



HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

I GIVE NOTICE THAT an online meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be held on 4 May 2020 at 11.00am, when the following items will be discussed:

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To receive minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23 March 2020, enclosed.
3. Matters arising, if any.
4. Declarations of interest (see enclosed).
5. To receive bank reconciliation and budget income and expenditure report to 31 March 2020 (attached).
6. To consider unused 2019/20 budgets (see enclosed).
7. To consider a Business Continuity Plan (see enclosed).
8. To consider post coronavirus recovery options.
9. To consider S106 projects/Hexham High Streets Heritage Action Zone.
10. To agree exclusion of the public during consideration of agenda item 11.
11. To consider a report from Hexham Community Partnership.
12. To agree a date for the next meeting of the Committee.
13. Any urgent matters at the Chairman of the meeting's discretion. (*Matters to be raised under this item should be written out (if possible) and given to the Chairman of the meeting or the Clerk before the meeting begins.*)

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
28 April 2020

Hexham Town Council
Council Office
St Andrew's Cemetery
West Road
Hexham
NE46 3RR
01434 609575
clerk@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk
H agenda 0520 FandGPCCommittee

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2020

666.	<p>PRESENT: Councillors R Hull, S Ball, C R Homer, T Cessford, J Ord and T Pearson.</p> <p>NB Only Councillor Ball attended in person (all other Councillors by video conferencing) so on 23 March the meeting had no legal standing. However, it was noted the Coronavirus Bill is currently passing through Parliament and which is due to receive Royal Assent on 26 March includes a provision to allow the Secretary of State to issue regulations effectively allowing local authorities to hold virtual meetings and doing away, for at least a temporary period, for the need for members to be physically present.</p>
667.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors T G E Gillanders and T Dodds.</p>
668.	<p>MINUTES of the meeting held on 26 February 2020, having been circulated, were AGREED.</p>
669.	<p>MATTERS ARISING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND PROTECTED BALANCE (minute 654b and action log refers). It was noted this is a fund manager, not a bank, and therefore not within the scope of the FSCS. However, it is managed with security as the primary objective, hence a AAA-rating.b) BANDSTAND SEATS (minute 657 and action log refers). It was noted that a response is pending.c) HEXHAM IN BLOOM (minute 657 and action log refers). It was noted that a response is pending.d) PUBLIC TOILETS (minute 663 and action log refers). It was AGREED to defer consideration of this matter.
670.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Councillors Ball and Pearson declared a non-pecuniary interest in one or more of the organisations requesting funding.</p>
671.	<p>FINANCIAL REPORT: The bank statement and account reconciliation together with the 2019/20 budget report to 29 February 2020 were received and accepted. Copies are attached to the minutes.</p>
672.	<p>S106 PROJECTS/HEXHAM HIGH STREETS HERITAGE ACTION ZONE: It was noted that the HSHAZ remains pending.</p>
673.	<p>ACTION PLAN 2020/21: The following plan was agreed to be recommended to Full Council.</p>

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2020/21

The actions marked with an * indicate actions that had been expected to be completed in 2019/20, and actions marked with a # are new and specific to 2020/21.

Action	Objective	Budget	Timescale
* Update the Welcome to Hexham signs	These are faded and some information is out of date.	2020/21 £3000 (reference 7170)	Quotes requested in March 2020.
* All Councillors to attend at least one training session	The Council's Training Policy notes, as a voluntary organisation, the Council values the time given by its Councillors to their community. The policy is aimed at maximising the rewards from that time by ensuring that Councillors understand and enjoy the role they undertake in their community and are properly equipped for it.	2020/21 £2000 (reference 6080)	
# Simplify burial fees	These are unnecessarily complex and repetitive.	N/A	To be considered by the P&I Committee in August
# Work towards Quality status	The Council gained the Foundation Award in October 2018. The Quality Award requires a Council to demonstrate it is at the forefront of best practice by achieving an excellent standard in community governance, community leadership and performance management.	N/A	
# Have the Cemetery gates and external doors, etc repainted	This is also part of the management plan submitted for the retention of the Green Flag Award.	From 2020/21 £12000 (reference 7380)	
# Consider some sort of marketing strategy relating to the Cemetery/	This is also part of the management plan submitted for the retention of the Green Flag Award.	N/A	

