

<b>Committee</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>12 April 2021</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>15</b>

### **HTC policy on the holding of Council meetings after 7 May 2021**

Council meetings have been held virtually under "The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) Regulations 2020.", since March 2020. These regulations allow councils to work in this way only until May 2021.

Central government has now advised that the opportunities offered by the Coronavirus Regulations will now end on 7 May 2021. They have ruled out any possibility of an extension although there will be a 12-week consultation. Extending the Regulations would mean introducing primary legislation, and the government says it does not have time for that. Government has also stated that in-person meetings could be postponed until 17 May, when many other indoor venues will start opening up, and it is thought that it will be safer. It would also be possible to continue to receive questions via email until 17 May and then allow restricted numbers of the public to attend in person. The capacity of our hall is a total of 30 at 2-metre distance. Taking into account councillors and staff, the maximum number of the public admissible would be 16. Those wishing to attend would need to book in advance.

If HTC were to hold their Annual Town Council meeting on 4 May virtually, then all councillors would be able to attend, whereas at least 3 members of council feel that they are extremely vulnerable and would not want to attend in-person meetings. This could be preceded by the Annual Town meeting on the same day as a virtual meeting along with invited public bodies.

**Recommendation :** that

1. HTC follows government guidelines on changing from virtual meetings to in-person meetings.
2. HTC continues to take questions from the public via email until 17 May 2021
3. HTC brings forward its annual town council meeting to 4 May 2021 to allow all councillors to take part
4. That HTC brings forward the Annual Town meeting to a virtual meeting also on Tuesday 4 May



Sarah Greatorex  
Town Clerk