

Meeting of:	<b>Cabinet</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Monday, 25 April 2022</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Corporate Performance and Resources
Report Title:	Draft-Multi Location Meetings Policy
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet approval of a Draft Multi-Locations Meeting Policy and to recommend the same to Council for inclusion into the Council's Constitution
Report Owner:	Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance and Resources
Responsible Officer:	Jeff Rees, Head of Democratic Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Monitoring Officer.
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive and Council decision
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet received a report at its meeting on 20th December 2021 which provided a progress update on the legislative requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("the Act") and on a hybrid solution for use at Council meetings. The report advised that as at 1st May 2021 Section 47 of the Act required that all Local Authorities MUST make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that 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.</li> <li>• In compliance with the provision under the use of the Managing Director's (as amended to Chief Executive 24th January, 2022) Emergency Powers the Council from 1st May 2021 published its arrangements for Attendance at Local Authority Meetings and agreed at the same time, in light of COVID 19, that all meetings would be live-streamed going forward.</li> <li>• This report provides Cabinet with a revised attendance at Local Authority meetings policy namely a Multi-Location Meetings (MLMs) Policy having regard to the requirements of the Act and Welsh Government's Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings published in August 2021.</li> <li>• Cabinet is requested to consider and approve the Draft Multi-Location Meetings Policy attached at Appendix A to this report and to refer the same to Council and for inclusion into the Council's Constitution. The Policy provides detailed guidance regarding the Council processes when conducting MLMs.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendations**

1. Cabinet is requested to note that the Council's current Remote Attendance at Meetings Procedure within the Council's Constitution has been reviewed in light of the provisions of Sections 46 and 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 21 and Welsh Government's Interim Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings published in August 2021).
2. That Cabinet considers and recommends to Full Council approval of the report and the Draft Multi-Location Meetings Policy attached at Appendix A to the report and that the draft Multi-Location Meetings Policy be included in the Council's Constitution.
3. That a review of the Policy be undertaken upon receipt of any further statutory guidance from Welsh Government, any accessibility requirements and the Council's Public Participation obligations.
4. T H A T the use of the urgent decision procedure as set out in Section 14:14 of the Council's Constitution be exercised in order that the Draft Policy and the report can be considered by Full Council on the same day as considered by Cabinet.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. Having regard Legislation and Statutory Guidance.
2. In order that a Multi-Locations Meetings Policy can be approved to be in place by 5th May 2022.
3. Having regard to statutory guidance received, accessibility requirements and the Council's Public Participation obligations.
4. In order for Full Council to be able to consider the matter on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the Welsh Ministers issued Regulations (The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020, 'the 2020 Meeting Regulations') which temporarily relaxed the rules for Local Authority meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 Meeting Regulations were intended to enable Councils to safely continue to discharge their functions during the pandemic, whilst adhering to public health restrictions and guidance.
- 1.2 The provisions of the 2020 Meeting Regulations ended on 30th April 2021 and were replaced by new provisions for Local Authority meetings made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ("the Act"), some of which were to take effect from 1st May 2021 and others 5th May 2022.
- 1.3 Prior to the pandemic Council meetings were held physically in the Civic Offices. Some of these were webcast from the Council Chamber e.g. Planning Committee and Full Council on a regular basis, via the solution of the Council's webcast

provider CIVICO. Some Scrutiny Committee meetings were also webcast where a matter of significant County wide interest was to be considered. The webcasts were broadcast live via the internet. Members of the public were and have continued to be able to register to speak at meetings where procedures allow i.e. Planning Committee and Scrutiny Committees and at scheduled Full Council meetings members of the public are able to submit a question for a response from the relevant Cabinet Member. All minutes were and continue to be uploaded to the Council's website as soon as possible after the meetings save for the exception of Cabinet minutes which are subject to the Council's call-in procedure (paragraph 7.24 of Section 7 of the Council's Constitution) and are usually processed within 2 working days of the Cabinet meeting taking place.