	consultation with Hexham residents				
	# Work with NCC and stakeholders in the town to develop a plan to regenerate the primary shopping area based on heritage led regeneration Specific HTC actions to be defined	The aim is to revitalise the central shopping area of the town and diversify possibilities using High Street Heritage Action Zone and NCC funding	Initial £20,000 in 2020/21 budget	Four year programme starting in Spring 2020.	
	# Research possible additional allotment sites	This is justified by the waiting list and is also part of the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan.	N/A		
	# Progress the Sustainability Action Plan	Following the Sustainability Policy adopted in September 2019, this action plan must be progressed and regularly reviewed.	2020/21 £3000 (reference tba)		
	# Consider the future need to develop the Cemetery	Consider any further action following the groundwater risk assessment carried out in 2019.	N/A		
	# Update the Town Plan to 2025		2020/21 £5000 (plus carry forward to be agreed)		
	# Plan to mark the Market Place 800 th Anniversary in 2022	Start developing a plan			
	# Consider the Festival of Britain 2021				
	# Consider the arrival of Hadrian anniversary in 2022				

	Retain the Green Flag Award for the Cemetery	The Cemetery was awarded this for 2018/19 and retained it in 2019/20. The aim now is to continue to promote it as well managed and maintained.	From 2020/21 £10000 (reference 5100)	Entry submitted in January 2020.	
	Further review the Hex-Press/ Council newsletter	Improvement needed in format and nature of Hex-press. The method of circulation also needs to be reviewed.	2020/2021 £1200 (reference 7840)	Discussions with HCP in 2020-2021.	
	Facilitate a Hexham Food & Drink Festival	To consider funding this as a precursor to the possibility of regular Produced in Northumberland markets.	2020/21 up to £5000 budget (reference 5130)	To be held in September 2020.	
	Arrange an Armed Forces Day celebration event	To take place on Saturday 27 th June.	2020/21 £3400 (reference tba)	Planning started In January.	
	Arrange Remembrancetide events in support of the RBL commemoration events	These are annual events.	2020/21 £2500 (reference 7800)	Start planning in July.	
	Arrange a new type of Christmas Lights Switch-On event in cooperation with other stakeholders in town to develop a more ambitious event	This is an annual event to promote community engagement.	2020/21 £500 (reference 7065)	Start planning in June/July.	
	Maintain Council links with Hexham in Bloom by having a Council representative on the committee	Support where possible. Examine possibility of a new input from Council	2020/21 £300 (reference 7850) NB Grant Aid of £1000 awarded for 2020/21		

	* Monitor and lobby Northumberland County Council regarding car parking facilities in Hexham	Present/expected loss of 500 long-term parking spaces in Hexham. Northumberland County Council need to provide 500 spaces asap. HTC actively engaged.		On-going	
	Support tourism	Make full use of the dedicated tourism budget.	2020/21 £10000 (reference 6096)		
	Promote the Council's Grant Aid scheme	14 applications were received in 2019 for 2020/21 (one long-term grant had been awarded in 2017).	2020/21 £14100 (reference 6050), £40000 (reference 6062) and £27000 (reference 6064)		
	Address public toilet provision in Hexham	The Town Council pays for the Sele toilets to remain open in winter.	2020/21 £2000 (reference 5120)		
674.	EXCLUSION of THE PUBLIC: It was resolved and AGREED in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, namely consideration of funding and confidential information, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded from the meeting and they were requested to withdraw.				
675.	FUNDING APPLICATIONS: These were considered and actions as listed in confidential note 675 were AGREED.				
676.	HEXHAM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: It was AGREED to defer consideration of this.				
677.	WIFI AND FOOTFALL TECHNOLOGY: It was AGREED to defer consideration of this.				
678.	VE75 PICNIC IN THE PARK: It was noted that this event has been cancelled. It was AGREED to pay for the climbing wall booked for the Armed Forces Day event from the 2019/20 budget subject to confirmation of a full refund if the event has to be cancelled.				
679.	The meeting was reopened to the public.				

