

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
15th March 2021 at 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones C Copleston S Goodchild M S Kennedy S Thorne	Chairman Substitute
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh Louise Senior	Corporate Services Manager Head of Democratic Services
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	K Wattingham	
Also present:	Councillors:	Y Farrell T McMahon	Part meeting Part meeting

11549 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Wattingham (Cllr Goodchild substituted)

11550 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11551 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

11552 OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Services Committee previously agreed to staff working from home until 7th May 2022 due to restrictions on movement and work arising from Covid.

Since this decision was made staff had continued to work from home providing email and telephone services to facilitate the work of the council. However, the council's reception had largely remained closed. There was a period when national restrictions enabled reception to be opened. This was secured through staff working on a rota basis and remained in place until restrictions were re-imposed.

The recent road map suggested by the government sets out a plan for the easing of restrictions from 12th April 2021 until 21st June 2021, providing that certain conditions were met. Staff were currently reviewing services to ensure that services were resumed in a safe way as soon as possible in accordance with national guidance.

Members were requested to consider the working arrangements during this transition period in particular in relation to the opening of Reception. To provide a face to face service to residents during this transition period and to continue to ensure staff safety, it was suggested that members consider the following:

12th April 2021 to 17th May 2021 – reception open 9am-5pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday with 2 staff members on a rota system

17th May 2021 to beginning of January 2022 – reception open 5 days 9am-5pm with 3 staff members on a rota system

Staff had been consulted on this possibility and were welcoming of the council being a considerate employer. As members were aware staff work under a flexi-time scheme, to accommodate this with this rota, staff will link in with others they were scheduled to work alongside to ensure that the office is open 9am to 5pm. Staff were also aware that they would be required to provide cover during periods of annual leave.

Members were supportive of a phased return that was in a safe and considered manner. It also supported the Town Council with their Vision to reduce their carbon footprint with fewer staff travelling to the council offices.

Members were advised that the arrangements post December 2021 would be revisited before Christmas 2020 and communicated with staff.

Members were in agreement with the proposed return based around the Governments roadmap.

Resolved: In accordance with government guidance to seek to re-open Reception as follows:

12th April 2021 to 17th May 2021 – reception open 9am-5pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday with 2 staff members on a rota system

17th May 2021 to beginning of January 2022 – reception open 5 days 9am-5pm with 3 staff members on a rota system

11553 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Staffing matter

Proposed by: Cllr Goodchild seconded by: Cllr Kennedy
Members for: 4 Members against: 0 Abstentions: 0

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Councillor Y Farrell and Councillor T McMahon left the meeting.

11554 STAFFING MATTERS

6.1 Members received a report, with resolutions, detailing this matter.

Members discussed the next steps of this staffing matter at length.

Resolved: To support the recommendations as detailed in the report.

Cllr D Jones left the meeting.

6.2 Members were advised that an additional staffing matter was requested to be discussed. Members received a report, with resolutions, detailing this matter.

Members discussed the next steps of this staffing matter at length.

Resolved: To support the recommendations as detailed in the report.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.36pm

Dated this day of

Chairman