

Virtual Annual Council Meeting Procedure Rules

Conduct of the Meeting

1. **Notice of a Remote Meeting** - The Proper Officer will give notice of the date and time of any remote meeting called under the Council Procedure Rules and shall provide details of how the remote meeting shall be conducted. The Notice, reports and background papers will be placed on the Local Authority website:
<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/listing/council-meetings>
2. **The Annual Council** meeting is a virtual/remote meeting in that it is being conducted at no specific location and all participants are at various locations, communicating via audio and online.
3. **The Regulations** (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 enable Council/Committee meetings to be held in a virtual format and enables remote attendance.
4. **Remote Attendance - means a person is able at that time:**
 - (a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members 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.
5. **Remote Access** - means by electronic means, including by telephone conference, videoconference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming.
6. **Types of Remote Link** - Members have been provided with the 8x8 Communications software to enable them to attend the remote Council meetings. Members should try to establish videoconference capability when they sit as Chair of Council and when they speak and vote. At all other times during the meeting they should turn off their videoconference and audio. If there are issues with capacity only the Chair of Council will remain on videoconference throughout the meeting. Members will be asked only to turn on the videoconference when voting.
7. **The Conduct** – details provided below are set out in relation to the Annual Council meeting under Rule 7 of the Council Constitution being held as a virtual/remote meetings.
8. **The Annual Council meeting** will comprise the Members of the Council and Officers required to be in attendance.
9. **Apologies for the meeting** - The apologies for the remote meeting should be given to the Committee Team in the usual manner via the Group Leader, by midday on the day of the meeting.
10. **The Minutes of the Council meeting** – to be approved by Members of the Council on their accuracy only and to be signed electronically by the Chair of Council and saved in the Committee folder until such time as the Chair can sign them.

- 11. Declaration of Interests** - Any Member participating by remote link who declares an interest in any item of business will be required to leave the remote meeting – this will be confirmed by the Committee Officer that the Member has left the meeting. The Committee Officer will confirm to the Member when they may re-join the remote meeting.
- 12. The Quorum for the Meeting** is 10 Members “in attendance”. Any Member participating by remote attendance shall be regarded as present for the purposes of determining quorum. In the event of any failure of the videoconference/audio (or both) the Chair of Council will immediately determine if the remote meeting is still quorate. If it is, then the business of the remote meeting will continue, if there is no quorum then the remote meeting will adjourn for a period specified by the Chair of Council to allow the connection to be re-established. If the number of Members who lose connection affect the proportionality of the meeting then it must be adjourned until such time as sufficient Members can be reconnected to achieve proportionality. This will be for the Chair to rule on.
- 13. Exclusion of members of the public and press** will be required to leave the remote meeting should items need to be discussed which are exempt from being discussed in public under the access to information procedure rules. Part I of Schedule 12A (Paragraphs 1 to 7). This means that the Part I business will be held before the livestreaming is stopped to allow any Part II confidential business on the agenda to be debated.
- 14. Members of the public** who wish to hear the meeting discussion and view the remote meeting will be able to do so via live stream using the virtual meeting link published on the Annual Council’s Summons. Members of the public will not be able to make any comments as this function will be switched off for all remote meetings.
- 15. Livestreaming** - Under the virtual meeting regulations that govern the conduct of meetings held remotely it is a requirement that not only should all members present be able to hear and be heard, where the meeting is in public any member of the public attending remotely should also be able to hear the debate. Therefore in the event that, for any reason, connectivity is lost with the live streaming, the Officer responsible for monitoring the live streaming will immediately notify the Chair of Council who will adjourn the meeting until such time as the live stream has been restored. In the event that it cannot be restored within 10 minutes of the start of the adjournment the Chair of Council will adjourn the meeting to another date and time.
- 16. Opening of the Annual Council Meeting** - The current Chair of Council will open the remote meeting by confirming who is present and calling for nominations for the new Chair of Council. The nominations and appointments of the Chair and Vice Chair at items 1 and 4 will be put to the meeting for general assent. A roll call vote as detailed in Point 22 will only be taken if there is any dissent. The new Chair of Council will take the Chair from Item 2 and will proceed in the order of business as published on the agenda for the meeting (Rule 7) from item 2.
- 17. Late items of business** – if there are any late items of business they will be taken at the appropriate place on the summons after other items in that category. The late items of business being items which had not been available five clear working days before the meeting. The late item(s) of business to be

announced at the meeting by the Chair of Council and a reason for the urgency of the item to be announced.