680.	ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY, WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY: It was AGREED to recommend these policies to Full Council.
681.	DELEGATION: A system of delegation to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the council, was AGREED.
682.	BURIALS AT ST ANDREW'S CEMETERY: It was noted that only graveside services may be held as the Chapel is closed. It was further noted that only immediate family should attend and social distancing should be observed.
683.	CORONAVIRUS: It was noted that a virtual multi agency meeting had been held earlier today. It was AGREED it was useful to have a single point of contact for volunteers and that this would be maintained by the Town Council. It was further noted that Adapt (NE) will take requests for help and link these with the volunteers, that a press release will be issued tomorrow, and that the County Council has set up a phonenumber with staff managing a hub (Northumberland Communities Together) as an offshoot from its "one stop". Concerns regarding DBS checks and vulnerable groups were noted and it was AGREED to put £10000.00 aside from the Contingency budget for work relating to the Coronavirus.
684.	NEXT MEETING: It was AGREED that the next Committee meeting is to be arranged.

Action Log

Re-refer staff salaries to the Committee when there is a national agreement (minute 659)	Clerk
Refer the Action Plan to Full Council (minute 673)	Clerk
Arrange funding as agreed (minute 675)	Clerk
Arrange climbing wall payment as agreed (minute 678)	Clerk
Refer policies to Full Council (minute 680)	Clerk
Maintain a list of volunteers (minute 683)	Clerk/Admin Officer

Chairman

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 3 September 2012 Councillors must declare if they have a disclosable interest in any matters under consideration.

To do so Councillors must use one of the following statements:

1. "I have a disclosable pecuniary interest
in..... (for example) Agenda item 3,
Planning application number 13/1234".
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraphs 11&15 apply).

2. "I have a disclosable personal interest
in..... (for example) Agenda item 4,
Grant aid application by Hexham Youth Initiative
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraph 13 applies).

Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Code of Conduct regarding the definitions of (A) pecuniary interest and (B) other personal interest and their obligations when declaring any interest.

To ensure Councillors interests are correctly minuted please use one of the above statements when declaring an interest.

NB. Should a Councillor wish to take part in the consideration and voting on a matter or matters in which he/she has a disclosable interest then they may request a dispensation be granted to enable them to take part in the discussion and voting on it but at least 10 days' notice must be given for any dispensation request.

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 4 MAY 2020

The following budgets were unused in 2019/20:

Budget Heading	Reference	Explanation
Elections Reserve	5090	This has not been required.
Premises Reserve	5092	This has not been required.
Town Plan Development Reserve	5500	No costs were incurred in 2019/20 as plans were deferred dependant on HSHAZ proposals (the budget will be carried forward).
Risk Management/H&S	6070	No costs were incurred in 2019/20.
Local Council Award Scheme	6090	No costs were incurred in 2019/20.
Headstone Raft Foundations	7350	This has not been required.
Water/Business Rates	7390	Following a leak in the supply pipe in the field in 2017, use had been overestimated. Following this, meter readings from the golf club were provided in 2018 and the Council remains in credit.
Wydon Park Allotments	7030	No costs were incurred in 2019/20.
Street Signs	7170	Quotes for new designs were sought in early 2020 but, to date, no costs have been incurred (the budget will be carried forward).
Play Areas – Vandalism	7210	No costs were incurred in 2019/20.
Winter Maintenance	7211	No costs were incurred in 2019/20.
War Memorial Reserve	5096	This has not been required.

Notes on other significant variances in 2019/20:

Budget Heading	Reference	Explanation
Advertising	5000	Over budget as additional advert needed for the Admin Officer post.
Postage	5020	Under budget as most correspondence done by email (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Office Equipment	5040	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Partnership Working	5091	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Contingency	5100	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21 but to carry forward unspent 2019/20 budget).

Neighbourhood Plan	5600	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Staff Welfare	6010	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Staff Salaries and Pension Contributions	6020/6030	Under budget as delay in advertising new post (budget increased for 2020/21).
Travelling expenses	6035	Under budget.
Training	6080	Under budget as most training free (and postponed to 2020/21 due to Covid-19).
Professional Fees	6095	Under budget.
Tourism Support Fund	6096	Under budget as few applications received.
Personal Protective Equipment	7300	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Machines/Equipment – Fuel/Road Tax/Insurance	7310	Under budget.
Machines/Equipment – Renew/Replace	7315	Under budget as replacement tractor pending (budget reduced for 2020/21 but to carry forward unspent 2019/20 budget).
Non-Specific Expenses	7330	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Heat/light	7370	Under budget.
Premises – Repair/Maintain	7380	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Floodlights – Repair/Maintain	7450	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Town Clock	7460	Under budget as no repairs required.
Dene Park Allotments	7000	Under budget as only one skip paid for in 2019/20.
Quatre Bras Allotments	7020	Under budget as no expenses other than skip hire.
VMS Units	7160	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Play Areas Reserve	5094	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Website & IT	7830	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Newsletter	7840	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Town Twinning	7870	Under budget.
Mayor's Annual Reception	7070	Under budget (postponed due to Covid-19).
Hexham in Bloom (Council Expenses)	7850	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).
Flowerbeds and Tubs – Planting	7110	Under budget (budget reduced for 2020/21).

