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| <b>Report To:</b>       | <b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>   | <b>Date:</b>       | <b>24 March 2020</b> |
| <b>Report By:</b>       | <b>Head of Legal &amp; Property Services</b>  | <b>Report No:</b>  | <b>LP/045/20</b>     |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | <b>Gerard Malone</b>  | <b>Contact No:</b> | <b>01475 712710</b>  |
| <b>Subject:</b>         | <b>COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Proposed Emergency Decision-Making Arrangements for Committee Meetings</b> |                    |                      |

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report updates the temporary arrangements for tele-conference participation at meetings and seeks approval for temporary decision-making arrangements in order to reduce face-to-face meetings during the COVID-19 emergency.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) the tele-conference arrangements be updated to suspend on a temporary basis and with immediate effect all Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings with the exception of any necessary meetings of the Planning Board, the Local Review Body and the General Purposes Board.
- (ii) all powers currently delegated to the Policy & Resources Committee and all Standing Committees be remitted to the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee to exercise in these circumstances of urgency and that, accordingly, all existing delegated powers to the Council's Committees be suspended forthwith.
- (iii) these emergency arrangements be kept under review by the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee so that they may be revoked at the earliest appropriate time.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 That the Committee confirms its approval of the suspension of Standing Orders and the Scheme of Administration for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency and remits appropriate powers and all functions delegated to Committees to the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee for the duration of the emergency.

**Gerard Malone**  
**Head of Legal & Property Services**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 COVID-19 is having a widespread and significant effect on all communities. In the developing circumstances, the temporary arrangements for tele-conference participation at meetings requires to be superseded by relevant emergency arrangements. This report proposes that all meetings of the Council and its Committees (apart from the Planning Board, Local Review Body and General Purposes Board) be suspended with immediate effect and that all powers delegated to Committees and Sub-Committees be exercised by the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee.
- 4.2 The emergency arrangements will assist in minimising face-to-face meetings and will provide for the effective carrying out of urgent Council business.
- 4.3 The emergency arrangements will be kept under review by the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee and will be revoked at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.4 In the meantime, the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee will meet as required for the conduct of urgent Council business on dates arranged in consultation with the Convener. Any necessary meetings of the Planning Board, Local Review Body and General Purposes Board will be arranged for business when required in consultation with the relevant Chair.

## **5.0 QUASI-JUDICIAL BOARDS AND REGULATORY FUNCTIONS**

- 5.1 Depending on the progress of necessary business, it will still be required in certain circumstances to deal with relevant applications for licences, permissions and other forms of statutory consent where failure to act would result in hardship for any party or person making representations. It is proposed that there be regular liaison with the Chairs of the Boards in order to ensure that key business is expedited in a manner that minimises the number of meetings and the requirements of face-to-face contact. Where appropriate, tele-conference facilities will be used subject to protocols to ensure fairness and due procedure for any such application and its consideration.
- 5.2 The intended arrangements for a forthcoming Pre-Determination Hearing will require to be postponed in the light of the emergency arrangements as such a potential large-scale public gathering would represent a threat to public health.
- 5.3 Additionally, steps will be taken to mitigate the effect of General Purpose licensing timescales. This may involve the extension of certain licences and different periods for renewal and further work will be undertaken on this.
- 5.4 It should be noted that these arrangements do not apply to the Inverclyde Licensing Board as separate arrangements for that body will be under consideration.
- 5.5 There will also be separate contact with colleagues in the Inverclyde Integration Joint Board in order to outline the steps being taken to maintain a governance process which addresses the necessities of the COVID-19 emergency.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Finance**

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | Budget Years | Proposed Spend this Report | Virement From | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| N/A         |                |              |                            |               |                |

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From (If Applicable) | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| N/A         |                |                  |                   |                               |                |

**6.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications beyond the issues noted in this report.

**6.3 Human Resources**

There are no HR implications arising from this report.

**6.4 Equalities**

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | YES (see attached appendix)  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required |

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO   |

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. |
|--------------------------|---|

|   |    |
|---|----|
| X | NO |
|---|----|

**6.5 Repopulation**

There are no repopulation implications arising from this report.

**7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The Chief Executive has been consulted on this report.

**8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None