

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor M Foley (Chair)
Councillors A Armstrong, H Asker, G Bagnall, S Barker, M Caton, A Coote, C Criscione, C Day, A Dean, G Driscoll, D Eke, J Evans, P Fairhurst, R Freeman, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper, N Reeve, G Sell, M Tayler and J De Vries

Officers in attendance: D French (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: L Flawn (Public Speaker)

C48 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Ms Flawn spoke of the challenges facing Local Authorities in the wake of Covid-19 and the financial consequences that would follow. She asked why the Council's accounts had not yet been signed off.

The Leader thanked Ms Flawn for her question and said there were no issues with the Council's accounts from last year, although a deficit had been forecasted for years three and four of the Administration, caused by the withdrawal of central government funding. He said the reason that the accounts had yet to be signed off was not for financial reasons but due to a regulatory issue that had to remain confidential until the auditor had resolved.

The Chief Executive read a statement from the Council's auditor, BDO, which stated that they were investigating an issue and the Annual Governance Statement could not be issued until the matter had been resolved.

In response to a follow up question from Ms Flawn, the Chief Executive said the Council would make every effort to sign-off the accounts by the deadline of 30 November but the issue was in the hands of the auditor. All information had been made available to the auditor in good time. She said many Local Authorities would be in a similar position this year.

C49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Armstrong entered the meeting at 7.10pm.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sutton.

C50 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

C51 PURCHASE OF A NEW COUNCIL ASSET

Councillor Reeve presented the report regarding the purchase of a new Council asset. He provided details of the purchase, and explained why the asset was needed and how it would benefit the Council's operations.

Members asked questions relating to the asset and the consequences this would have on operations and its impact on staff and travel movements.

In response, the Chief Executive reassured Members that the Council would work closely with staff that would be affected by the change.

Members asked questions relating to any hidden costs contained in the purchase.

In response, the Director – Financial and Corporate Services explained the terms of the lease which stood for 975 years and cost £10 per annum. He said this arrangement was as good as a freehold.

Members asked a number of questions relating to future plans for the potential asset. Councillor Reeve said this was not part of the proposal up for discussion tonight.

In response to a question relating to the cost of the project, Councillor Reeve said further detail on revenue costs would be looked at and shared with Members.

The Director – Financial and Corporate Services said the transitional budget would be utilised and details would be shared with Members.

RESOLVED to authorise the:

- a) Acquisition of the site at a price of £7,600,000 plus costs; and
- b) Necessary short term borrowing; and
- c) Disposal of the current site

The resolution was carried 33 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm.

