REMOTE/VIRTUAL MEETINGS

GOVERNANCE PROTOCOL

Status: good practice agreed through political consensus. Author: Head of Governance Strategy and Performance Date agreed: Date for review:

PURUPOSE OF THIS PROTOCOL
Remote/virtual meetings can be trickier to convene than conventional meetings. It is considered helpful in terms of good governance principles to have additional measures in place to assist with the smooth running of such meetings. The Council's Standing Orders still apply with remote/virtual meetings. This protocol complements Standing Orders and it is proposed that the protocol is adopted as good practice through political consensus.

AT LEAST THE DAY BEFORE THE MEETING		
1	Pre-meeting	CMT Admin will arrange a pre-meet to go through the agenda to identify any-pertinent issues arising from the meeting agenda, any written questions or Notices of Motion received and identify which officers will be responding to questions on reports if required. Clerk and Chair to agree if any preliminary remarks are required, beyond those noted below. The clerk will ensure that first-time participants have been offered an induction session for Connect Remote
2	Joining meeting and access to papers	Members should contact the clerk if they need advice on joining the meeting, using Connect Remote or accessing papers.
3	Pre-notification of interests	Inform the Clerk of any interests being declared and whether withdrawing or not, to help the Clerk follow correct Connect Remote procedures.
3	Substitutes	Inform Clerk of substitutes (where permitted) attending to allow Connect Remote invitation to be sent.

| 4 | Fair notice of motions/amendments | It can be harder to co-ordinate officer advice at short notice with remote meetings. Where a Member wishes to put forward a motion/amendment which differs significantly from the recommendations within a report on the agenda they are encouraged to provide a written copy of the proposal to the clerk by 2pm on the working day before the meeting.

The clerk may offer or coordinate advice on the terms of the motion/amendment and will circulate it amongst the council/committee Members with the consent of the proposer.

It is understood that
• advance notice of a motion/amendment may not be possible with urgent/last minute agenda items
• Even if advance notice has been given there will still be an opportunity to raise further changes to motions/amendments at meetings
• Where a motion/amendment which is a significant departure from agenda report recommendations is raised during a meeting there is a risk that the motion/amendment is deemed incompetent by the Chair in terms of Standing Order 34. |
| 5. | Advance notice of questions | It is harder to have officers on hand to answer questions that arise during a remote meeting. Members are encouraged to raise factual questions with officers in advance of a meeting and make use the written questions procedure within SO 35. |

ON THE DAY OF THE MEETING		
1	Joining the meeting on time	Join Connect Remote Meeting at least fifteen minutes before the Committee meeting is due to start. Ensure that video and audio is selected and switched on. All present should mute audio until invited to speak by the Chair. All should be aware that the meeting will be webcast live over the internet and be mindful of their surroundings particularly as most will likely be joining the meeting from their own home. If there are other people in the home, they should be made aware that you will be filmed. This is particularly important if there are children/young adults in the household as the footage will be archived and available for public viewing for 12 months following the meeting.

2	Chair	The Chair should join the meeting using their video.
3	Equipment check	The clerk will welcome those joining the meeting as they arrive and test cameras and microphones then request microphones are muted and cameras off when not speaking. Confirm to the Chair when all Members are present.

AT THE START OF THE MEETING		
1	Welcome and formalities	Chair to state:- • Welcome • Reminder of live webcast • All attendees reminded to mute microphones and switch off camera when not speaking • Please do not come in to speak during items unless I invite you to do so • If you wish to speak let us know by raising the electronic hand on-screen or sending a chat message • If any Member loses connection or have any technical issues during the meeting, please alert the Committee Officer on stand by via telephone . We may not be able to halt the meeting if a Member loses connection

ORDER OF BUSINESS etc.		
1	Roll Call	• The clerk shall take the Sederunt by checking which Members are in the Connect Remote Meeting, by roll call
2	Introductory	The chair shall deal with :- • Other introductory remarks, if any • Urgent business, if any • Re-order reports if appropriate
3	Declarations of Interest	As normal
4	Confidential items	As normal
5	Minutes	As normal

DURING THE MEETING		

| 1 | Declaration of interest | Where a Member has declared an interest in the item they should withdraw from the discussion. The chair will remind the Member that they cannot speak or communicate with others present.

