

SUBJECT:	COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES RELATING TO REMOTE MEETINGS
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	CAROLYN WHEATER – CITY SOLICITOR

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the adoption of Council Procedure Rules relating to remote meetings of the Council. These are to cover the period in which the Council members are unable to meet in person, due to the impact of the coronavirus.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 make provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to, council meetings held on or before 7 May 2021.
- 2.2 The regulations enable the Council to hold meetings without all, or any, of the members being physically present in a room. This allows for remote meetings through electronic, digital, virtual locations, live webcast, live interactive streaming, video and telephone conferencing.

3. Procedure Rules

- 3.1 The 'place' at which the meeting is held may be a council building, or where the organiser of the meeting is located, or an electronic, digital or virtual location, a web address, or a conference call telephone number.
- 3.2 In order for members to be able to attend meetings of the council remotely, they need not be physically present, provided they are able to hear and be heard (and, where possible, see and be seen by) other councillors and members of the public attending remotely or in person.
- 3.3 Council Procedure Rules relating to remote meetings, as appended to this report, set out how remote meetings will be facilitated at the City of Lincoln Council. These procedure rules will apply to remote meetings in the same way as they do for other meetings of the council except where they conflict, in which case this procedure rule takes precedence over other procedure rules in relation to the governance of remote meetings. For example, the requirement to stand whilst speaking at meetings of Council will clearly not apply for a remote meeting of Council.

3.4 Access to information rules will still apply to remote meetings, such as the publication of agendas and reports at least five clear working days prior to the date of the meeting.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules
As outlined in the report.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

5. Recommendation

5.1 That the Council Procedure Rules relating to remote meetings, and to cover the aforementioned period, be approved.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None