



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL



Agenda & minutes

Full Council meeting of
Tuesday, 10 November 2020

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Portsmouth City Council

A REMOTE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL will be held virtually on Tuesday 10 November 2020 **to commence at 2.10pm or immediately after the conclusion of the Extraordinary Council meeting if later** and all members of the council are hereby summoned to attend remotely (link sent separately to members) to consider and resolve upon the following business:-

Agenda

- 1 **Members' Interests**
- 2 **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 October 2020** (Pages 11 - 26)
- 3 **To receive such communications as the Lord Mayor may desire to lay before the Council, including apologies for absence.**
- 4 **Written Deputations from the Public under Standing Order No 24.**
- 5 **Questions from the Public under Standing Order 25.**
- 6 **Appointments**
- 7 **Urgent Business - To receive and consider any urgent and important business from Members of the Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order No 26.**
- 8 **Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority - Update**

As agreed at the last Council meeting through a Notice of Motion, to receive an update for noting from the council's representative, on the Hampshire Fire Authority, Councillor Fazackarley.
- 9 **Update on the Aquind Interconnector Project** (Pages 27 - 36)

To receive and note the attached report considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 3 November.
- 10 **Monitoring Officer Report**

To receive and consider the report of the Monitoring Officer (to follow) in respect of Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Notices of Motion: Process information

Following the Full Council meeting of 21 July 2020, the Council agreed to change Standing Order (32(d)), meaning all Notices of Motion of the

agenda will automatically be dealt with at this meeting, thereby dispensing with a three minute presentation from the proposer and subsequent vote to enable its consideration.

11 Notices of Motion

(a) **Universal Basic Income**

Proposed by Councillor Matthew Winnington
Seconded by Councillor Ben Dowling

Many people in Portsmouth are struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic and with the looming end of the Brexit transition period leading to real uncertainty about their jobs and paying the bills going into the future. For some who have lost their jobs they have had to go through the process, many for the first time ever, of claiming benefit.

Claiming benefit can be a stressful experience and there is no full income from Universal Credit until five weeks into the claim and, when it is received, it is usually nowhere near what people were getting from their jobs prior to being made redundant or being unable to carry out their self-employed work anymore.

This council therefore believes that a pragmatic and fair solution to this is the introduction of a Universal Basic Income (UBI), a universal payment that goes to every citizen and those who have recourse to public funds in the UK. This takes away the stress and complication of having to put in a claim for even a small amount of money from the state and gives the opportunity for each recipient to use the money that they receive as of right to pay towards housing costs, invest in setting up a business, give to charity or whatever is right for the person receiving it.

Further to this, this council will ask the government to pilot a UBI and that Portsmouth be one of the pilot areas (subject to Cabinet formally resolving to support this approach) as we are a place at the front line of Brexit as a major port city and a city with many people employed in the cultural and creative industries which are under particular threat due to COVID-19.

(b) **Aquind**

Proposed by Councillor Luke Stubbs
Seconded by Councillor Simon Boshier

The council notes with regret the application made by Aquind for an interconnector cable from France to Hampshire, England. This council strongly objects to the application, particularly the stretch that runs through the city of Portsmouth.

The council notes that both recent leaders of the City Council, Councillor Donna Jones and Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, have made their objections clear. These objections are a matter of

record. The first formal objection was noted in a meeting in the spring of 2018 by Councillor Donna Jones on behalf of Portsmouth City Council. Both city MPs Penny Mordaunt and Councillor Stephen Morgan have also lodged their objections publicly.

The council therefore agrees that the most effective way to stop Aquind is for all councillors and political parties to work together to support a strong evidence based objection to the application.

The council requests:

1. The Leader of the Council set up a cross party working group to prepare for the public inquiry due to be held to determine this application.
2. The working group's Terms of Reference be agreed to ensure unity, respect and support amongst political parties in working together to stop the Aquind interconnector application.
3. That regular updates are brought back to the City Council on the on-going progress of the working group and wider application.

(c) **Free School Meals**

Proposed Councillor Suzy Horton
Seconded by Councillor Steve Pitt

This Council notes:

That numbers of pupils entitled to Free School Meals are rising fast in Portsmouth with over 1000 additional children since the start of the pandemic. That means over 7000 children.

That every child who is entitled to Free School Meals is a sign of a family under significant financial pressure.

That this picture of increasing child poverty is supported by the rapid rise in the number of families dependent on food banks.

The Trussell trust reporting an 81 per cent increase in food bank dependency in March 2020, and other food banks reporting similar increases. The number of children relying on food banks more than doubles during lockdown and Portsmouth figures reflect this trend with one foodbank reporting over 100% increase in demand the weeks before half term.

That children who are hungry are less able to learn and thrive at school.

That the extension of the school meals voucher scheme (campaigned for by Marcus Rashford) to cover the period of the

summer holiday was incredibly important and valuable to families in food poverty.

The very welcome commitment from Liberal Democrat Education Minister in the Welsh Assembly, Kirsty Williams, to guarantee free school meal provision for children in Wales for school holidays until at least Easter 2021.

The very welcome commitment from Portsmouth City Council to guarantee a 2 week voucher for free school meal provision for the 2020 Christmas holidays as well as continuing with successful programmes such as Holiday Food and Fun.

This Council recognises that the withdrawal of the furlough scheme, along with fears of a second lockdown are likely to lead to further increases in child poverty.