- 1.4** As at 1st May 2021 Section 47 of the Act required that all Local Authorities MUST make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that 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, also referred to as Multi-Location Meetings (MLMs). For meetings capable of being held virtually in May 2021 participants needed to be able to speak and hear each other.
- 1.5** Under the use of the Managing Director's (as amended to Chief Executive 24th January, 2022) Emergency Power's the Council from 1st May 2021 published its arrangements for Attendance at Local Authority Meetings, which detailed a software provision for Hybrid meetings, and agreed that all meetings be live-streamed via remote means.
- 1.6** Section 46 of the Act requires Local Authorities from 5th May as follows:
- (1) A principal council must make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that—
    - (a) a broadcast of proceedings at a meeting to which subsection (2) applies is available electronically so that members of the public not in attendance at the meeting can see and hear the proceedings;
    - (b) the proceedings are broadcast as they take place, subject to any specified exceptions;
    - (c) the broadcast is available electronically for a specified period after the meeting.
  - (2) This subsection applies to proceedings at a meeting, or any part of a meeting, which is open to the public of—
    - (a) a principal council;
    - (b) any of the following specified bodies—
      - (i) the executive of a principal council;
      - (ii) a committee or sub-committee of an executive of a principal council;
      - (iii) a committee or sub-committee of a principal council;
      - (iv) a joint committee, or a sub-committee of a joint committee, of two or more principal councils.

(3) The Welsh Ministers may by regulations make further provision in connection with the broadcast of proceedings at a meeting to which subsection (2) applies.

(4) In subsections (1) and (2), “specified” means specified in regulations made by the Welsh Ministers.

**1.7** As a result of the decision to live-stream all meetings and to continue to hold meetings on a virtual basis, having regard to COVID 19 restrictions and Welsh Government guidance, the meetings were and continue to be undertaken in Microsoft Teams with the use of OBS software to broadcast proceedings live via YouTube. Links to the live-streams are also made available on the Council’s website for the public to view (save for where confidential matters are discussed).

**1.8** Resourcing live-streaming via this method has however, been and continues to be staff resource intensive. Although the Council agreed to live-stream its Council meetings from 1st May 2021 (save for those matters of a confidential nature) there was no legal requirement at that time to do so. Section 46 of the Act requires from 5th May, 2022 for the broadcasting of Principal Council meetings.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

**2.1** In August 2021 Welsh Government published interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings (MLMs) in relation to Sections 46 and 47 of the Act . Their purpose being to achieve greater accessibility and improved public participation in Local Government  
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-08/interim-statutory-guidance-on-multi-location-meetings.pdf>

**2.2** MLMs offer Local Authorities the potential to update and transform the way they do business. It allows Local Authorities to become more flexible and efficient and raise their profile in the local community and to bring their work directly into people’s homes. Public access to MLMs is likely to be significantly higher than the level of audiences attending meetings in person previously.

**2.3** Part 3 of the Act is about promoting access to local government. Section 47 of the Act provides where meetings are to be broadcast (electronic broadcasts) under Section 46, that persons are able to speak to and be heard by each other and to see and be seen by each other. The Act also states that Welsh Ministers may by regulations make further provision in connection with the broadcasting of proceedings at a meeting referred to in Section 46 (2).

**2.4** The Local Authority is also under a duty to make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring 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.

- 2.5** Following an update report to Cabinet on 20th December 2021 (Min No C774 refers) regarding a hybrid solution for use at Council meetings Cabinet resolved THAT the Council's Remote Attendance at Meetings Procedure be reviewed in light of Welsh Government's Statutory Interim Guidance on multi-location meetings (published August 2021) and reported back to Cabinet for consideration prior to implementation in May 2022.

### **Multi-Location Meetings (MLMs)**

- 2.6** An MLM is a meeting of the relevant Authority (Principal Council) whose participants are not all in the same physical place. These are often referred to as Remote or Hybrid meetings (Hybrid being a meeting taking place both physically and remotely) and they can take several forms as below:
- Meetings of a Committee where all participants are in the same physical location except one individual who joins from another location, with the physical public gallery being provided;
  - Meetings of a Committee where a roughly equal number of Members are present in a physical space and joining through remote means; those joining through remote means may include the Chair;
  - Meetings of a Committee where all Members are joining through remote means but nonetheless a physical public gallery has been made available in Authority premises;
  - Meetings of a Committee taking place wholly through remote means where no physical arrangements have been made.

### **The Guidance**

- 2.7** The Welsh Government Interim Guidance on MLMs states that Principal Councils:
- broadcasts must be available electronically ;
  - Make arrangements for “multi-location” meetings, at which participants can speak to and be heard by each other. Where meetings must be broadcast participants must also be able to see and hear each other (S47).
  - Publish certain information, including notices of meetings, electronically, and electronic information relating to meetings must remain available in this format for six years following the date of the meeting. Relevant Authorities must also put in place facilities for the public who would otherwise not be able to do so, to access meeting documents.
- 2.8** The Authority must set out the details of its arrangements for MLMs. These arrangements must be guided by the general principles of Transparency, Accessibility, Good Conduct, Welsh Language, Local Needs and Future Generations.

