

Rules of Procedure for Remote Meetings

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1.1 Introduction

- a) The [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) make provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to, council meetings held on or before 7 May 2021.
- b) The regulations enable the council to hold meetings without all, or any, of the members being physically present in a room. This allows for remote meetings through electronic, digital, virtual locations, live webcast, live interactive streaming, video and telephone conferencing.
- c) The ‘place’ at which the meeting is held may be a council building, or where the organiser of the meeting is located, or an electronic, digital or virtual location, a web address, or a conference call telephone number.
- d) In order for members to be able to attend meetings of the council remotely, they need not be physically present, provided they are able to hear and be heard (and, where possible, see and be seen by) other councillors and members of the public attending remotely or in person. If the technology that enables the meeting to be broadcast fails, the meeting will be adjourned.
- e) The Procedural Standing Orders in Part 4 of the constitution apply to remote meetings in the same way as they do for other meetings of the council and will be interpreted in accordance with the Regulations as far as possible. Where they conflict, these rules take precedence over other procedure rules in relation to the governance of remote meetings.

1.2 Process

- a) The council facilitates remote attendance and access to its meetings through the medium of Microsoft Teams, which enables the following to take place:
 - 1) Contributions to be received from Councillors and Officers through their Council issued IT equipment (or over the telephone if IT equipment not available) and contributions from members of the public (over the telephone) who have been granted a right to speak/ask a question at the meeting in the same way as if they were physically present in the Council Chamber.
 - 2) Except where the public and press are excluded from the meeting for consideration of a particular item the audio of the meeting will be live streamed on the Council's website with the video of the meeting being made available for playback afterwards.
- b) Before the meeting, any documents and agendas to be referred to during the meeting should be shared with participants and will be published (where appropriate) in advance on the council's website along with details of how to access the meeting.
- c) Before the meeting, all participants should be made aware of the following etiquette:
 - 1) Join the meeting at least ten minutes beforehand to avoid unnecessary interruptions.
 - 2) Participants' microphones should be muted when not talking.
 - 3) Members will be invited to speak in alphabetical order and only speak when invited to by the Chair.
 - 4) If referring to a specific agenda page, mention the page number.
- d) The Chair and the clerk may:
 - 1) Pause (adjourn) the meeting by taking down the live audio feed from public broadcast and then resume it when needed. This may be done, for example when the committee is deliberating in private or when a not for publication item is discussed. Where the meeting is adjourned a message to this effect will be posted on the relevant page so that the status of the meeting is clear and all participants are aware.
 - 2) Switch off a participant's microphone after they have finished speaking.

1.3 Participation by Members of the Public

Members of the public will have the same right to participate in meetings of Council or Committees in accordance with existing provisions in the constitution. Public participation in virtual meetings will be either through written representations or a telephone facility rather than in person.

1.4 Voting and Interests

- a) In view of the fact that all Members cannot be seen by the Chair at the same time, it will not be transparent to those participating in or accessing the meeting how members have voted if this is done by a show of hands. A roll-call of Members will therefore be taken to record votes at remote meetings.
- b) When there is a vote, the clerk will perform a roll-call of all members present and ask them to state their voting intention (For, Against or Abstain). These will then be counted and recorded. At the conclusion of the voting the clerk shall announce the numbers of votes cast for, against and abstentions and announce whether the motion has been passed or lost.
- c) Members should abstain from voting where they have not been present for the whole of the discussion around a particular item.
- d) In accordance with Standing Order 30.01, where a member has a disclosable pecuniary interest, they should withdraw from the meeting. The clerk will facilitate this by removing a member with such an interest from the virtual meeting at the appropriate time. As soon as that item of business is concluded, the member will be re-admitted.

1.5 Access to Information

- a) The requirement to ensure meetings are open to the public includes access by remote means, such as live audio or video stream on the website. Where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means, the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person. The agenda will be published on the website in accordance with current timescales.
- b) Any requirements for the authority to ensure publication, posting or making available a document for inspection at offices of the council include publication on the council's website.

1.6 Record of Attendance

Members are not required to sign their name in the attendance book when attending a remote meeting. A record of attendance will be produced by the clerk following a roll call at the beginning of the meeting.