



**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE**

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to  
**COVID-19 INTERIM MEASURES GROUP  
27 MARCH 2020**

**INTERIM GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEYBRIDGE PARISH  
COUNCIL IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ELECTION**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To identify temporary governance arrangements for Heybridge Basin Parish Council (PC).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That members review **APPENDIX 1** reviewing the Governance options and background information and risks presented;
- (ii) That Members resolve to extend the current temporary arrangement that the Clerk of Heybridge Parish Council administrates queries and problems;
- (iii) That once government advice permits to hold public meetings again or legislation allows for virtual meetings or to hold elections, Maldon District Council will review the arrangements to decide whether it should exercise its powers under s 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 or hold an election.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Due to COVID-19 and the risk to society, we have followed government advice and formally suspended all polls so Heybridge Basin PC election will not be running in May. At the moment, we can only work on the basis of the election happening in line with Police and Crime Commissioner (which will be a year delay).
- 3.2 The reorganisation order, finalised and sealed in October 2019 means that Heybridge Basin Parish Council will come into existence on 1 April 2020. Elected members were due to take office to administrate this from May 2020.
- 3.3 Committee meetings and associated meetings of Maldon District Council have been suspended and Maldon District Council offices have removed all but essential staff and moved to interim measures in the light of COVID-19 government advice.
- 3.4 The law does not currently allow provision for Decision making by virtual meetings though this may be permitted later depending on when legislation is passed.

## 4. CONCLUSION

4.1 **APPENDIX 1** highlights three options, which are:

1. Request that the Clerk of Heybridge Parish Council temporarily administers Heybridge Basin Parish but as there will be no members acting no decisions could be made other than answering queries and providing information.
2. Temporarily appoint people to act as members for Heybridge Basin Parish Council under s91 of the Local Government Act 1972 and establish a constitution and appoint a Clerk. It would be hoped that those members would then resolve to give interim measures to the Clerk
3. Delay the start date of the reorganisation order until April 2021.

4.2 In view of the risks and challenges associated with each of these, we recommend a temporary continuation of the current arrangement until the emergency COVID-19 measures that Maldon District Council is operating under have been relaxed.

## 5. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES

5.1 None.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – All options carry a risk, but the approach recommended is most aligned to the current emergency environment.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – None.

Background Papers: **APPENDIX 1** - Heybridge Basin Parish Council Governance.

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