

Protocol for Online meetings of Audit & Governance Committee

Introduction

During the period when meetings cannot be held in person, Audit & Governance Committee is to be reconvened as an online meeting to carry out its important scrutiny role. The Committee oversees the Council's regulatory framework: contracts; financial regulations; and risk management. It also monitors the treasury management strategy, the sign off the accounts and considers reports of both the Council's internal and external auditors. This meeting acts as the Council's Audit Committee and has been appointed in accordance with good practice advice from the Audit Commission and CIPFA. At a time of such financial uncertainty, the Audit & Governance Committee's overseeing scrutiny role has never been more important.

Membership

It is proposed to retain the Committee membership at 8 councillors based on 5 Labour; 2 Conservative; and 1 Green.

The nominated members of each Group are:

Labour (5)	Cllrs Davies, Edwards, Emberson, Gittings, McKenna
Conservative (2)	Cllrs Robinson and Stevens
Green (1)	Cllr J Williams

Quorum

No change is proposed - the current quorum is 3

Attendance

- Substitution is allowed so that where a nominated member cannot attend then the Group Leader can nominate another member of their Group to attend in their place.

Public Participation

Members of the public will be able to follow the meeting 'live' in order to meet the legal requirement for meetings to be held 'in public'. Information will be published with the agenda on how to do this on the Council's website.

Councillor participation

The usual councillor questions and speaking on agenda items procedure is to be suspended. All councillors who wish to make representations on an item must work with their political group to ensure that those points can be addressed by the nominated member(s) of the Committee.

Voting

Formal votes at meetings of the Audit & Governance Committee are rare. However, in the event a vote is required at an online meeting, the Chairman will ask each individual Councillor to declare whether they are for, against or abstaining orally. This will be done

in order to achieve clarity to the decision-making process, as councillors will not all be visible during the voting process.

Declaring Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillors with a disclosable pecuniary interest must declare the existence of the interest and leave the meeting. This will be achieved by the member pausing or exiting the online meeting temporarily for the duration of the item of business in which they have the interest. Once the item of business has been dealt with, the Chairman or Committee Administrator will invite the member to return to the meeting.

Exempt and Confidential Business

Where a Committee passes a resolution to exclude the press and public from an item or items of business to consider exempt or confidential information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), this (Part 2) business will be conducted in a separate private online meeting. Before any councillor can take part in discussing exempt and/or confidential business they must confirm to the Chairman that they are in a location where no person not entitled to be party to that information can hear or participate in the discussion/ decision in respect of the restricted business.

Management of meeting

The success of the online meetings will depend on the ability of the participants to interact with each other via the system and the ability of the Chairman to manage the meeting despite the unfamiliar setting.

The Chairman will decide a practical protocol for management of the debate and decision-making - e.g. calling of speakers, self-introduction before speaking, vote taken by asking members in turn rather than show of hands. Changes to this protocol can be implemented from time to time by the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chairman.

Protocol for Online Traffic Management Sub-Committee

Introduction

During the period when meetings cannot be held in person, Traffic Management Sub-Committee is to be reconvened as an online meeting to carry out its important role dealing with traffic management functions and discretionary parking permits. The Sub-Committee determines transport and traffic management schemes which affect the public highway and may require a regulatory process for which the Council as the Transport Authority for the area is responsible. The role of the Sub-Committee is currently more critical to enable the Council to react as promptly as possible to recent Government additional statutory guidance on the reallocation of road space in order to support local authorities to manage their road networks in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

This Protocol outlines some changes proposed to facilitate successful online meetings of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee, by reducing the number of participants and the complexity of the meetings.

Membership

In order to make the online meetings more manageable it is proposed to reduce the number of participants, by keeping officer attendance to a minimum and reducing the number of Committee members attending while retaining representation from all political groups.

The online meetings will therefore be attended by 10 members supported by the committee administrator and the relevant transport officers, based on the following proportionality: 6 Labour; 2 Conservative; 1 Green; and 1 Liberal Democrat.

All members attending the online meetings will be drawn from the membership of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee as agreed at the Policy Committee on 27 May 2020, subject to the rules of substitution set out below.

The nominated members of each Group to attend the online meetings are:

Labour (6)	From Cllrs David Absolom, Debs Absolom, Barnett-Ward, Ennis, Hacker, Page & Terry (to be confirmed)
Conservative (3)	Cllrs Carnell and Stanford-Beale
Green (1)	Cllr Whitham
Liberal Democrats (1)	Cllr Duveen

Quorum

No change is proposed to the current quorum of three.

Attendance

The Leader of each political group is responsible for ensuring that the most relevant members of Traffic Management Sub-Committee attend the meeting.

- **Substitute members**

- (a) Where a nominated member cannot attend, the relevant Group Leader will be able to select another member of the full Traffic Management Sub-Committee to attend.
- (b) Where a Group has only one member of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee appointed in the current year (2020/21) and that member is unable to attend an online meeting, the relevant Group Leader will be entitled to nominate a substitute member from the Group.

Managing the meeting

The success of the online meetings will depend on the ability of the participants to interact with each other via the system and the ability of the Chair to manage the meeting despite the unfamiliar setting.

The Chair will decide a practical protocol for management of the debate and decision-making - e.g. calling of speakers, self-introduction before speaking, vote taken by asking members in turn rather than show of hands. Changes to this protocol can be implemented from time to time by the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair.

Given the potential difficulty of tabling and circulating documents at an online meeting Standing Order 39 is amended to specify that, where councillors are pre-disposed to make any proposed amendments, these should be submitted to the Chair, all nominated members of the Committee and the Strategic Transportation Programme Manager by email at least 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting. This does not preclude any amendments to officer recommendations, which may still be tabled during the meeting as a result of the discussions during the debate.

Business to be considered

To make the online meetings focussed on the important business of the Pandemic Response and the Recovery, officers are also seeking to control the business to essential items only. This will mean that fewer reports will be presented and those that are will need to be agreed by the Chair, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport and the Strategic Transportation Programme Manager.

Public participation and attendance

The facility for Ward Councillors to speak on items will continue.

Members of the public will be able to follow the meeting 'live' in order to meet the legal requirement for meetings to be held 'in public'. Information will be published with the agenda on how to do this.

Voting

Votes at online meetings will be taken by the Chair asking each individual Councillor to declare whether they are for, against or abstaining orally in order to achieve clarity to the decision-making process.

Declaring Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members with a disclosable pecuniary interest must declare the existence of the interest and leave the meeting. This will be achieved by the member pausing or exiting the online meeting temporarily for the duration of the item of business in which they have the interest. Once the item of business has been dealt with, the Chair or Committee Administrator will invite the member to return to the meeting.

Exempt and Confidential Business

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