

21 September 2020

Committee	Council
Date	Tuesday, 29 September 2020
Time of Meeting	6:30 pm
<p>This is a remote meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.</p> <p>Members of the public will be able to view this meeting whilst it is in session by clicking on the link that will be available on the Agenda publication page immediately prior to the commencement of the meeting.</p>	

Agenda

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Meeting and/or the Chief Executive.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the adoption by the Council on 26 June 2012 of the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct, effective from 1 July 2012, as set out in Minute No. CL.34, Members are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out on the Agenda to which the approved Code applies.

4. MINUTES

1 - 14

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020.



5. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- a) To receive any questions, deputations or petitions submitted under Council Rule of Procedure.12.

(The deadline for public participation submissions for this meeting is 23 September 2020).

- b) To receive any petitions submitted under the Council's Petitions Scheme.

6. MEMBER QUESTIONS PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

To receive any questions submitted under Rule of Procedure 13. Any items received will be circulated on 29 September 2020.

(Any questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services by, not later than, 10.00am on the working day immediately preceding the date of the meeting).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Council is asked to consider and determine recommendations of a policy nature arising from the Executive Committee as follows:-

(a) Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Discounts 2021/22

15 - 20

At its meeting on 26 August 2020 the Executive Committee considered the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax Discounts for 2021/22 and **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**:

1. That the default Council Tax Reduction Scheme be **ADOPTED** effective from 1 April 2021 with a minor revision to the national working age regulations to allow for a de minimis tolerance for income changes.
2. That authority be delegated to the Head of Finance and Asset Management, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to agree the uprating of the working age regulations incorporated into the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with those announced by the Department for Work and Pensions.
3. That the following Council Tax discounts be **ADOPTED** effective from 1 April 2021:
 - The discount for unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties is 25% for a maximum period of six months.
 - The discount for properties which are vacant and require major repair work to render them habitable is 25% for a maximum period of 12 months.
 - The discount for unoccupied furnished properties (second homes) is zero.

- An empty homes premium of an additional 100% is levied on properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least two years, but less than five years.
- An empty homes premium of an additional 200% is levied on properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least five years, but less than ten years.
- An empty homes premium of an additional 300% is levied on properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least ten years.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 21 - 53

To receive the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 54 - 64

To receive a report from the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Any amendments made by the Audit and Governance Committee will be updated at the meeting.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Local Electricity Bill

Councillor Cody will propose and Councillor Carter will second:

Power for People is a campaign for more local, clean energy generation that would benefit local communities.

They are a not-for-profit organisation campaigning for the Local Electricity Bill – that they authored – to become law. The Bill is currently supported by a cross-party group of over 200 MPs including Tewkesbury's own MP Laurence Robertson.

The Bill aims to solve the current problem whereby local renewable energy generators, such as community energy groups, are unable to sell energy that they generate to local people. This is because of the huge setup and running costs involved in doing so.

The Bill would overcome this problem by establishing a Right to Local Supply that would make the costs of selling locally generated clean energy proportionate to the scale of the operation. This would benefit the existing community energy groups across the country and, even more excitingly, create the opportunity for huge growth in such groups and other local clean energy providers.

If the Bill became law it would be excellent news for public authorities that wished to set up their own energy companies to sell locally generated renewable energy to local people, as the set up and running costs involved would be proportionate and thus a fraction of what they are now. The revenues received by such authorities could be ploughed back into local emissions reduction schemes and other

local services and facilities.

A full copy of the Bill and the names of the 200+ MPs supporting it can be viewed via the following link

<https://powerforpeople.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Local-Electricity-Bill.pdf>

A copy has also been emailed to all Members of the Council

In light of the above, the Council is asked to:

1. sign up to the campaign www.powerforpeople.org.uk/sign-up and
2. adopt the resolution set out below:

Tewkesbury Borough Council:

- (i) acknowledges that it has made efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;
- (ii) recognises that Councils can play a central role in creating sustainable communities, particularly through the provision of locally generated renewable electricity;
- (iii) further recognises that:
 - a) very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,
 - b) making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for Councils and Community Groups to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, and
 - c) revenues received by Councils that became local renewable electricity providers could be used to help fund local greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures and to help improve local services and facilities;
- (iv) in view of the above, the Council supports the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of more than 200 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply and will: inform the local media of this decision,
 - write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and
 - write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at 8 Delancey Passage, Camden, London NW1 7NN or info@powerforpeople.org.uk) expressing its support.

(b) Support for Increased Provision for Cyclists within Tewkesbury Borough

Councillor Munro will propose and Councillor Stanley will second:

Cycling is an important component in plans to reduce traffic, improve air quality, keep our residents healthy and reduce our carbon emissions in the fight against climate change. The pandemic has shown that there is an appetite for cycling where this is safe and enjoyable, and it is important to build on this interest and continue to encourage those who do not usually cycle. The importance of cycling has been recognised by central government who are keen to develop cycle networks.

