



# TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	<b>Colin Hill – Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer</b>
<b>TEL NO</b>	<b>01706 548135 / 07306109131</b>
<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>townclerk@todmorden-tc.gov.uk</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> July 2020</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Future meetings and Return to Formal Council and Committee Structure</b>

### PURPOSE:

1. To update Members on the latest advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding face to face meetings.
2. To recommend to Members that we return to a Full Council/Committee structure effective from 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020, whether held remotely, face to face or a combination of both.
3. To recommend that at the Emergency Committee meeting scheduled for 29th July 2020 , the Emergency Committee Resolves to return to Full Council and Committee structures and that the powers conferred upon it as an Emergency Committee end effective at the end of that meeting.
4. That in doing so the public is invited into all meetings effective from 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.
5. That as part of the process in returning to the normal Council cycle of meetings, at the first meetings of individual Committee meetings, an update is provided of all matters raised in the intervening period relative to the respective Committees, to enable Members to be familiar with the current issues requiring attention.
6. That for the avoidance of doubt ,at the first meeting of the Full Council to be held on 14th October 2020, all actions taken by the Emergency Committee are ratified en bloc by Full Council.

### BACKGROUND:

7. Following the lockdown arising out of Covid 19, Todmorden Town Council resolved for all its business be conducted through a single reduced member size Emergency Committee.

8. By the time we return to the normal cycle of meetings, the Emergency Committee will have met on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 6<sup>th</sup> May, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1<sup>st</sup> July and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

9. The following advice has been received from NALC on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020

*Following the Government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July, NALC and SLCC strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face to face contact. Government rules still state that we should all work from home if we can.*

*Local councils have the powers to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing technology until May 2021 and so most councils will have no need to meet in person.*

*Furthermore, local councils have the duty to allow the public to observe council meetings without placing restrictions on the number attending, which many council meeting venues will not be able to accommodate in a safe way at this time.*

*However, where a local council does have an identified need to hold a physical meeting, as they are unable to conduct council business any other way, they can consider doing so from 4<sup>th</sup> July.*

*These meetings must be managed within the social distancing and 'safer workplaces' guidance produced by Government, which includes the requirement to conduct a risk assessment to determine if it is feasible and safe to hold a physical meeting.*

*It is important that this risk assessment is carried out, and any identified actions to reduce risk to attendees are implemented before any face to face meetings resume.*

*Councils must keep documentation of this risk assessment and the reasons why the council has taken the decision to return to face to face meetings.*

*NALC will be updating its guidance on remote meetings very shortly to include information on how to approach 'hybrid meetings' (where some people attend in person and others join remotely), effectively and safely.*

10. In terms of our own intention to return to Face to Face/public meetings, this will also be informed by Calderdale MBC in terms of use of the Town Hall, and in this respect it may be particularly difficult to resume meetings in the Cockroft Room in the short term.

11. Whilst therefore this report details the return to the normal Council meeting cycle and has ambitions to consider face to face/public meetings at the earliest opportunity, the decision to do so must be taken in the light of guidance from Government, NALC and Calderdale MBC.

12. It is expected therefore that Remote/Virtual working will remain the main method of carrying our Council business for likely the next 3 to 6 months, and as part of these considerations, the need to ensure all Members are fully remotely enabled.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

13. There are no direct financial implications arising out of this return to the normal Council / Committee Cycle of meetings.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

14. That the Emergency Committee note the proposed timetable to return to the normal Council/Committee Cycle as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

15. That the Town Clerk brings to the next Emergency Committee meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 a report seeking a Resolution that the powers conferred upon it as an Emergency Committee end effective at the end of that meeting and that formal Council and Committee structures are reintroduced.
16. That the Town Clerk brings back to Full Council proposals to return to face to face meetings as and when guidance indicates this is a possibility.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

17. The Emergency Committee should resolve to end its powers as an intermediate Emergency Committee.
18. Returning to public meetings must be managed in line with current Covid 19 related advice, building owners advice, and practical measures to ensure full compliance from a risk management point of view.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

19. The establishment of an Emergency Committee was always intended to be an interim measure.

**DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:**

20. None

**SUPPORTING PAPERS**

21. Appendix 1 – Meeting timetable by date  
Appendix 2 – Meeting timetable by Committee and Date

**For further information please contact : Colin Hill**