

PROTOCOL FOR REMOTE MEETINGS

NOTE: This Protocol may need to be adapted according to the type of meeting held. It should be read in conjunction with the User Guide for members of the public

Introduction

The provisions in this Protocol for remote meetings supplement the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution (the Council's Standing Orders) in relation to the governance of remote meetings.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 expired on 7 May 2021. At its Annual General Meeting on 5 May 2021, the County Council resolved to continue with remote access, live broadcast committee meetings over the coming months as the national Covid-19 recovery roadmap is implemented. These meetings are informal but open to the public to view and participate in, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Council's Constitution.

Any formal decisions that the Council needs to make will be made by the Chief Executive Officer using his emergency delegated powers, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee and all relevant information.

General:

- All informal remote meetings will be streamed so they are available to the public. The meetings will be recorded and a copy of the recording placed on the council's website and YouTube pages.
- The meeting will be available to view once the meeting commences, via the following link www.northyorks.gov.uk/livemeetings
Recordings of previous live broadcast meetings will be available there and also on the County Council's YouTube site at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0gjJEz3veF4w-9y9Hqnm4A>
- If the technology fails for a wholly remote meeting and the meeting is no longer open to the public, any recommendations made could be challenged. It is therefore particularly important that councillors attending a meeting join sufficiently early to test their connectivity to the

live event and for an officer to verify that the meeting is, indeed, being live streamed to the public.

Prior to the meeting

Access to papers

- Democratic Services will publish the agenda and papers in the usual way on the council's website. A printed copy will be available for inspection at the council's offices. There will be an agreed form of wording on the agenda that this will be a remote meeting and specifying how public questions will be dealt with.

Public Questions and Statements

- Members of the public must still submit any questions/statements in writing three working days prior to the meeting. They will be offered the opportunity to read out their question/statement at the remote meeting, via video conferencing, or have it read out by the Chair or Democratic Services Officer. If the questions/statements are read out by the Chair or Democratic Services Officer, then there will be no opportunity for a supplementary question to be asked.

At the meeting: 1. Process

Joining/leaving

- All participants to "join" at least ten minutes prior to the meeting (to give time to resolve any technical issues that may arise).
- Any councillor who joins the meeting late should highlight this to the Chair at the first possible opportunity.
- Any councillor who needs to *leave* the meeting early should advise the Chair.

Quorum

- Normal quorum rules will apply.

Consideration of business

- *Minutes*: The Chair to seek approval of the minutes and take matters arising in the usual way. NOTE: The Chair will be sent a hard copy of the minutes in the post to sign and return to Legal and Democratic Services.

- *Declarations of interest:* Councillors must comply with the Members' Code of Conduct, including making declarations of interest at a meeting. Any declarations made will be recorded in the minutes. A councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest in an Item who has to leave the meeting should declare their interest verbally to the Chair and leave the meeting. Once the item has been dealt with, the Democratic Services Officer will tell the councillor when they may re-join the meeting.
- *Public Questions or Statements:* Members of the public must still submit any questions/statements in writing three working days prior to the meeting. They will be offered the opportunity to read out their question/statement at the remote meeting, via video conferencing, or have it read out by the Chair or Democratic Services Officer. If the questions/statements are read out by the Chair or Democratic Services Officer, then there will be no opportunity for a supplementary question to be asked.
- *Reports:* The committee will consider the order of business on the published agenda.
- If there are no exempt or confidential items, the Chair to conclude the meeting and confirm it has ended.

Exempt or Confidential Items

- During consideration of any exempt or confidential item of business the live stream of the meeting will be temporarily suspended.

Voting

- If an item requires a vote, the Democratic Services Officer will ask councillors to confirm their vote. NOTE: Any councillor who loses connection during any part of an item that has a vote should consider whether this makes it appropriate for them to take part in the vote.

At the meeting: 2. Technological issues that may arise

Loss of connection

- In the event of the technology failing, proceedings, either visually, orally, or in terms of connection, the Chair will determine if the meeting is still quorate. If it is then the business of the meeting will continue. The quorum for each committee can be found in the council's Constitution.

- If there is no quorum following failure of the connection then the meeting shall be adjourned by the Chair for a period of no more than 10 to 15 minutes, while attempts are made to re-establish the connection.
- If the connection for the councillor cannot be restored, the Chair will decide whether or not the meeting will continue. In order to continue, the meeting must still be quorate.
- If the connection to the public stream cannot be restored, the meeting must be adjourned to a future time and date.

Following the meeting

Minutes and the Recording

- Minutes will be produced in the normal way and a draft placed on the council's website.
- A recording of the meeting (excluding consideration of any exempt or confidential matters) will be placed on the council's website.