

AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES FOR MULTI-LOCATION MEETINGS, REMOTE ATTENDANCE MEETINGS (RAM) AND HYBRID MEETINGS

Introduction: Since July 2020, we have been holding our meetings by remote attendance, as a result of the Covid regulations. The ability to hold remote meetings has been made permanent by section 47 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021. (Commencement order no 3, made 18th March 2021)

In 2020, we made some temporary changes to our rules of procedure as some rules would not be practicable at a remote attendance, rather than at a physical meeting. These were then temporary amendments, which were agreed with the Chair of Council, who by their appointment is recognised as the arbiter of rules of procedure within the Constitution.

Terms used:

- Remote attendance Meetings – RAM where all participants and observers are connected by a software platform. No one is ‘physically’ present at the meeting.
- Multi-location Meetings: the term now widely used to describe both RAM and hybrid meetings.
- Hybrid Meetings - where some people are physically present, but others contribute remotely

We now need to make the temporary changes, as detailed below, permanent. The proposed amendments, shown in italics, will ensure that our Rules of Procedure will work equally well for a Remote Attendance Meeting or, in the future, at multi-location/hybrid meetings.

Interpretation: Rule 6.3: The decision of the Chair of the meeting on all points of procedure and order and the Chair’s interpretation of any Procedure Rule shall be final and no debate may ensue thereon.

Declaration of Interest: Should a Member need to declare an interest and thus leave a Remote Attendance Meeting, the meeting host will transfer them electronically to the virtual waiting area for the duration of that item.

Rule of procedure number	Regarding	Comments and <i>proposed amendment for Remote Attendance Meetings</i>
7	Quorum	Whilst the number for a quorum remains the same at 18, Members may not all be physically present. <i>For a Remote Attendance Meeting of Council, this would be 18 Members shown on the system as participating. For other meetings, the requirement will be a quarter of the membership, rounded up where necessary. (Thus for a 13 member committee, the quorum would be four)</i>
8	Duration of Meeting	Council meetings normally start at 2pm and must ordinarily conclude by 5pm, unless at the Chair's discretion. Experience has shown that three hours using a screen is too long. <i>Our guidance for Remote Attendance Meetings, whilst not absolutely binding, for a break after two hours, should be observed. Our agendas now show the need for a break after a meeting has lasted for two hours.</i>
14	Previous Decisions and Motions	Normally 10 signatures are required. <i>For Remote Attendance Meetings this must be 10 emails from different individuals sent to the Head of Democratic Services.</i>
15.0	Voting	<p><i>We anticipate that for non –contentious issues, unless Members indicate their opposition or abstention on a vote, this can be conducted on a consensus basis, by ‘silent assent’, where only those wishing to oppose or abstain are required to indicate by use of the chat function, raising a hand, or verbally.</i></p> <p><i>Should a formal vote be required, this would have to be done following the usual Recorded Votes process.</i></p>
15.1	Majority	The reference to ‘members voting and present in the room at the time the question was put is not applicable for RAM. <i>Members voting must be visible to colleagues and observers/viewers (camera switched on, unless they have previously indicated</i>

		<i>technical problems or are dialing in) during that part of the RAM to be eligible to vote.</i>
15.3	Show of Hands	<i>At a Remote Attendance Meeting, voting by show of hands is not practicable: for instance, the position of the camera on I pads means hands may not always be visible to the officer conducting the count or to fellow Members. Voting at a Remote Attendance Meeting should either be by 'silent assent' or roll call</i>
15.4	Ballots	<i>At a Remote Attendance Meeting, formal ballots other than by the calling out of names in alphabetical order (in essence, the recorded vote process) are not possible. Many decision can be taken by consensus, with only those opposing or abstaining being required to show (See reference to 'silent assent' at 15.0)</i>
15.5	Recorded vote	<i>Should a recorded vote be required at a Remote Attendance Meeting, rather than stand, 10 Members will need to request this via the 'chat' function. 'I request a recorded vote'. The Monitoring Officer will remind Members of the procedure for a recorded vote and indicate when the requisite number of requests has been reached.</i>
16	Minutes	<i>The requirement to sign minutes was temporarily suspended. Minutes will be kept for signature until normal service is resumed.</i>
17.	Record of Attendance	<i>The Webex /Zoom recording constitutes a record of attendance and the officers will also make a manual record.</i>
18	Exclusion of Public and Press	<i>The press and public can be excluded from a RAM, after the exclusion has been moved, seconded and voted on.</i>
19	Members' Conduct	<i>See below</i>
19.1	Standing to Speak	<i>Members are not required to stand to speak at RAMs</i>
19.2	Chair standing	<i>The Chair is not required to stand, but may request that a Member's microphone is silenced.</i>

19.3	Member not to be heard further	The Chair will direct that the Member's microphone is switched off.
19.4	Member to leave the meeting	<i>The Chair will direct that the Member be moved into the virtual lobby</i>