

## **CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL**

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>A vision for conducting hybrid meetings from May 2022.</b>
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<b>To provide an overview to Members on how hybrid meetings will be held from May 2022</b>

### **Background**

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (LG&EW2021), Section 47 requires principal councils to make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that from 5 May 2022, that local authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meetings, to speak to and be heard by each other, and in the case of meetings to be broadcast (under Section 46 of the regulations), to speak and be heard by each other and to see and be seen by each other.

The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 22 April 2020 made provision in relation to local authority meetings, as a result of the covid-19 outbreak. The regulations related to participation at meetings held between 22 April 2020 and 1 May 2021. As a result of these regulations, all Ceredigion County Council meetings open to the public were held remotely. These arrangements have continued and now form part of the LG&EW2021 and will form the basis for the hybrid arrangements post 5 May 2022 where Members, Officers and the public are able to attend meetings remotely or in person.

### **Attending in person or remotely**

Members, Officer and members of the public will be able to attend meetings of the Council that are open to the public in person at the Council's Penmorfa Office, Aberaeron or remotely (wherever possible). It should be noted that attendance in person may be subject to limitations on numbers due to space and any regulations or guidance that may be in place at such time, such as the 1 or 2 metre social distancing regulations / guidance which have previously been in place.

Equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings is currently being installed, and detailed guidance will be provided following installation and Democratic Services Officers are trained on its use. Final Statutory Guidance from the Welsh Government has not been received and currently there is no estimated date for this guidance. In the meantime, *it is anticipated* that the following will apply.

### **Providing information in advance of meetings**

As is current practice, Members will be asked to provide the following information in advance of the meeting:

- Apologies
- Whether they wish to attend in person or remotely
- To provide details of any declarations of interest

- To provide details of any personal matters that they wish to submit
- Non-Committee Members should notify the Chair and meeting facilitator in advance of the meeting if they wish to speak on any specific agenda item.

Members of the public can address the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Development Control Committee, as set out in the relevant protocols. The protocols require members of the public to notify Democratic Services two days in advance of the meeting if they wish to submit a request to address the Committee. From May 2022, any member of the public addressing such a committee will be able to do so remotely or in person at the Council Chamber.

The meeting facilitator will provide a summary to the Chairman in advance of the meeting confirming the details requested in advance of the meeting, including apologies, personal matters and declarations of interest etc in the order that they were received.

**Mechanism for supporting the meeting**

The meeting will be managed via a Computer Control System providing for microphone management, voting, speech timers and an automated camera tracking for all analogue (in person) and digital (remote) microphone systems. Members attending in person will be able to access these options via the mic unit, whilst Members attending remotely will be able to access these functions directly from the computer screen by using a mouse or touchscreen. The mic system can be operated in one of two modes: Central Mode and Delegate Mode. In Central Mode, the microphones are controlled centrally by the Chair, where Members submit a request to speak, whereas in Delegate Mode, the microphones are turned on and off directly by the Members. The Delegate Mode is best suited for small meetings. Automated camera tracking will be set up to pan to live microphones.

Prior to a meeting, delegate information for those attending in person will need to be pre-entered for display onscreen during the meeting, when Members request to speak and while microphones are enabled. If Members decide to implement the voting option as opposed to calling a roll-call for each item, it is essential that the information is pre-set, and that Members notify Democratic Services Officers in advance as to whether they will be attending remotely or in person.

The translation function will interface via headphones for those attending in person, and via a language selection option for those attending remotely.

Consideration will need to be given as to how the new system is used in the new administration following receipt of the final Statutory Guidance and the full functionality of the system is understood.

<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>That the Committee notes the report</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Background documents:</b>	<b>The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021:</b>

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=26688>

**Name:**

**Nia Jones**

**Job Title:**

**Corporate Manager – Democratic Services**

**Date:**

**22.02.2022**