

Title of Report	URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN QUARTER 4 2019/20	
Presented by	Councillor Richard Blunt Leader	
Background Papers	Council's Constitution Decision Record - Executive Arrangements - 19 March 2020 Decision Record – Executive Arrangements for Virtual Meetings – 8 April 2020 Record of decisions – 31 March 2020	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	Financial implications were taken into account by the Cabinet in reaching its decision. Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Legal implications were taken into account by the Cabinet in reaching the decisions. Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no staffing and corporate implications Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	In accordance with the Council's Constitution, to formally report that the Cabinet or individual Portfolio Holders have taken decisions, which are considered to be urgent and, if delayed, would be likely to cause serious prejudice to the Council's interests.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL NOTES THE REPORT.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Special Urgency Procedure in the Executive Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution states that, if the date by which an executive decision must be taken and the general exception Rule 16 cannot be followed, then the decision can only be taken if Cabinet has obtained the agreement of the relevant Scrutiny Chairman that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred. If the Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Committee is unable to act, then the agreement of the Chairman of the Council, or in his/her absence the Deputy Chairman will suffice.
- 1.2 On the 19 March 2020, due to the national situation regarding COVID-19, the Leader took the decision to change the arrangements for the exercise of executive powers which was made at Council on 21 May 2019 for a temporary period as follows:

Executive decisions are delegated to individual portfolio holders. These delegations will be as follows:

1. *In the first instance a decision will be made by the relevant portfolio holder*
2. *Should the portfolio holder be unavailable to act, then the decision will be made by any other member of the Cabinet.*

At the time of making the decision, the Leader stated that the arrangement would be kept under review.

- 1.3 On 4 April 2020 the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meeting and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“The Regulations”) were passed pursuant to S78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. These regulations enabled council meetings, including those of the Executive to be held remotely. Having discussed the matter with the Chief Executive the Leader decided to change the executive arrangements to reflect the fact that the regulations were in place but also to allow for individual cabinet member decision making as a contingency measure. It is the Leaders strong preference for decisions to be made by Cabinet, collectively and the other arrangements should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

The arrangements will be as follows:

1. *Executive decisions shall be made by Cabinet, sitting as a collective body where that is practicable.*
2. *Where Cabinet is not able to meet, the Executive decisions will be made by the relevant portfolio holder.*
3. *Should the portfolio holder be unavailable to act, then the decision will be made by any other member of the Cabinet.*

- 1.4 Under the Special Urgency Procedure, the Leader is required to submit a quarterly report to the Council on the executive decisions taken under rule 17 in the preceding three months. The report will include the number of decisions taken and a summary of the matter about which each decision was made.

- 1.5 The reporting timetable for 2019/20 is as follows:-

			REPORT TO COUNCIL
Q1			10 September 2019
April	May	June	
Q2			19 November 2019
July	August	Sept	
Q3			25 February 2020
Oct	Nov	Dec	
Q4			23 June 2020
Jan	Feb	Mar	

- 1.6 No urgent decisions were taken by Cabinet in quarters 1 – 3 and as such, a quarterly report to Council was not required.

2.0 DECISIONS MADE DURING QUARTER 4

- 2.1 Three urgent executive decisions were made during quarter 4. These were all taken on 31 March 2020 by the relevant individual Portfolio Holder. The decisions were:-

- Support to the Council’s Leisure Operator in Light of the Coronavirus Situation
- Future High Streets Fund Business Case Development and Supporting Work
- Rent Policy Options in Response to COVID-19

- 2.2 In addition to this the Chairman of the Council agreed to waiver call-in on the decision relating to Rent Policy Options in Response to COVID-19.

2.3 A summary of each decision is detailed below.

3.0 SUPPORT TO THE COUNCIL'S LEISURE OPERATOR IN LIGHT OF THE CORONAVIRUS SITUATION

3.1 With the closure of both Hood Park and Hermitage Leisure Centres on 19 March, the decision was to seek approval for an emergency financial support package for Everyone Active to ensure that their staff remained employed and that our leisure partner remained operational in the initial stages of the COVID-19 crisis.

4.0 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTING WORK

4.1 An urgent decision was required to approve an increase in budget for the Future High Streets Fund consultancy commissioned to prepare the full business case submission. The increased budget maximised the chances of making a successful funding bid to the Future High Streets Fund, which, at the time needed be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by 30 April 2020. If the decision was delayed it would result in missing the deadline for Future High Streets Fund submission and would likely cause the submission to fail.

4.2 In addition, an urgent decision was required to accept two grant awards totalling £130,000 from the Leicester and Leicestershire Business Rate Pool funding. These grant awards were to support the council to further develop the regeneration projects identified through the Coalville Future High Street Fund and also to enhance cycling and pedestrian links in Coalville town centre. If the decision was delayed it would result in missing the deadline for accepting the two grant awards.

5.0 RENT POLICY OPTIONS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

5.1 An urgent decision was required to provide a supportive policy environment to help tenants deal with the financial impact of the COVID-19 situation. The decision suspended our normal approach to rent arrears recovery and allowed staff greater discretion to agree individual payment arrangements with tenants based on the impact on their circumstances of COVID-19. These arrangements included agreeing to no payments for a period of time in appropriate circumstances and consideration of writing off debts in due course. The arrangements were initially for a period of 3 months with an option for the Strategic Director to extend for a further 3 months, with the normal policy being reintroduced by default after 6 months, unless an alternative decision was taken first.

5.2 The urgency of the decision was dictated by the desire to allow tenants to benefit from the flexibility afforded by the new approach as quickly as possible given the COVID-19 situation.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 In line with the Special Urgency Procedure the Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Committee agreed that the decisions proposed were reasonable in all circumstances and that they should be treated as a matter of urgency.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Supporting Coalville to be a more vibrant, family-friendly town Support for businesses and helping people into local jobs Developing a clean and green district Local people live in high quality, affordable homes

	Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	As detailed on each report that was considered by
Safeguarding:	Not applicable
Equalities/Diversity:	Not applicable
Customer Impact:	Not applicable
Economic and Social Impact:	Not applicable.
Environment and Climate Change:	Not applicable
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Chairmen of the relevant Scrutiny Committees Chairman of the Council
Risks:	To comply with Special Urgency Rule 17 of Part 4.3 of the Council's Constitution, the decisions made by Cabinet are to be reported to Council.
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