18. **Visual Presentation** - the usual visual presentation of the Summons provided at the meeting will not be provided. The summons will be published on the Council's website 5 working days before the meeting so that both Members of the Council and members of the public can view the Summons and reports before and during the remote meeting.
19. **Members of Council** will be asked by the Chair of Council if they wish to speak. Members should indicate using the hand symbol on the 8x8 Communication System if they wish to speak and when not speaking will be asked to have their microphone on "mute". The Clerk may indicate through the Chair of Council who wishes to speak. The Chair of Council will then call on each Member in turn who indicated a wish to speak and ask them to turn on their microphone and camera when invited to speak and give their name. Members should only speak when invited and only one Member should speak at a time.
20. **Debate** - When the Chair of Council considers that there has been sufficient debate they will call the debate to a close and remind the Council Members of the moved recommendation
21. **Disruption to remote conferencing** - In the event of individual link failures, the remote Member(s) will be deemed to have left the meeting at the point of failure and if the link cannot be re-established then the presumption will be that the meeting should continue. If the link is successfully re-established then the remote Member(s) will be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment. Subject to Point 12 above on proportionality.
22. **Voting** - (For items 8, 9 and 26) The Chair of Council will ask Council Members to vote. This will be done by the Committee Officer reading out the names of the Council Members alphabetically and asking them to vote For, Against or Abstain so that everyone can clearly hear how each Member is voting (roll call). The Committee Clerk will then total up the votes and advise the Chair of Council. The recommendation will be either carried or lost depending on how the majority of Members vote. In the event of a TIED vote the Chair of Council will have the casting vote. Subject to Point 12 above on proportionality.
23. **Appointments at Items 12, 13, 14, 15a, 15b, 15c, 16, 17 and 18** – these are for each Group to put forward their appointment based on the Council's proportionality. **No individual vote is required on these appointments and will be done by general assent of the meeting.** Members are appointed under the allocation of seats proportioned to each Group under Item 15 (Appointments to Committees). A spreadsheet will be circulated to the Group Leaders asking them to advise their appointments and highlighting how many Members each Group needs to appoint. Once received back to the Committee Team this will be circulated to all Members in advance of the Annual Council meeting.
24. **Appointments at items 19- 24** – The circulated spreadsheet will highlight where appointments need to be made. Where a vote is required (i.e. when more than one nomination has been received) the vote column on the spreadsheet will be highlighted. The votes will be taken as a block vote on each parties nominations for each item (i.e. Liberal Democrat nominations, Conservative nominations, Labour nominations, Independent nominations). This would mean a total of 4 votes and the result announced by the Chair of

Council with the party with the most votes having their nomination appointed.. If this method of block voting could not be undertaken then the vote will be carried out as per point 22 above with each appointment being contested voted on individually by roll call. Where no vote is required the appointments will be by general assent of the meeting and the Chair will announce that these appointments are agreed as the appointment is not being contested.

- 25. Announcing vote result** - The Chair of Council will then announce the vote result via the videoconference.
- 26. Process for each item of business** – the same process will follow for all the items on the published agenda.
- 27. Decisions** The full minutes will be published on the Council’s website in time for the next meeting of the Committee.
- 28. Recording** - All meetings will be recorded apart from any Part II Confidential Items of business (see Point 14 above).
- 29. This protocol** is a guide as to how virtual/remote Council meetings should be conducted. This protocol will sit alongside the Council’s Procedure Rules set out in the Council Constitution and are considered good practice and etiquette.
- 30. The Chair of Council** has the discretion to amend this Protocol as necessary.