### **Multi-Location Meeting Policy**

- 2.9** It is important to ensure that participants and observers have access to easy to understand information which explains how they can and should engage in MLMs. The Policy, once adopted, shall be readily available electronically.

- 2.10** A Draft Multi-Location Meeting Policy is set out at Appendix A. This Policy provides guidance regarding the Council processes when conducting MLMs. Cabinet is asked to consider and recommend to Council approval of the Policy for inclusion into the Council's Constitution.

### **Amendments to the Council's Constitution**

- 2.11** Any consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution as a result of this Policy will be presented in a future report following the Monitoring Officer's consideration of any recommendations put forward by the Head of Democratic Services. Some amendments have already been made in accordance with the legislation.

### **Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 2.12** The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage;
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language;
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English;
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 2.13** The Council currently broadcasts all its meetings save for matters of a Part II nature via remote means through Microsoft Teams via OBS software through to YouTube.

- 2.14** However, the logistical and technical requirements for managing video and audio recordings for members sharing a physical space alongside individuals joining remotely requires specialist technology and as such the Council has procured software through its current webcast provider CIVICO to provide its broadcasting service for Hybrid meeting. The Council has procured 120 hours of service, from its provider CIVICO, per year, to provide this service.

- 2.15** Although the CIVICO software also has the ability to provide for meetings to be undertaken by Remote means only, having regard to the contract procured and the resource implications, where the Council has agreed, meetings to be

conducted by remote means the Council will continue to use Microsoft TEAMS via OBS software through You Tube.

- 2.16** Where resources allow, other meetings with a significant public interest can also be considered to be webcast by the Chair of the relevant Committee. However, it is important to note that any increase will require additional funding to support such changes.
- 2.17** The Council has currently entered into a contract for 120 hours of broadcasting and as such it is therefore recommended that the Council meetings outlined in paragraph 21.2 of the Policy be broadcast from 5th May 2022 via Hybrid means via the Council's CIVICO platform provider. The other meetings will be held Remotely and broadcast online until further regulations are received from Welsh Government Ministers. The meetings proposed to be broadcast on a Hybrid basis are Full Council, Cabinet, Planning, Governance and Audit and a Scrutiny Committee meeting that is to consider a matter of significant County wide interest. The matter of significant County wide interest being determined by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee in conjunction with the Chief Executive.
- 2.18** All other Committee meetings will operate on a Remote basis and be broadcast live through Microsoft TEAMS, via OBS software and You Tube save for meetings where Part II matters are to be considered wholly or in part. This would, however, not preclude some or all of the participants attending the Part II meetings remotely or if there were overriding reasons for doing so. 'In person' meetings will be able to be broadcast if required e.g. Senior Management Appointment Committee, save for when Part II matters are to considered wholly or in part.
- 2.19** The reason for these suggestions being due to the sensitive nature of the proceedings of such meetings and the possible potential impact on the livelihood of some of the participants. Any changes to how these meetings will operate will be determined by the Chair of the relevant Committee in conjunction with the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer or Head of Democratic Services.
- 2.20** Following the Local Government Elections on 5th May 2022 all Members (including Co-opted Members) and observer representatives on Committees together with any member of the public where Council provision allows for public speaking at meetings will receive training in the use of the Civico solution to ensure how they can effectively participate in physical and Remote meetings.
- 2.21** It is proposed that a further review of the Policy takes place after 12 months from the implementation of the Policy, by the Democratic Services Committee having regard to Welsh Government guidance, accessibility and the Council's Public Participation obligations.
- 2.22** Should further guidance be received from Welsh Ministers prior to a review of the Policy this will be reported to Cabinet as appropriate.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the “well-being goals”.
- 3.2** Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 3.3** An IIA Screening Form has been completed and no adverse implications have been noted.
- 3.4** The Policy has also been written having regard to the Council’s Project Zero position and Diversity in Democracy Action Plan.

### **4. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 4.1** The costs associated with this will be met from existing budget provision, however where required any future cost pressure bids relating to this Policy will be reported as appropriate.

#### **Employment**

- 4.2** None as a direct result of this report.

#### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 4.3** There are no additional legal implications to set out in the report.

