

11. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS - VIRTUAL MEETINGS (JS)

1. Purpose of the report

To approve temporary amendments to Part 1 of the Authority's Standing Orders to facilitate Virtual Meetings of the Authority and its Standing Committees.

Key Issues

- **Before the Covid-19 Emergency Local Authorities including National Park Authorities could not make decisions in virtual meetings.**
- **Measures were included in the Coronavirus Act 2020 which made provision for the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to make regulation to facilitate attendance and decision making at remote meetings.**
- **The Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 became effective on 4th April which allows virtual meetings of the Authority and its Standing Committees. The Regulations apply to meetings held before 7 May 2021.**
- **Part 1 of Standing Orders regulate the operation of meetings of the Authority and its Standing Committees. The report proposes that minor temporary amendments be made to Standing Orders to provide clarity on how virtual meetings will operate.**

2. Recommendations

- 1. To approve the temporary amendments to Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. To note the etiquette for virtual meetings of the Authority and its Committees as set out in Appendix 2.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

- 3. Before the Covid-19 Emergency the Authority could not make decisions in virtual meetings.**
- 4. The Coronavirus Act 2020 made provision for the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to make regulations to facilitate attendance and decision making at remote meetings.**
- 5. The Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020" became effective on 4th April. These Regulations mean that the Authority may now legally hold virtual meetings of the Authority and its Standing Committees subject to requirements relating to allowing public access to the meetings and allowing them to participate.**

Background Information

- 6. On 1 April the Secretary of State made regulations "The Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020" which became effective on 4th April which apply to National Park Authorities. This means that the Authority may now legally**

hold virtual meetings of the Authority and its Standing Committees.

7. The Regulations make provisions for:
 - Issuing an electronic notice of meeting to Members and the public instead of a paper one;
 - Permitting remote attendance and decision making by Members through video or telephone conferencing meetings;
 - Facilitating remote access to meetings of the Authority and its Committees by Members and the press and public;
 - Removing the requirement that the first meeting of the Authority to take place after 31 May is the annual meeting;
 - Publishing Background Papers.
8. Although the Regulations can be applied without amending Part 1 of the Authority's Standing Orders it is proposed that they be amended as set out in Appendix 1.
9. To complement the amendments to Standing Orders a document setting out suggestions on the etiquette for virtual meetings has been prepared. This is attached as Appendix 2.

Proposals

10. To approve the temporary amendments to Part 1 of Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 1 and note the etiquette for virtual meetings of the Authority and its Committees set out in Appendix 2.

Are there any corporate implications Members should be concerned about?

Financial:

11. Additional licences have been purchased to set up the platform needed to set up virtual meetings but these have been contained within existing delegated budgets.

Risk Management:

12. The proposed amendments aim to provide clarity around the temporary arrangements and minimises the risk that decisions made at virtual meetings could be challenged.

Sustainability:

13. None

Equality:

14. None

15. Background papers (not previously published)

None

16. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Proposed amendments to Part 1 of Standing Orders.
Appendix 2 - Etiquette for virtual meetings of the Authority and its Committees

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