

13. COVID19 STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – to reaffirm the decision to extend the amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Background - Initially approved 24th March 2020 Council Minute 537/19 A & F and further extended at the Town Council on 30th June 2020 Minute 58/20 a & b. further extended 28th July 2020 Minute 100/20 to extend the amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for a further 3 months until the end of October 2020 (to be reviewed at each Council meeting held during the period).

Standing Orders

Note re: a below – The legislation refers to the “Town Clerk / Proper Officer” (Stephen Vinson) being given delegated authority. However, from a Business Continuity perspective, to secure against the impact of possible illness and to take account of the division of responsibilities between staff it is recommended that the delegation be extended to the RFO/ Deputy Town Clerk (Yvette Hayward.) In the terms of area of work responsibility, the Facilities Manager (Jacqui Orange) and TIC Manager (Vicky Cutts) would provide function specific support and decision-making authority should both the Town Clerk and RFO / Deputy Town Clerk be ill.

a) Scheme of delegation / Business Continuity – “That the Council delegates authority to the Clerk (RFO / Deputy Town Clerk and Facilities Manager depending upon the area of service responsibility and availability through sickness) in consultation with the Mayor (Deputy Mayor and Chair or Vice Chair of the relevant service committee and availability through sickness) to take any actions necessary with associated expenditure to protect the interests of the community and ensure council business continuity during the period of the pandemic Coronavirus, informed by consultation with the members of the council”.

Financial Regulations

Note re: f below – The current Financial Regulations are 4.1 the Town Clerk or RFO may in consultation with the Mayor or Chair of the appropriate committee approve an item of expenditure £2,500. (Note - possible increase to £5,000) Intended for operating expenditure, perhaps equipment purchase.

Financial Regulation 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk, RFO or Facilities Manager may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in their judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £7,500 (Note – possible increase to £15,000). The Clerk/RFO shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter. For example, this is intended to help authorise immediate works to a threatened Council building to

hopefully avoid a higher bill by delayed decision making. Council may wish to adopt the new figures of £5,000 and £15,000 pending guidance further advice from Government.

RECOMMENDATION: That the scheme of delegation / business continuity modifications to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are re-affirmed for another month.