bull and

RESOLVED That funds are provided for the hire of a HGV driver to support
(unanimously) Serco in the reinstatement of the garden waste collection service on Monday 1 June 2020.

367/19 – OPERATIONAL UPDATE

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the District Council's phased return to services in response to the current pandemic. The Corporate Leadership Team had been working on a wide range of issues, including some that were due to be considered at the next Emergency

Committee Meeting, such as the re-opening of public toilets; Bakewell market stalls and the High Street Safety initiative which was being run in conjunction with Derbyshire County Council.

The Chief Executive then took questions from the floor, as follows:

Councillor Claire Raw:

- (1) How will the Council address residents' concerns of littering by visitors the Derbyshire Dales and Bakewell in particular?
- (2) Please provide clarity on the situation regarding the decision to evict the Travellers from the Bakewell Showground;
- (3) Will Councillors be involved in any decisions regarding the re-opening of public toilets?
- (4) Will the Council sign the petition to major supermarkets to prevent the sale of disposable barbeques which are being used irresponsibly, resulting in the destruction of wildlife habitats and damage to our district's ancient sites?

The Chief Executive advised that the amount of littering by visitors to the Derbyshire Dales the previous weekend was indeed unacceptable. The Council's Clean & Green team had worked all of the following day to remove 150 bags from the district's main parks and town centres. The Chief Executive advised that he would undertake further PR work over the weekend, including an interview with Radio Derby, to push the message that if you do visit, please respect the area and communities and take your litter home with you.

With regard to the Travellers, the decision to apply for eviction was an operational decision, in conjunction with the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies in Bakewell. The costs of the eviction proceedings would be met by the Council's existing budget.

The issue of re-opening public toilets was on next week's Emergency Committee Meeting agenda, when Members would be able to make a decision based on the Risk Assessments which had now been completed.

The Council had already given its name to the Peak District National Park's campaign to ban the sale of disposable barbeques.

Councillor Clare Gamble asked whether the District Council had written to the major supermarkets with a view to encouraging them not to sell disposable barbeques. The Chief Executive referred to his previous response and confirmed that the campaign was a combined effort over the whole of the Peak District. Councillor Gamble requested that the issue of disposable barbeques be put on next week's agenda for further debate.

Councillor Paul Cruise:

Councillor Cruise asked Councillor Garry Purdy, as Leader of the Council, whether he believed social distancing was still in place, particularly in the area's hotspots? Councillor Cruise also asked Councillor Purdy whether the Council was concerned about a second wave of the pandemic, and whether he felt it was time Government re-visited the guidance on this issue?

Councillor Purdy acknowledged that everyone had concerns over a second wave, however the police had no special powers to enforce social distancing and could only give advice. Pressure

was continually being put on Government through liaising with the appropriate Ministers, weekly DCN conferences, the East Midlands Councils conferences and our local MP.

Councillor Claire Raw:

Councillor Raw asked where the Travellers had been moved to and what was the situation in regard to a permanent site being found in terms of the Council's legal responsibility?

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that there was a tolerated site at Rowsley, to which the Travellers had been encouraged to move. An application for an eviction order from Bakewell Showground had been made in March, however this could not be enforced during lockdown. Members would be informed when a Court date was confirmed. The search for a permanent site was continuing, and the results would be brought back to Members in due course. In the meantime it had been reported that there had been an increase in itinerant travellers in the last week or two.

Councillor Sue Bull:

Councillor Bull reported that some businesses were using the Council's bins to deposit their waste, leading to over-full bins in the town centres; people were still converging on the countryside in too large a number; and rubbish and excrement were still being left.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the problem, but advised that the Council had limited littering patrols.

Councillor Claire Raw:

Councillor Raw commented that as a result of Dominic Cummings having flouted the rules, how could they be reinforced in the Derbyshire Dales? Councillor Raw also asked that the Chief Executive make a plea during his forthcoming Radio Derby interview that disposable barbeques be banned from sale.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he would do his best to put the message across, and advised that 12 businesses had already agreed not to sell any.

MEETING CLOSED 7.20PM

CHAIRMAN