

## Hybrid Committee Meeting Protocol

1. With limited space available in the Council Chamber, any member wishing to participate in the meeting in the Council Chamber must give prior notice to Democratic Services no later than 24 hours before the meeting. A space will be allocated to those members in the Council Chamber which will be their workspace for the day as well as the meeting. 6 seats are available in the Council Chamber, an additional seat reserved for the chair if they wish to be present in the chamber, and another seat set aside as a contingency for another member who may have ICT issues. Four seats at the front are reserved for officers/guests presenting at the committee and may need to be rotated depending on the agenda.

The number of members present in the chamber for a meeting may need to be reviewed and amended due to the needs of the meeting. For example, for a planning committee where they may be additional speakers addressing the committee.

### **Discussion point**

Should seats be allocated on a first come first served basis? Should seats be limited on a politically balanced basis? A seat set aside for each political party plus a couple of extras? Should a seat be automatically available for the vice chair as well?

2. Remotees, be that members or officers are to sign in to meeting 15 minutes before meeting is due to start. This will allow everyone opportunity to ensure their Camera, Microphone and sound settings are working and allows time to make adjustments ahead of the meeting.

If you are using a device other than your dedicated council laptop such as a mobile phone or a tablet, please try joining the meeting a couple of days in advance to check that you can join the meeting as a participant and are not taken to the live stream.

[Guidance on using TEAMS and the functionality within it, including the various settings options and troubleshooting is available on the hub here](#)

If you are a member participating in the Council Chamber, or you will need to do prior to the meeting is ensure the meeting chat is available for you to use within Teams. All voting and indicating to speak will be done through the chat as with fully remote meetings but if you are in the chamber you do not join the video call.

3. If people are addressing the committee from outside organisations, democratic services will need advanced notification of their participation from the organising officer. This is particularly important if the guest is addressing the committee remotely and time should be allowed to test the connection in advance of the meeting.
4. Any guest or officer presentations that are to be shared as part of the committee will need to be circulated by email to all councillors in advance of the meeting, either by democratic services or the officers themselves, as remotees may not be able to view the presentation clearly.

5. Just before the start of the meeting, Democratic Services will inform the chair that we will start the live stream. All remotees, except the chair of the meeting, should mute their microphone AND switch off their camera to ensure there is no disturbance in the meeting. ***Please be aware that your audio will be appear on the live stream at all times even if you are not addressing the committee.***
6. Members and officers will have tested their equipment prior to the start of the meeting so there is no need for individual introductions. This would be difficult in terms of order and delays going back and forth.
7. If a member has a declaration of interest for an agenda item they should make democratic services aware of this in advance of the meeting. Particularly where the member with the interest is attending remotely, prior notification allows the meeting to run smoothly. Further information on declarations of interest is below.
8. The chair will provide an overview of the agenda item and invite the relevant officer(s) to give an introduction to the item. The Chair will then switch off their microphone, and if attending the meeting remotely, switch off their camera whilst the officer does the opposite. The Chair will be provided with an amended agenda front sheet that gives details on who to introduce for each item and whether they are in the chamber or participating remotely.
9. Whilst the officer is giving their overview, if another committee member wishes to speak or ask a question, they should make their intention clear in the 'chat' facility for the meeting by clicking the raise hand button. This will bring it to the attention of the Chair who will invite you in at the relevant point in the meeting.

If you are attending the meeting remotely you can access the chat facility by clicking on the speech bubble icon in the toolbar and if you hover your mouse over the icon, it will say show conversation.

If you are attending the meeting in the Council Chamber, you will need to ensure you have Teams open and are within the Chat area of teams. Whilst you will not join the meeting in Teams, you will still use the chat facility to interact with the meeting.

**Remember to unmute your microphone and switch your camera back on before you begin to speak otherwise other participants won't be able to hear or see you.**

10. When it is time to vote on an agenda item, voting will also take place in the chat facility whether you attend the meeting remotely or in the council chamber. This will be open to committee members only and voting preferences will remain anonymous to all participants. Democratic Services will create a poll that will appear in the chat down the right hand side of the screen. To cast your vote, simply click your preference followed by submit vote. Votes will be calculated in real time for the chair to see and declare as necessary. Please bear in mind that if you are unsure if your vote has been counted or not, you can submit your vote as many times as you like and it will still only count one vote for you.
  - a. Contingency – if the poll doesn't work or you cannot cast your vote for some reason or the result of the vote is close, it is likely that we will move to an individual verbal vote for clarity of all participants and the public.

[Guidance on how to use the chat facility and vote is available on the hub here](#)

11. Repeat the remaining steps until the meeting is concluded and all agenda items have been discussed and, where necessary, voted on.

### Declarations of Interest

Members who have an interest to declare on an agenda item will notify democratic services and the chair of the declaration and the nature of the interest in advance of the meeting.

If your interest is Pecuniary or prejudicial, you will be required to leave the meeting for the duration of the item. You can do this by clicking leave at the top of the screen or clicking the red square with the white telephone in the toolbar in Teams. Leaving a meeting does not prevent you re-joining at it another time. Obviously, if you are participating in the meeting in the Council Chamber then you will be asked to leave the room for the duration of that item.

The chair will need to be content that the member(s) have left the meeting and is not taking part in the debate. The chair can check the participants in the meeting by clicking the 'show participants' button in the toolbar next to the chat icon. This can be used to check they have left the meeting as well as having re-joined the meeting on conclusion of the item.

Democratic Services will contact the members that have left the meeting to inform them when they can re-join. Members can re-join the meeting in the same way they did initially via the link to the meeting in outlook or Teams.

Democratic Services will email the declaration of interest form to members for completion and return following the meeting.

### Confidential Items

All participants need to be mindful of adhering to the rules on confidential agenda items and ensure that no other individuals can see or hear the conversation that is taken place. It is your responsibility to ensure that it remains confidential and you need to be aware of your surroundings to ensure that no other person can overhear the discussion. Practical considerations for confidential items include using headphones to hear the conversation rather than listening through speakers and ensuring that you are isolated from other people.

Members are still bound by the code of conduct for remote meetings in the same way as physical meetings and expected behaviours and principals remain in place.

### Pause/Adjourn Meeting

As with the current arrangements for streaming meetings, we are unable to pause and restart the live stream. Should a meeting require adjournment or a short break, the Chair will need to be clear on the time for recommencing the meeting and all participants will need to adhere to the restart time. During adjournment, all microphones and cameras should be switched off to prevent any unnecessary discussions being overheard.

### Moving and Seconding Items

At the point in the meeting where members are required to move and second an agenda item, members should make their intention clear in the 'chat' by typing 'moved' or 'seconded'. There is no need to speak your preference and the chair will ask you at the relevant point to write your intention there.

### Points of Order

If a member wishes to raise a point of order during the meeting they will need to write in the 'chat' 'point of order'. The monitoring officer and democratic services will monitor this chat and pause proceedings to ask the member raising the point of order for details of what the point of order are.

The Monitoring Officer will then make a decision as to the validity of the point of order and continue the meeting on the basis of that outcome.

### Contingency

Should the technology between the Council Chamber and remotees fail, the meeting will be adjourned for a short period to try and rectify the issue. If this is not possible the meeting will either move to be held fully remotely through Microsoft Teams or will need to be postponed until another time.