This Council therefore supports the calls by the Child Food Poverty Task Force, supported by Marcus Rashford and many leading food suppliers and producers, which calls for:

The expansion of free school meals provision to every child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.

That provision be made for food vouchers to cover school holidays and periods of lockdown for all families in receipt of Universal Credit or with low-income and no recourse to public funds.

That Healthy Start vouchers should be increased in value to £4.25, and expanded to be made available to all those in receipt of Universal Credit or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.

In August, the Government spent more than £522m subsidising diners £10 per meal, under the Eat Out to Help Out scheme. It would cost just £15 to provide a week's meals for a vulnerable child in Portsmouth

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education and the Chancellor to call for:

1. Extended eligibility for free school meals to every pupil whose parents or guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit
2. Food vouchers for every one of those pupils in every school holiday and during any period of lockdown
3. Extended eligibility for free school meals to pupils from low-income families whose parents or guardians have no recourse to public funds and destitute asylum seekers under s4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

(d) **Planning**

Proposed by Councillor Terry Norton

Seconded by Councillor Scott Payter-Harris

Council notes the extensive backlog of unregistered planning applications that has built up. It notes that seemingly routine applications are now taking many months just to validate and longer still to determine.

Council considers that being able to make planning decisions in a consistent and timely manner is critical if it is to achieve its ambitions for the regeneration of the city and for it to become a hub for businesses in emerging sectors. It notes the low number of major applications that have been received or determined over the last year and is concerned that a combination of these delays and high CIL payments is making Portsmouth an unpredictable, expensive and slow place to do business.

Council supports the actions taken to bring in outside support to try and reduce the backlog. It remains concerned that this may not be sufficient. It therefore resolves to ask the Cabinet Member with responsibility for planning to ensure:

- That the Planning Department adopt a guaranteed minimum standard for the validation of applications, including a maximum time period for those applications where the submitted documentation is complete (from the date of receipt)
- That the Cabinet member work with the Planning Department to ensure greater transparency for both Councillors and the public and bring a report to the next Full Council meeting to update the council on the new standards and backlogs.

(e) **Stop Fining Homeless People**

Proposer: Councillor Cal Corkery

Seconder: Councillor Judith Smyth

Since the government issued the 'everyone in' directive in March 2020 the council has housed a total of over 400 homeless individuals in hotels. Around 130 of those people have now been moved on to new temporary accommodation units across a mix of student halls and rooms in shared houses.

While a significant number of people have benefitted from this new provision, it remains clear that there are homeless people who for a variety of reasons have been unable to access these accommodation services.

A number of rough sleepers, regularly those with the most complex needs, feel they would be unable to cope in a hostel or shared house environment. Often this is due to feeling unsafe as a result of their health and support needs.

A recent investigation by The Mirror found that across the country 420 fixed penalties have been issued by councils to homeless people for begging or loitering in the street. A number of £100 fines have been issued by the council to rough sleepers in Portsmouth - none of which have been paid.

The likelihood of rough sleepers having the available financial resources to pay a £100 fine is limited to non-existent. Placing such a financial burden, which they have no realistic hope of meeting, on vulnerable people is as cruel as it is ineffective.

Full Council therefore:

1. Recognises the significant efforts that have been made to accommodate local homeless people since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and thanks all those who have contributed towards this.
2. Suggests Cabinet ask council officers to continue to explore the housing options which could be made available for rough sleepers for whom a hostel or shared house setting is not appropriate.
3. Invites the Cabinet to change the policy of issuing fines to homeless people.
4. Requests Cabinet take action to ensure the council stops issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to rough sleepers.

(f) **Commonwealth Armed Forces Veterans Support**

Proposed by Councillor Tom Coles
Seconded by Councillor Graham Heaney

We call upon the council to ensure their armed forces champions and lead officers are aware of the difficulties experienced by commonwealth veterans and ensure that those who are currently experiencing problems, whether financial or immigration difficulties, are not disadvantaged whilst their applications are ongoing.

We also call upon the leader of the council to write to the prime minister, Kevin Forster MP the minister of state for immigration, and Johnny Mercer MP the minister of state for veterans affairs outlining this councils support for all commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years being granted automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK and that any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically given British Citizenship.

Further, this council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to both Stephen Morgan MP and Penny Mordaunt MP on behalf of this council, to ask that they continue to press the government for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served diligently and honourably for this Country.

(g) **Parking and COVID**

Proposed by Councillor Luke Stubbs

Seconded by Councillor Linda Symes

The COVID pandemic has hit both the retail and hospitality sectors hard, with a deep and permanent reduction in the level of employment and business activity the likely result.

For many struggling retailers a successful Christmas is essential. Without it, a wave of store closures after the January sales must be probable.

Council acknowledges the impact that COVID has had on its own finances and that as things stand, tax receipts are likely to be lower and expenditure higher than originally planned. It however notes its own exposure to the business sector and that a further decline will mean a drop in business rate income.

Parking charges are a deterrent to shoppers and visitors. Council calls on the Cabinet to urgently investigate whether a period of free parking (say for two hours) could be introduced in council car parks covering the period up to Christmas.

12 Questions from Members under Standing Order No 17. (Pages 37 - 40)

David Williams
Chief Executive

Deputations - A written deputation stating which agenda item it refers to must be received by the Local Democracy Manager by 12 noon two working days preceding the meeting. Any written deputation received by email will be sent to the Council Members and be referred to and be read out at the meeting. Please notify the Local Democracy Manager at Stewart.Agland@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
PORTSMOUTH
2 November 2020