

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 13(b)
29 JULY 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Fiona McMillan, Director of Law and Governance	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	N/A	
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VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROTOCOL

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: <i>Director of Law and Governance</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
It is recommended that Council approve the Virtual Meetings Protocol (Appendix 1 to the report).	

1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider approval of the Virtual Meetings Protocol.

2. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of the [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) it has been necessary for the Council to hold its meetings virtually. The Regulations, made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, apply notwithstanding any pre-existing standing orders or any other rules of the authority governing meetings. They came into force on 4th April and remain valid until 7th May 2021. The effect of the Regulations on the Council's constitution is to insert what are in effect mandatory standing orders for councils that wish to hold meetings remotely. They therefore have an automatic amending effect and can be applied immediately. Nonetheless it is considered good practice to have them adopted formally by Full Council at the first opportunity to do so.
- 2.2 In order to ensure that these virtual meetings would run as smoothly as possible, a Virtual Meetings Protocol, incorporating the Regulations, was drafted and agreed provisionally by Group Leaders, until the next Full Council meeting could be held.
- 2.3 As the pandemic progressed, Group Leaders have reviewed the protocol to ensure that it remained up to date and relevant. The protocol as attached at **Appendix 1** is proposed to regulate future meetings of the Council and its committees.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Group Leaders and senior officers have been consulted on the proposed protocol and have had input into its contents.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.2 All the relevant legal implications are addressed within the report.

Equalities Implications

- 4.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 4.4 There is no change to the Council's carbon impact arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 5.1 Peterborough City Council's Constitution

6. APPENDICES

- 6.1 **Appendix 1** – Peterborough City Council Virtual Meetings Protocol