

Standing Orders – Remote/Hybrid Meetings

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Standing Order

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I1 Introduction

- I1.1 These Remote/Hybrid Meetings Standing Orders have been developed in line with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which expired on 7 May 2021, to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and ensure essential business continues whilst upholding democratic principles and protecting the health and safety of Councillors, officers and the public, in line with Public Health guidance.

I2 Scope and Application

- I2.1 These Remote/Hybrid Meetings Standing Orders apply to all meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Boards, Committees and Sub-Committees that are to be held from 7 May 2021 until 21 June 2021 or such other date as the Government's social distancing requirements are lifted.

Accordingly, all Standing Orders are to be read subject to these Remote/Hybrid Meetings Standing Orders, including:

- (a) Council Meetings
- (b) Committees and Sub-Committees
- (c) Cabinet
- (d) Overview and Scrutiny
- (e) Access to Information
- (f) Health and Wellbeing

I3. Interpretation

- I3.1 Reference to the 2020 Regulations are to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and the words "remote access" and "remote attendance", had the meaning given to them by the former 2020 Regulations, namely:

Remote access of public and press to a local authority meeting to enable them to attend or participate in that meeting by electronic means, including by telephone conference, video conference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming; and

A Councillor in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time if all of the conditions are satisfied:

- (a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other Councillors in attendance;
- (b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
- (c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

- 13.2 Decision makers and key officers will attend remote/hybrid meetings in person, normally at the Town Hall, Torquay with all other interested parties including other Councillors, officers, members of the public and registered speakers, encouraged to attend the meetings remotely via Zoom, to ensure that the least number of attendees are present to and meet the requirements of the Council's Covid-19 Security/Safety Risk Assessment.

14. Time and access to meetings

- 14.1 Meetings will be held at the time notified on the agenda and include arrangements for obtaining access via electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers, as well as the physical location for members of the committee/board etc.

15. Attendance and Remote Connection

- 15.1 The Civic Mayor/Chair will commence the meeting, by taking the attendance by roll call to confirm the meeting is quorate.
- 15.2 In the event of a loss of connection and/or an evacuation from the physical meeting room, the meeting will be immediately adjourned until the physical attendees are able to re-join the hybrid meeting.

16. Method of voting at remote/hybrid meetings

- 16.1 On a motion being put to the vote, the Civic Mayor/Chair will ask each decision-making member, taking each in alphabetical order, to say if they are for or against the motion or whether they abstain. The Civic Mayor/Chair will immediately announce the numerical result of the vote.

17. Interests of members attending meetings virtually

- 17.1 A Councillor attending virtually who would ordinarily be required to leave the room during the consideration of an item of business due to the Councillor having a disclosable pecuniary interest or to having such other interest as the Council's Code of Conduct may require the Councillor to do so, shall be deemed to have done so when the Councillor declares their interests and withdraws from the virtual element of the meeting.
- 17.2 Where reasonably practicable to do so, a Councillor who has an interest under Standing Order 17.1 that would require him/her to leave the meeting, should notify the clerk in advance of the meeting.

18. Remote/Hybrid access to meetings by the public and the Press

18.1 Right to be present at a meeting by remote access

Members of the public and the Press have the right to hear and where practicable to do so, to see those formal meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Boards, Committees and Sub-Committees by remote access to ensure social distancing measures are met, except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private.

18.2 Details of remote access to be included on agenda

Details of how members of the public and of the Press can hear and where practicable to do so, to see the meeting, will be included on the notice of/agenda for the meeting.

18.3 Discussion of confidential business and disclosure of exempt information

Upon the Council, Cabinet, Board, Committee or Sub-Committee passing a motion to exclude the public and Press from the meeting due to the discussion of confidential business or exempt information, the rights of the public and the Press to see or see and hear, the meeting shall cease and their electronic access will be disconnected and the recording of the meeting will be stopped.

19. Conduct during meetings

19.1 The decision making Councillors attending the physical meeting in person, shall raise their actual hand and will only be permitted to speak, when called upon to do so by the Civic Mayor/Chair. Councillors in remote attendance or any member of the public exercising a right to speak in remote attendance, will only be permitted to speak, when called upon to do so by the Civic Mayor/Chair and shall cease to speak, when told to so by the Civic Mayor/Chair. At the beginning of each item and after any officer presentation, the Civic Mayor/Chair will ask Councillors attending remotely to indicate, by using the 'raise hand function', whether they wish to speak. The meeting host will advise the Civic Mayor/Chair which Councillors have requested to speak during the debate. Unless speaking microphones shall be muted to minimise background noise.

19.2 Subject to Remote/Hybrid Meetings Standing Order 19.1, when a Councillor is speaking, no other Councillor in remote or physical attendance shall interrupt that Councillor or seek to speak over that Councillor.

- 19.3 If a Councillor interrupts or seeks to speak over a Councillor who has been called upon to speak by the Civic Mayor/Chair, the Civic Mayor/Chair will warn the person concerned. If the person concerned persists in doing so at any time during the remainder of the meeting, the Civic Mayor/Chair shall mute the audio of the Councillor concerned or request the meeting host to remove them permanently from the meeting.