It is recommended that Full Council is asked to consider carrying forward the following budgets:

Budget Heading	Reference	Explanation
Contingency	5100	As the Council's main reserve (and as it was agreed at the 23 March meeting to reserve £10,000.00 from this budget for costs relating to Covid-19).
Tourism Support Fund	6096	Applications are likely to increase in response to loss of revenue relating to Covid-19.
Machines/Equipment – Renew/Replace	7315	As the tractor replacement required has not yet been purchased.
Street Signs	3000	As 2020/21 Action Plan.
Mayor's Annual Reception	7070	As the March 2020 reception had to be postponed, hopefully to be held in autumn instead.

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
April 2020

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 4 MAY 2020

The following draft Business Continuity Plan is attached for the Committee to consider and recommend to Full Council.

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Business Continuity Plan



Maintaining this document is the responsibility of: Jane Kevan, Town Clerk

This document is due to be reviewed: XX

The following premises are covered in this document:

Hexham Town Council Office
St Andrew's Cemetery
West Road
Hexham
Northumberland
NE46 3RR

Copies of this document can be found:

www.hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Description of Business

Hexham Town Council was established in 1974 and is, as a Parish Council, the first level of local government for the Hexham community. The Council delivers a variety of services such as the Cemetery, allotments, grant aid, play areas (including a skatepark and outdoor fitness equipment), Christmas lighting, planting at Hexham Abbey and some other areas of the town centre, Remembrance and other events, the provision of new public litter bins (except in County Council owned parks) and work with other organisations such as Hexham Community Partnership and Northumberland County Council. It is also working on a Town Plan and the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan is at the referendum stage.

Our Customers

The residents of Hexham, and those who work in and visit the town.

Role of the Councillors

Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their Wards. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.

In addition, Councillors:

- Are collectively the ultimate policy makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions
- Contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage citizen involvement in decision making
- Effectively represent the interests of their Ward and of individual constituents
- Respond to constituents' enquiries and representations, fairly and impartially
- Participate in the governance and management of the Council
- Maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics
- Serve the public interest and take decisions having regards to the interests of the whole local community
- Act as a responsible employer and ensure the safety of all staff.

Business Continuity Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to prepare our business in the event of extended service outages caused by factors beyond our control and to restore services to the widest extent possible in a minimum time frame.

Outcome

The outcome of this plan is to ensure that the business is able to maintain a good level of service for our customers.

Plan Objectives

- Serves as a guide for those implementing our business continuity plan
- Assists in avoiding confusion experienced during a crisis by documenting, testing and reviewing recovery procedures
- References and points to the location of critical data
- Provides procedures and resources needed to assist in recovery

Key Staff

If a disaster occurs key staff will be the Town Clerk, Administrative Officer and Operations Manager.

Staff Welfare

It must be recognised that an incident that results in the enacting of this plan may also cause additional pressures for staff. Staff members need to be given clear direction about the priorities of the business. Staff must be monitored more closely to ensure that their welfare is maintained.

Staff should be aware of what their role is when a major disruption occurs. Clear and concise communication with staff is pivotal to having an organised response. Staff must be made aware of what communication methods are going to be used so they can find out the latest information if they are going to be working from a different location than normal.

If the Mayor or Town Clerk suspect that staff members have suffered undue stress or even trauma from the business disruption they must consider providing assistance for those staff who have been affected.

Communicating with and by Staff

The Town Clerk will communicate with staff on all updates and news regarding any emergency incident.

All communication with the press will be through the Town Clerk but any interview will only be with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

Communicating with Councillors

The Town Clerk will, in the first instance, notify the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of any updates and news regarding an emergency incident followed by communication to all Councillors.

