

SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL  
Executive & Emergency Committee – 20 March 2020.

**COVID-19 - CONTINGENCY PLAN IN THE EVENT OF RESTRICTIVE ACTIVITY OR A SHUTDOWN.**

It is likely that Government will pass emergency legislation to support the prevention of the spread of Covid-19. This may include restricting peoples' activity and travel; increasing the number of people who are asked to "self-isolate", preventing groupings of people for meetings and events.

*The Terms of Reference of the Executive & Emergency Committee include :*

*To assist, in an emergency, the population of Swanscombe and Greenhithe in overcoming any extreme or unusual conditions caused by natural or accidental means.*

*To prepare contingency plans to meet any of the situations as described above.*

Under Section 101 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Members are asked to consider extending the delegation of Council decisions to the Town Clerk during any period of restricted activity or closure declared by the Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus. Such delegation to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents and to include:

1. In the event of closure an amount of £50,000.00 to be transferred from the Active Saver 1 account to the Current Account to cover direct debits and staff wages for a 2 month period;
2. To respond to electronic correspondences;
3. Paying staff wages and monitoring the councils financial position (monies coming in and going out);
4. Prior to the commencement of a "lockdown" contractors and facility hirers will be informed of the Town Councils position and any arrangements for contacting the Town Council;
5. Monitoring and updating the Town Council website and social media accounts, as and when required;
6. Keeping Members updated electronically on government and KALC guidance issued during closure;
7. Ensuring staff are contacted regularly and updated on the position of any restrictions;

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8. Statutory meetings – these could be affected in a “lockdown” situation as the 1972 Act specifies when these must be held. This will be considered on a risk basis taking into account the latest guidance from Public Health England (PHE) at the relevant time and any new legislation. *Pragmatically, any decree issued by the Government is likely to supercede the 1972 Act – either implicitly or through regulations issued by the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG);*
9. Any enforced closure will result in the lifting of absence recorded as sick leave with regards to wages i.e. staff receive payment in the normal manner during period of enforced closure.
10. Any member of staff required to self-isolate due to symptoms will be treated as on sick leave as per contracts. Any other member of staff unable to work as a result of this will be treated as per any enforced closure (see 9).
11. Any staff effected by an enforced closure lasting longer than one calendar month will have their remaining leave entitlement adjusted on a pro-rata basis.
12. All facilities hire is suspended until further notice.
13. To avoid ceasing being a member of the authority, under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, and in light of the unprecedented circumstances, dispensation be granted to all members until such time as scheduled meetings can be resumed.
14. In accordance with Financial Regulation 18.2 the Council waive Financial Regulation 6.4 which will enable officers, in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to act as a single signatory for payments during any period of restricted activity, to be endorsed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee or full Council at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure the continued operation of this function, with an audit control, during a period of restricted activity.
- 9-15. The Town Council will not enforce the rent condition of its Leased facilities due to any period of restricted activity resulting from the Covid-19 crisis.

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**Recommended:** To agree and adopt the Covid-19 Contingency Plan as detailed