Similarly the Council has already included a commitment in its COVID-19 Corporate Recovery Plan to “build on our communities’ connections with green space, walking and cycling to encourage healthy, sustainable living and an appreciation of biodiversity”, and to include in our garden communities improved transport links and green infrastructure, including cycling routes.

Whilst recognising that cycling is primarily within the remit of Gloucestershire County Council, this Council is asked to do whatever it can to support safe cycling and the County Council in its efforts to develop a cycling network in our County. The County Council is proposing a cycle path to link Bishop’s Cleeve to Cheltenham, and Churchdown to Cheltenham which has the potential link to routes through to Tewkesbury, Ashchurch and the new Garden Town. Also, not to forget that small local journeys to our local shops, businesses and schools will reduce short journeys taken by car and it is short journeys that most people start to enjoy before moving to more ambitious cycle rides.

In view of the above it is a matter of concern that no work on the cycleway between Bishop’s Cleeve and Gotherington, which was agreed under a Section 106 Agreement to be built and paid for by developers, has commenced. The current position is that, while a date was given to start in April 2020, this was cancelled due to the pandemic and the latest information from the County Council is that the work is still with the highways legal team. This Council is asked to show its determination to get this cycle path built and demonstrate its commitment to improving cycle routes in our Borough.

Accordingly, the Council is asked to

- Make a public statement that it supports initiatives to increase the take up of cycling and will ensure that, in all planning applications for major developments, provision will be made for cycle paths for both local and longer journeys.
- Issue a statement of support to the County Council supporting its initiatives to develop a cycle network and its work to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Tewkesbury, including a requirement that funding for schemes is identified.

- Ask the County Council to prioritise the works of the highways legal team to ensure that the Bishop's Cleeve to Gotherington cycleway is not delayed further, with a request for work to start on building the cycleway by the end of the current financial year.

(c) Transparency and Openness of Tewkesbury Borough Council Proceedings

Councillor Stanley will propose and Councillor Munro will second:

This Motion is in line with our Council Value to 'Put Customers First' to listen, treat our residents fairly and continuously improve our culture.

Members of the public have the opportunity to ask questions at full Council but do not currently have the right to ask any supplementary questions. This is not in line with other Gloucestershire Councils including Cheltenham, Cotswolds, Stroud and Gloucestershire County Council who all allow members of the public the right to ask a supplementary question following on from the replies they receive.

In terms of Minutes of Council meetings, the current practice at Tewkesbury Borough Council is for the Minutes of the previous full Council meeting to be published with the Agenda for the next meeting. Accordingly, the minutes for the last full Council on 28 July are not available on the Council website until seven working days before the next meeting. The same practice is followed for all other Committee meetings with the exception of the Executive Committee where a Decision Notice is published within three working days of the meeting.

Officers are fully supported by Members for their work to deliver accurate minutes of meetings and are thanked for their hard work in supporting Borough Councillors and the functions of the Council. This Motion is a request to change process at Tewkesbury Borough Council to improve openness and transparency of the Council's proceedings.

Scrutiny is an essential part of the democratic process and therefore as many of the Council's decisions should be made available to the public as soon as possible after meetings to aid transparency and trust in Council decision-making. As the Council and Executive are the main decision-makers, it is proposed that a Decision Notice is published for full Council along the lines as already exists for the Executive Committee. It is understood that this is achievable without the need for additional resources.

Accordingly, the Council is asked to

1. Amend the scheme of Public Participation to allow members of the public the right to ask supplementary questions arising from the answers to their original questions, and
2. Adopt the same practice that is followed for the Executive Committee and publish a Decision Notice for full Council within three working days of the meeting.

(d) Invitation to Gloucestershire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to Present its Latest Proposals for Cheltenham A&E

Councillor Stanley will propose and Councillor Jordan will second:

The Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) meeting on 15 September 2020 of the Gloucestershire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, proposed to extend the three month closure of Cheltenham's Type 1 A&E Department for a further six months.

As a Council, the work that the NHS Trust has undertaken is very much appreciated and whilst the original three month closure was understood to help keep Cheltenham General 'COVID Free' during the height of the COVID transmission, in order that elective surgery could be resumed, the proposed extension requires further explanation.

In particular, the Council is concerned about the proposed six month extension both in terms of the A&E at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital having the capacity to cope with all A&E patients from the whole County together with the capacity of Emergency Ambulance services and that the additional six month extension could become a long term or permanent change.

The Council has previously received presentations from the Clinical Commissioning Group in April and October 2019.

In the light of the proposed extension of the closure of Cheltenham A&E the Council is asked to invite the Clinical Commissioning Group to a further all Member event to present their latest proposals; the detailed arrangements for which would be undertaken by Democratic Services.

Recording of Meetings

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, please be aware that the proceedings of this meeting may be recorded.

**Sara J Freckleton
Borough Solicitor**