Communicating with and the Public

Communications with the public should be via the Town Council website, social media, local news outlets and the Town Council noticeboard.

Equipment

Both office staff have a work laptop to enable them to work away from the office if necessary. The Operations Manager has a work mobile phone and his number (07891 101236) is known to all staff. When needed, the office number (01434 609575) will be diverted to the Town Clerk's work mobile phone.

The backup system for the server is (to check with ICT). Technical support is provided by ICT Service Limited (0191 4162002, support@itcservice.co.uk).

Data Protection

When working from home, all data on work laptops must be protected in accordance with the Town Council's Data Protection Policy and working practices must be in line with GDPR. All connections by a work laptop to the internet, when away from the workplace, must be made using a secure password protected internet connection.

Scenario 1

Premises incident

A premises incident can include fire, flood or any other disaster that renders the Town Council office inaccessible.

Step 1: Evacuation of premises and safeguarding of staff, visitors and Councillors

In office hours:

Action	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Evacuate the building	Follow normal fire drill procedure	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Check evacuation is complete	Staff and visitor safety is the priority. Check everyone on site has been evacuated.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Verify if incident is real	If false alarm, resume business as normal	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Call emergency services	999	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Record details of any injuries sustained in the incident	If possible, use Accident Book kept on the shelf by the entrance door	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Alert staff, Councillors and visitors	Alert anyone due to arrive on-site of the incident	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Assess impact	Town Clerk or Admin Officer to discuss the scale of the incident with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and decide next steps	Town Clerk, Admin Officer

Outside office hours:

Action	Details	Responsible Person(s)
First person on site to notify Town Clerk/Admin Officer and Mayor	Do not enter the building	All staff
Call emergency services	999	All staff
Alert staff, Councillors and visitors	Alert anyone due to arrive on-site of the incident	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Assess impact	Town Clerk or Admin Officer to discuss the scale of the incident with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and decide next steps	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Alert Councillors	Alert all Councillors	Town Clerk, Admin Officer

Step 2: Business continuity

Critical Activity	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Phones	Staff to use work (or personal) mobile phones. Contact Onecom Ltd (03333 445501) to divert the office phone number to the Town Clerk's work mobile phone.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Internet	Staff to use home internet connections.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Inform Insurance company	Contact details: Came & Company, Blenheim House, 1-2 Bridge Street,	Town Clerk, Admin Officer

	Guildford, GU1 4RY (Local Account Executive is Richard Matthews Mobile – 07770 931 630 Office Tel: 01483 462 895)	
Post	Post should not need to be redirected: if the postbox on the office wall may not be used, post may be delivered to the postbox on the Cemetery Lodge instead.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Inform customers	If disruption is expected, inform customers via the website, social media, local news outlets and the Town Council noticeboard.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer

Scenario 2

Infrastructure incident

An infrastructure incident can include the loss of computer systems, telephones, internet access or power.

Step 1: Understand the extent of the loss

Infrastructure	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Phones	Contact phone provider (Onecom Ltd, 03333 445501) to ascertain outage extent.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Internet	Contact internet provider (ITC Service Ltd, 0191 4162002) to ascertain outage extent	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Mains power	Contact power provider (British Gas, 0330 100 0222) to ascertain extent of outage.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer

Step 2: Business continuity

Infrastructure	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Phones	Staff to use work mobile phones. Phone provider to forward office line to Town Clerk's work mobile.	Town Clerk
Internet	Office staff to use home internet connections.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
IT	Contact ITC Service Ltd if necessary.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Mains power	Office staff to work from home until power is restored.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Meetings	Move any scheduled meetings (or have them electronically) and advise Councillors and any other attendees.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Communication with Councillors	Ensure emails to Councillors are forwarded and other lines of communication are maintained.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Post	Attend relevant post box	Town Clerk, Admin Officer

Scenario 3

Staff incident

A staff incident can include a sudden family emergency, injury or other event which renders a key member of staff suddenly unable to work.

Step 1: Ensure no service interruption

Infrastructure	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Identify interchangeable staff	All members of staff should have at least one colleague who can perform their role, even if in a reduced capacity. Identify the relevant person and support them in carrying out business-critical activities.	All staff
Assess extent of loss	Identify whether the affected staff member's absence is likely to be temporary, longer-term or permanent. Keep in mind this may be a difficult period for the staff member and/or their family. NB A locum Clerk may be provided by Came & Company.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Longer term loss of staff	F&GP Committee to consider appropriate action.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer: report for F&GP Committee.