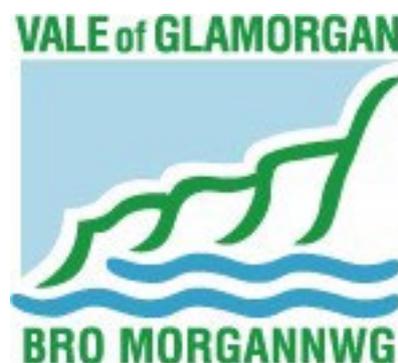
### **5. Background Papers**

## **DRAFT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL MULTI-LOCATION MEETINGS POLICY**

This Policy has been drafted having regard to the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Welsh Government Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings (August 2021).

This Policy is in addition to the Council's Remote Meetings Procedures and the Council's Procedure Rules as contained within the Council's Constitution.

April 2022



# MULTI-LOCATION MEETINGS POLICY

## Introduction

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, Welsh Ministers issued Regulations (The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020, ‘the 2020 Meeting Regulations’) which temporarily relaxed the rules for Local Authority meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 Meeting Regulations were intended to enable Councils to safely continue to discharge their functions during the pandemic, whilst adhering to public health restrictions and guidance.

The provisions of the 2020 Meeting Regulations ended on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and were replaced by new provisions for Local Authority meetings made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”), some of which were to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and others from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

In August 2021, Welsh Government published Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings which can be found at:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-08/interim-statutory-guidance-on-multi-location-meetings.pdf>

### 1. What is a Multi-Location Meeting?

- 1.1 A Multi-Location Meeting (MLM) is a meeting whose participants are not all in the same physical place. Some of the participants may be physically located in the meeting venue whilst others join from their home or other remote location.
- 1.2 Under the Act Welsh Government provisions confer on Local Authorities duties to convene MLMs to enable greater accessibility and public participation in the Local Government decision making process.
- 1.3 Section 47 of the Act required Local Authorities to make and publish arrangements that ensure that Local Authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which enables meeting participants who are not in the same place to attend the meetings and be able to speak to and hear each other. (This provision came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and the Council’s Policy for this provision was approved under an Emergency Power in April 2021 and inserted into the Council’s Constitution.)
- 1.4 However, from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 meeting participants must not only be able to speak to and hear each other but for meetings which are required to be broadcast under Section 46 of the Act participants actively taking part in the meeting must also be able to see and be seen by each other.
- 1.5 When considering arrangements for MLMs or Remote attendance the Authority will also have regard to Welsh Government guidance and / or regulations issued by Welsh Ministers.

1.6 Section 2 of Welsh Government's Interim Statutory Guidance sets out a number of principles to guide Authorities when developing their meeting arrangements which are transparency, accessibility, good conduct, Welsh Language, local needs and future generations. The Guidance also confirms that the meeting arrangements should be reflected in the procedure rules set out in the Council's Constitution.

## **2. Broadcasting of Meetings**

2.1 Section 46 of the Act requires that the Authority shall ensure that meetings of a Principal Council (paragraph 21.2 refers) are broadcast live and are available to view electronically save for when the meeting is not open to the public (Part II – confidential or exempt information). The livestreaming of the meeting shall be published on the Council's website and archived thereafter for future viewing.

## **3. Notice of a Meeting**

3.1 The Authority will ensure that the relevant information shall be included on the Notice of the Meeting (Agenda) advising out how the Committee Members, Officers and the public may attend the meeting.

3.2 The Act requires that Notices of Meetings and electronic information relating to meetings (i.e. including notices of meetings, agendas, reports and background papers) must be published on the Council's website and must remain available in an electronic format and be available for a minimum of six years following the date of the meeting.

## **4. Agendas, Reports, Decision Notices, Minutes and Background Papers**

4.1 Agendas, Reports, Decision Notices and Minutes of formal meetings will be published on the Authority's website. A small number of hard copies shall be available to members of the public physically attending a meeting. Agenda papers are normally available five clear working days prior to a meeting.

4.2 Decision Notices of a meeting (that came into effect under the Act in May 2021) must show decisions made; names of those present; apologies; declarations of interest and outcome of any votes and must be published on the Authority's website within seven working days of the meeting taking place, including the day of the meeting.

4.3 From May 2021 background papers must have also been published on the Authority's website.

4.4 There is no longer a requirement to post Notices of Meetings at the Council's offices. However, hard copies of agendas and reports must be available for the public if meetings are held physically and the Council is also required to make public access provision for members of the public who cannot access documents, for example by providing access to computers, limited copies of

documents at meetings or via a fee or making documents available for inspection.

