

Note to Chairs on Virtual Meetings

Following a number of virtual meetings of the Authority and its Committees using WebEx we thought it might be useful to provide this guidance to help Chairs carry out their duties.

Note that before the meeting starts a welcome page will be displayed on the screen rather than the participants' video as they arrive. This is used to help us set up the live YouTube Broadcast and will be taken down as soon as the meeting starts. Note that if for any reason we cannot start the Broadcast or it stops the meeting cannot legally continue. A Member of the Democratic and Legal Support Team will advise you if this is the case and if it happens it may be useful to briefly adjourn the meeting to attempt to reconnect.

Please can you cover the following at the start of the meeting

- **Welcome** – Remember to welcome those listening on-line to the meeting as well as Members.
- **Announce** – That a video recording of the meeting is being webcast live and a copy will then be available on the Authority website for the next three years.
- **Roll Call** – Ask a Member of the Democratic and Legal Support Team to carry out a roll call of the Members present.
- **Declaring Interests** – Ask Members to declare their interests and any lobbying received during the roll call. If a Member has an interest that prevents them from participating in an item the Democratic and Legal Support Team will move them into the lobby during that item and bring them back in when the item has finished.
- **Participation** – Remind Members that if they lose their connection during an item and therefore missed part of the officer introductions or debate they should declare this to the meeting and abstain from voting on that item.
- **Video** – In a spirit of openness and transparency ask Members to make sure that their cameras are switched on throughout the course of the meeting.
- **Microphones** – Ask Members to switch off their microphones when not speaking and remind them that Standing Orders require them to turn off any devices they are not using for the meeting such as mobile phones.
- **Request to speak** – Ask Members to use the raise hand/request to speak function in WebEx to indicate that they wish to speak and wait until invited to speak by the Chair. The Democratic and Legal Support Team are looking out for Members using this function and will alert you to requests by private message

Please can you also bear in mind the following while the meeting progresses.....

- **Process** – Please refer to the attached process diagram which provides a recommended sequence to be used for each agenda item which aims to make sure that the correct process is followed and everyone gets a chance to contribute.
- **Microphones & Cameras** – Remind Members and Officers to switch on/off their microphones and cameras if they forget.
- **Hands Up** – Remind Members to put their “hands down” after they have spoken.
- **Public Participation** – Under the Covid-19 arrangements we have provided members of the public with three ways in which they can contribute to the a meeting
 - A written statement – This will be read out to the meeting by a member of the Democratic and Legal Support Team.

- A pre-recorded video or audio statement – This will be presented to the meeting at the relevant point.
- A live telephone call. The Democratic and Legal Support Team will connect the call to the meeting, check that the caller can be heard, give instructions to the caller and start the timer. Note that because of the way the system works and to avoid feedback interference the caller cannot hear the Chair while they are on the call.

Although they may no longer be present the Chair should thank the public participants for their contributions as they will still be watching the live stream.

- **Voting** – All voting (except for agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting and to note reports) will be carried out using a recorded vote. When it comes to a vote hand over to a Member of the Democratic and Legal Support Team to give instructions and call out the names. They will advise you of the results.
- **Summing up** – It is useful for members of the public listening on the internet if you clarify what has been agreed before moving on to the next item – It does not have to be too complicated “the application has been refused” or “the officer recommendation has been approved” is enough. Also remember to announce adjournments and the proposed duration.
- **Excluding the Press and Public** – The webcast will end immediately after the decision to exclude has been made. It would be really helpful if you could announce the end of the webcast at this stage and say goodbye to listeners. It is the webcasting equivalent to giving time for Members of the public to leave the room and it gives democratic services time to stop the broadcast.
- **Extending the meeting beyond 3 hours** – Remember that this standing order still applies to virtual meetings so if the meeting is likely to go beyond 1pm get consent from the Members to continue. A general assent is fine so no formal vote is needed.

Virtual Meeting Process Note