The chair should remember to advise the Member that they may re-join after conclusion of the affected item of business. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | Presentation materials | Any presentation material should be provided to the Clerk in advance of the meeting in order that it can be circulated to members prior to the meeting.

A presentation can be given at the meeting by the Officer sharing his screen, this will allow the presentation to be visible on the webcast. |
4	Meeting proceedings	The chair will • conduct proceedings as usual in accordance with Standing Orders and any committee-specific procedures • Pause and delay if necessary to ensure efficient meeting and participation by all • When moving between procedural stages ask if all Members have spoken who wished to do so • Pause and adjourn for a short time if procedural or legal advice is required, explaining and ensuring all microphones are muted and cameras off before doing so.
5	Use of "hands up" sign	The clerk will assist the chair in identifying Members wishing to speak by monitoring 'hands up' signs.
6	Leaving a meeting before it has concluded	When a Member needs to leave the meeting before it has concluded they should put a message into the chat advising the Clerk and Chair who in turn can advise the meeting that a member has left.

DEBATE, MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS		
1	Debate	Debate shall be controlled through the chair as normal. Members should aim to be as clear and concise as possible.
2	Written material	If written material needs to be circulated during the meeting (where advance notice was not possible) this shall be shared with other Members and relevant officers using the chat function or by the officer

		sharing their screen. If possible, such material should be kept within one side of A4. The chair will consider the competency of any such material, taking advice from officers where appropriate.
3	Adjournment	If required the meeting shall be paused or adjourned to allow written material to be shared and read. At the resumption of the meeting the Chair will ask for a roll call to be taken to ensure that they are present and connected.

VOTING AND DECISION		
1	Voting	At close of summing-up the chair shall instruct the clerk to proceed to the vote. The clerk shall • share their screen in order that all Members can access the electronic voting, • invite Members to vote using the relevant icons that will appear on their screens, • the clerk will confirm that all Members have voted before closing the vote and thereafter declare the result which will also be visible on screen; If for any reason the Electronic Voting system fails, the clerk will revert to taking the vote manually and shall • Advise Members to activate their microphones, vote and then mute again • Take the vote by roll call, pausing to allow each Member time to vote • If a Member does not vote when contacted, return to them at the end for a second opportunity
2	Drop out during vote	If Members do not respond when asked to vote the chair shall investigate and consider whether the meeting should be adjourned.
3	Announcement of vote	The clerk shall announce the result of the vote

QUESTION TIME		
1	All Members	Members should note that, in virtual meetings, it is harder to have officers on hand to answer spontaneous questions at the "question time" part of the agenda so there is an increased likelihood that on the spot answers will not be available. Members are

		therefore encouraged, where possible, to use the written questions procedure within SO 35.
2	Chair	Seek questions by asking Members to raise the virtual hand

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS		
1	Pause in meeting	The chair shall pause the meeting to allow the Clerk to ensure Members of the public are not present and remind that only those who require to be present at the meeting should remain. The clerk will ensure that any public webcast link is stopped and that only those who require to be connected to the meeting remain.
3	Resume meeting to consider confidential items.	The chair shall resume the meeting and deal with business as usual

IN THE EVENT OF TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES		
1	Loss of sound/vision	Members should alert the clerk on standby via telephone if they are having technical difficulties. The standby clerk will alert the meeting Clerk who shall clarify the extent of the issue with the Chair.
2	Continuation of the meeting	If temporary dropout which is now resolved, the Chair can proceed with the meeting, unless the matter is quasi-judicial or regulatory in which case advice should be sought from the clerk. If ongoing issue, advise that the meeting will be adjourned for a short period to allow investigation and resolution if possible. If the issue cannot be resolved, continue with the meeting if quorate.