## **5. How are Physical or Multi-Location Meetings (MLMs) Conducted?**

5.1 MLMs are meetings of the Council or its Committees whose participants are not all in the same physical place. Such meetings can either be held:

- Hybrid – with some participants joining through remote means and some attending physically in the same place as others; or
- Entirely Remote – whereby all participants are taking part via remote means.

5.2 Hybrid Meetings – will be conducted and broadcasted via the Council's hybrid meeting solution provider, CIVICO, from the Council Chamber (save for meetings either partly or wholly confidential in nature).

5.3 Remote only meetings – will be conducted via Microsoft TEAMS and broadcast live via OBS software through YouTube (save for meetings either partly or wholly confidential in nature).

5.4 Entirely physical meetings – will usually be held in the Council Chamber at the Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry and broadcast via the Council's Hybrid meeting solution provider, CIVICO, (save for meetings either partly or wholly confidential in nature).

## **6. How Can I Participate or Observe a Council Meeting?**

6.1 A participant at a meeting with the Vale of Glamorgan Council is defined as a person who takes an active part in the meeting. They may be an Elected Member, a Co-Opted Member (with or without voting rights), an officer of the Authority, a person giving evidence to a Committee as a witness, a person who has registered to speak at a Committee (in accordance with Council procedures), someone presenting a question at a Full Council meeting (under the Council's procedure) or a representative from an outside organisation on a Committee. [\[View Public Speaking Guides\]](#)

6.2 A member of the public, not participating in a meeting, will be able to observe a meeting by either attending in person where a physical or Hybrid meeting is taking place and/or observing a Remote or Hybrid meeting. An observer at a meeting is defined in the Interim Statutory Guidance as a member of an audience, or otherwise spectating who may be in the same room that a meeting is taking place or they may be observing by remote means.

6.3 Covid-19 has had an impact on physical numbers permitted in venues. As a result the number of persons permitted in a Meeting Room may (depending on the situation, any guidance and regulations in force at the time) be reduced and will need to be reviewed regularly in line with Welsh Government Regulations and in line with the Council's risk assessments and with safety measures being put in place to support safe access and use.

N.B. On occasions where physical space for attendance at a meeting may be limited (e.g. as a result of the COVID pandemic) or where there may be technological issues, the Chair of a meeting, essential officers supporting the meeting and simultaneous translators will be afforded priority for attendance. With regard to any further attendees the Chief Executive, and / or the Monitoring Officer and / or the Head of Democratic Services in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and / or Committee Chair will make any such further determinations. Should technical issues prevent live transmission all efforts will be made to ensure a recording of the meeting is made and uploaded to the Council's website.

6.4 The Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with Facilities Management, shall ensure that the maximum physical numbers permitted is clear and that the following system will be put in place:

**(i) Members**

The Head of Democratic Services, in conjunction with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, shall inform each Political Group Leader of the number of their members allowed into the Meeting Room (the calculation will be based on the proportional representation of that Council Body and the Council's risk assessments). For Committees which have Co-Opted Members and Observer Representatives, the Head of Democratic Services will inform the Chair of each Committee of the number of Members (including Co-Opted Members) allowed into a meeting room in exceptional circumstances.

**(ii) Officers**

The Head of Democratic Services shall liaise with the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance to ensure that the relevant officers are physically present where appropriate.

**(iii) Members of the Public**

Members of the public who wish to attend a physical meeting in the Council Chamber will be able to observe from the public gallery however, should the number of members of the public that wish to be present exceed the maximum number permitted in the Council Chamber seats will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

6.5 With regard to observing Remote and / or Hybrid meetings, members of the public will be able to view a meeting by accessing the link to the meeting online. Members of the public who do not have access to the internet to view live broadcasted meetings can request to attend a public viewing in a suitable location in the Civic Offices by contacting Democratic Services at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

- 6.6 Councillors are encouraged to bring their Council devices to physical meetings so that they can view the agenda papers online.
- 6.7 A participant at a meeting (as defined in paragraph 6.1 above) wishing to speak in Welsh at a meeting is required to contact Democratic Services at least 72 hours before the meeting in order that the necessary translation arrangements can be made.

