



Llais Cynghorau Cymuned a Thref yng Nghymru
The Voice of Community and Town Councils in Wales

Practice Development Note 5

Multi-Location Meetings: Timetable of Actions

Date Issued May 2024

Review Date May 2025

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OVW Practice Development Note 5

Remote Meetings: Timetable of Actions

A simple guide for Community and Town Councils

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
1. Introduction			
1.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 delivers a package of reforms to strengthen and extend the powers available in local government. Guidance has been published in relation to these arrangements. Chapter Two refers to Multi-location meetings.	<p>The purpose of this Note is not to replicate the Guidance. The Guidance is clear and rooted in statute.</p> <p>Councils must have regard to this guidance when acting in their functions as local authorities.</p> <p>Rather, this Note offers practical tips on how to get the best out of these arrangements.</p>	<p>The Act was passed on 20 January 2021.</p> <p>The Welsh Government published guidance in 2022 explaining and expanding on the provisions of the 2021 Act.</p>	<p>Councils must ensure that they are compliant with the Act and the associated statutory guidance.</p>

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
<p>1.2 This Practice Development Note refers mainly to conduct where attendance is by remote means.</p> <p>Councils must ensure that any meeting held 'in person' also contains provision for remote participation.</p>	<p>Councils must have regard to this guidance when acting in their functions as local authorities.</p>	<p>The Act was passed on 20 January 2021.</p> <p>The Welsh Government published guidance in 2022 explaining and expanding on the provisions of the 2021 Act. This is known as statutory guidance.</p>	<p>Councils must ensure that they are compliant with the Act and the associated statutory guidance.</p>
<p>1.3 One Voice has also published detailed guidance on multi location and hybrid meetings. This guidance can be seen on our website.</p>	<p>The One Voice Wales guidance includes detailed advice, technical solutions, practical tips, and signposts to other information to help improve the experience of participants and follow statutory provisions.</p> <p>This Note does not replicate the guidance but picks out some</p>	<p>One Voice Wales approved the new guidance in March 2024.</p>	<p>Study the guidance as soon as you can. Introduce any changes you need.</p>

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
	practical tips to help Councils manage meetings.		
1.4 One Voice Wales has issued Model Standing Orders which reflect these arrangements. Speak to your Development Officer if you need to obtain a copy.	The Model Standing Orders will help to ensure that the Council's governance arrangements reflect statutory requirements.	The Model Standing Orders were published in May 2023. Councils should review their Standing Orders at least annually.	Standing Orders can be reviewed at the Annual Council meeting or at any time during the year.

The remainder of this Note addresses some of the practical DOs and DONTs when attending remote meetings.

Some of the information also features in the documents listed above.

Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
2. Before the meeting			
<p>Make sure your IT equipment is working.</p> <p>The Member or Officer supporting the meeting should ensure they arrive or join early for the meeting to allow time to test internet connections, audio, and video.</p>	<p>To access the meeting and take part without any problems.</p>	<p>Do this well in advance.</p>	<p>At least 15 minutes before the meeting.</p>
<p>Make sure you can access the link to the meeting.</p>	<p>To access the meeting and take part without any problems.</p>	<p>Do this well in advance.</p>	<p>At least 15 minutes before the meeting.</p>

Join the meeting in plenty of time in case you hit any snags.	To access the meeting and take part without any problems.	Do this well in advance.	10-15 minutes before the meeting.
<p>Allocate roles in advance. Who will send the link to invited guests, control the screens, keep the notes, chair the meeting, keep an eye on participation by remote attendees who wish to attend.</p> <p>Who sets up the meeting for any physical participants. The Clerk can't do it all!</p>	To help maintain order and efficiency within the meeting.	Do this well in advance.	Make long-term plans for this.

