

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Urgency Committee** held
via video conferencing at 4:05 pm on **Wednesday 22 July 2020**

PRESENT

Councillors: James Mills (Chairman); Toby Morris (Vice Chairman); Joy Aitman; Merylyn Davies, Duncan Enright; Andy Graham; Liz Leffman; Jeff Haine; David Harvey; Norman MacRae MBE and Michele Mead.

Also in Attendance: Councillors Jill Bull, Julian Cooper, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Gill Hill and Dan Levy.

Officers in Attendance: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive); Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive); Frank Wilson (Executive Director, Finance); Keith Butler (Head of Democratic Services) and Amy Barnes (Senior Strategic Support Officer).

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 22 August 2018 and 15 May 2019 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers relating to matters to be considered at the meeting.

4. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

No submissions were received from the public in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person; and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings), the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

6. RE-OPENING OF LEISURE FACILITIES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GLL

The Committee received and considered the joint report of the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer containing exempt information, which (i) addressed issues relating to funding support for GLL; (ii) reviewed the current legal position and the reduction of risk to the Council; and (iii) sought consideration of the mix of leisure centres and facilities which should be included in the initial phasing of the re-opening of services following the coronavirus pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Leisure, Councillor Mead, outlined the report and explained the circumstances in which the proposals had come about.

Councillor Mead proposed the report as written and this was seconded by Councillor Morris who agreed that it was important to reopen the Leisure Centres as soon as possible to enhance the health and wellbeing of the residents of West Oxfordshire.

Members discussed the options detailed in Annex B to the report, along with the associated costs and the differing costs between reopening dry side and wet side facilities. The proposed reopening timetable of individual centres was also scrutinised, in particular in relation to the facilities at Woodstock and Carterton and although not ideal in some respects, it was accepted that a staggered reopening was understandable and appropriate.

The forecast detailed in the report was also looked at and officers provided assurance that GLL were keen not to lose their customer base but it was not possible to predict uptake until the centres were open.

Members thanked officers for the report, and the Committee -

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the phased re-opening of the District's Leisure Centres as outlined and recommended in the report be approved;
- (b) That the waiver of management fees detailed in the report be approved, with the Chief Finance Officer being authorised to take the further recommendations specified in the report should that prove necessary;
- (c) That a loan be approved with additional authority to the Chief Finance Officer to increase the loan limit should the actuals in coming months be higher than the estimates;
- (d) That GLL Better be requested to agree an amendment to their contract as detailed in the report; and
- (e) That the ongoing impact of the GLL funding requirements be reviewed in the context of the current budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm

CHAIRMAN