If the staff loss is temporary, support the member of staff filling the gap until the absent member of staff returns. If the absence is long-term or permanent:

Step 2: Business continuity

Critical Activity	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Recruit temporary or full-time replacement	Follow the standard recruitment procedure to find a full-time, part-time or fixed-term contract (as appropriate) replacement.	Town Clerk/Admin Officer F&GP Committee panel

Scenario 4

Pandemic

Covid-19 and the current situation in April 2020 is a major challenge to all due to severe restrictions on people's movements and only certain types of business being considered essential with key workers.

Step 1: Ensure no service interruption

Many local government services have been deemed essential. For Hexham Town Council this includes carrying out burials, Full Council and Committee meetings where necessary, grass cutting, and compliance with legislation such as audit requirements.

The Council is also responsible for responding to new regulations so, for example, closing its play areas, providing advice on allotments, and postponing or cancelling public events such as the planned VE75 Picnic in the Park and Armed Forces Day events.

Infrastructure	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Identify staff required	Depending on the work still being done, some staff such as the Cemetery Workers may temporarily only work part-time (furloughing is not an option as the Town Council's income is not affected). Consideration also needs to be given to any staff sent NHS/Government letters to stay at home as they have been identified as being at high risk (the Town Clerk is working entirely from home, the Admin Officer is working mostly from home but going in to the office daily for post and burials administration).	All staff Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Close office	Follow scenario 2 step 2 where relevant.	All staff Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Although temporary, this may vary depending on whether the situation is short-term, medium-term or becomes long-term.

Step 2: Business continuity

Critical Activity	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Keep up to date with legislation and advice	Note and respond accordingly. Monitor NCC response, NALC and SLCC advice. Keep Councillors updated.	Town Clerk/Admin Officer
Keep customers advised	Inform customers via the website, social media, local news outlets and the Town Council noticeboard.	Town Clerk/Admin Officer

Social implications/ consider additional response	Liaise with other organisations to, e.g., set up Hexham Community Together, coordinating volunteers and vulnerable residents requesting help.	Mayor and other Councillors, Town Clerk/Admin Officer
Town Council Budget	Consider potential effects on the budget such as financial aid required by local organisations and charities.	F&GP Committee, Full Council
Effect on Hexham	Consider the effects on the High Street and the loss of tourism. Refer to the Town Council's Action Plan.	F&GP Committee HSHAZ

Recovery Phase

The purpose of the recovery phase is to resume normal working practices for the whole organisation. Where the impact of the incident is prolonged, normal operations may need to be delivered under new circumstances (e.g. from a different building). Also, there is the possibility that online meetings may need to continue for many/all meetings if social distancing is extended and/or many Councillors or staff have to remain in isolation.

Action	Details	Responsible Person(s)
Agree and plan the actions required to enable recovery of normal working practices	Agreed actions will be detailed in an action plan and set against time scales with responsibility for completion clearly indicated.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Respond to any long-term support needs of staff	Depending on the nature of the incident, we may need to consider providing support services.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Publicise that there is now "business as usual"	Inform customers through normal channels that our business is operating as normal.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Carry out a debrief of the incident and complete a report to document opportunities for improvement and any lessons identified	This should be reviewed to ensure key actions resulting from the incident are implemented within designated time scales.	Town Clerk, Admin Officer
Review this continuity plan in light of lessons learned from the incident and the response to it	Implement recommendations for improvement and update this plan. Ensure a revised version of the plan is read by all staff.	Town Clerk, Operations Manager
Report to Finance & General Purposes Committee	Ensure Councillors are aware of any recommendations arising from a review of the incident.	Town Clerk

Maintenance and Review of Plan

Any staff changes which affect the plan should be addressed immediately.
The plan should also be checked and reviewed as follows:

- When there has been an incident which necessitates use of the plan, an incident report should be prepared and an assessment of the plan's performance should be carried out
- When there is a significant change in the way Hexham Town Council is run because of a change in legislation, etc the effects should be evaluated with respect to the plan
- Or after a maximum period of 3 years.

Any changes made as a result of a review should be reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee and approved by Full Council.