3. At the meeting			
Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale

<p>If your attendance has to be recorded, make sure you can be easily and properly identified. Be prepared to identify yourself.</p> <p>Don't log on as simply "Clerk," "Dave," or "Koppite96."</p>	<p>To help record attendance accurately and keep things professional.</p>	<p>Put these plans in place before any meeting.</p>	<p>Do this in time for the meeting, if not before.</p>
<p>Do you know how to use the Raise Hand function? Use this feature when you wish to speak. Lower the hand when you no longer wish to speak.</p> <p>Do you know how to turn the video function on so that people can see you on screen?</p>	<p>To keep proceedings orderly and help to ensure that your voice is heard.</p>	<p>Check this before any meetings. Different software packages such as Zoom, Teams, Googlemeet may use different icons etc.</p>	<p>Do this in time for the meeting, if not before.</p>
<p>Understand how to mute and unmute yourself to avoid disruption from background noise</p>	<p>To help with maintaining order and efficiency within the meeting.</p>	<p>Check this before any meetings. Different software packages such as Zoom, Teams, Googlemeet may use different icons etc.</p>	<p>Do this in time for the meeting, if not before.</p>

Take care when using the Chat facility. Decide if the meeting is going to use this function and, if so, who keeps an eye on anything posted in the Chat menu.	To keep proceedings orderly and help to ensure that comments are noted.	Check this before any meetings. Different software packages such as Zoom, Teams, Googlemeet may use different icons etc.	Do this in time for the meeting, if not before.
Decide on processes for sharing any documents online with attendees.	To help with maintaining order and efficiency within the meeting.	Determine this well in advance.	Make long-term plans for this.

5. After the meeting			
Action	Purpose	Timescale	At-a-glance timescale
5.1 Record any specific issues encountered and how they have been resolved.	This record can then be consulted in future meetings if similar problems arise.	As soon as possible after the meeting.	Do this when writing up the minutes?
5.2 In the case of the Chair attending remotely at a meeting, the minutes should be initialled and signed by the Chair prior to at the same or next meeting.	To ensure that the legal requirement for the Chair, if present, to sign the minutes signifying their approval. "Local Government Act 1972, Part IV, Schedule 12 41(1) - Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of a local authority shall be drawn up and entered in a book kept for that purpose and shall be signed at the same or next	At the same or next meeting.	As indicated.

	meeting of the authority by the person presiding thereat, and any minute purporting to be so signed shall be received in evidence without further proof.”		
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Some key tips:

- The [statutory guidance](#) is comprehensive. One Voice Wales has not sought to duplicate this advice. This note is an 'at-a-glance' guide to good practice, with helpful suggestions to supplement the statutory guidance.
- There are many software programmes and platforms available for Councils to use. One Voice Wales does not recommend one product over another. Just make sure that whichever system you use ensures that the Council complies with statutory guidelines and facilitates a successful meeting.
- Whilst physical meetings in the same location are allowable under the 2021 Act, participants (i.e. council members, members of the public and press) must be allowed to join meetings from another location. Councils must publish these arrangements, for example, through standing orders
- Many Councils have amended their agendas etc. to facilitate hybrid meetings. Here are examples from [Carmarthen Town Council](#) and [Pontypool Community Council](#).
- It may be helpful to consider a deadline by which people should notify the Council that they intend to participate remotely. However, this would not prevent people from attending from another location without advance notice.
- Everyone has the right to attend a Council meeting from another location if they wish. Approval cannot be withheld. [Pennard Community Council](#) has found that its online meetings have attracted more members of the public than the physical sit round the table meeting ever did!
- These arrangements throw up a new set of scenarios for Councils to contemplate. Occasionally IT problems can result in Members being unable to access the meeting via their IT equipment. Provided the link to the meeting was properly created and circulated, this is unlikely to impact on the validity of the meeting, as long as the meeting remains quorate.
- If a Member loses connection because of an issue with their connection, think of this as their car breaking down on the way to the meeting and the meeting will still be valid as long as it is quorate.

- If the main meeting room itself loses connection however, this may be a different issue and the meeting may need to be suspended or abandoned.
- At the meeting itself, speak through the Chair. Do not “shout across the room.” Wait to be called. Speak clearly. Make sure you can hear and be heard.
- Make it easy for people to identify you.
- Stay Focused: Avoid multitasking during the meeting. Avoid background noise or distractions.
- Don’t have the dog on your lap.
- Act with dignity and etiquette.
- and finally, don’t forget: This is a real meeting. It’s not a video catch-up with friends or family. If it’s a Council meeting, your Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will still apply. Check what your Welsh Language Scheme says about allowing speakers to use the language of their choice. Make sure your Standing Orders address procedures at remote or hybrid meetings. Follow those rules.

Follow appropriate protocols at all times. If it’s a One Voice Wales meeting or other outside body, many of these rules and principles *will* still apply. Many One Voice Wales meetings are held remotely these days, such as Area Committee meetings and Larger Local Councils.