## **7. Quorum**

- 7.1 The quorum of a meeting is one quarter of the voting Members unless specified otherwise within the Council's Constitution. The quorum shall include those attending Remotely, at a Multi-Location or physically; providing they are able to speak and be heard by each other and to see and be seen by others when actively participating in proceedings.
- 7.2 If the numbers present fall below the quorum required, the meeting ends immediately.
- 7.3 Apologies for absence by an Elected Member for a meeting can be accepted by Democratic Services up to the publication of the Decision Notice for the meeting i.e. up to seven days from the meeting (the seven days will include the day of the meeting as per the Act).

## **8. Withdrawal from a Meeting due to a Prejudicial Interest**

- 8.1 Should an Elected Member declare a Prejudicial Interest at a Physical, Multi-Location or Remote meeting, the Member must withdraw from the meeting unless they have obtained a dispensation from the Council's Standards Committee. However, where Members of the public are able to speak at a meeting, the Elected Member can also remain to make their representations but must leave after their representations are made. (For further information on declarations of interests at meetings see Council's Constitution.)
- 8.2 The Elected Member will be invited back into the meeting once the item relating to the prejudicial item has concluded. Should that person not respond to the call to re-join, the meeting will continue without them, providing it is quorate.

## **9. Voting**

- 9.1 Voting will either take place electronically, via a roll call or a mixture of both.
- 9.2 All voting results will be announced by either the Chair, the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer or the Democratic Services Officer before moving to the next item of business.
- 9.3 Should a Member leave the room and not return, their vote will not be able to be provided by another Member. However, if the voting device or audio on the

laptop is unavailable the Member may use the message facility in the Remote software to relay their vote to the Chair.

- 9.4 Unless a recorded vote is requested in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chair will seek a consensus from Members. If no objections are received the recommendations will be considered as carried ("no dissent").
- 9.5 In both a Hybrid or Remote meeting the vote will be carried out electronically and the names of those voting for, against or abstaining will be automatically recorded. If a physical roll call of votes is taken this will be undertaken by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Officer at Full Council and for any other meeting by the Democratic Services Officer.
- 9.6 If a Member cannot initially be contacted to provide their vote, the officer will return to the Member and following a second attempt, if no response is received and the meeting remains quorate, the Member will be considered not present for that part of the meeting.
- 9.7 Remote attendees **should** only use the chat facility in the software system to:
- Alert the Chair they wish to speak; or
  - If their audio fails to advise of the vote they wish to make.

It is also important to note that any information recorded in the chat facility will be a matter of public record which may be subject to a Freedom of Information request.

N.B. In the Microsoft TEAMS meeting platform Members may also indicate to the Chair that they wish to speak by activating the "Raise Hand" function. When using the CIVICO Hybrid meeting solution Members are required to activate the "Request to Speak" button which will add them to the speaking queue managed by the Chair and / or Democratic Services Officer.

9.8 The chat facility **is not to be used for discussions** as all discussions must be made verbally in the meeting for the sake of individuals observing the meeting and / or the meeting recording if a recording is being made.

## **10. How Will Exempt Matters be Dealt With?**

10.1 The Chair of the meeting shall inform the public when the meeting is moving into private session (Part II). The recording must cease before any discussion on the item commences. The Democratic Services Officer will confirm with the Chair when the recording has been stopped.

## **11. Multi-Location / Remote Attendance – Is a Member "Present"?**

11.1 Multi-Location and Remote meetings provide additional challenges in terms of meeting attendance. There are a variety of circumstances in which this might become an issue e.g. taking of votes, loss of connection (WiFi or mobile).

- 11.2 To be considered present, the Member must be able to speak and be heard and to see and be seen by others if the meeting is broadcasted. At a meeting the Monitoring Officer and / or Democratic Services Officer shall provide the local determination and will consider issues such as temporary interruptions associated with connection issues.
- 11.3 Any failure in technology / connectivity which results in Members' loss of contact during the meeting shall not invalidate any part of the deliberations or any vote taken. The Chair of the Committee may adjourn the meeting if they consider appropriate whilst any technical issues are resolved.
- N.B. Both meeting platforms operated by the Council have a participants list function which demonstrates to the Chair and Democratic Services Officer which participants are connected to the meeting at any given time.

## **12. Public Questions at Council and Public Speaking Procedures**

- 12.1 Should a member of the public wish to ask a question at Full Council meetings they must give notice in line with the Council's procedure which can be found at ([https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx))
- 12.2 Public speaking procedures for Committees (where procedures are in place) can also be found at:  
([https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Public-Participation-at-Council-Meetings.aspx))

## **13. Formality and Privacy at Meetings**

- 13.1 When attending Remote or Hybrid meetings (MLMs) Elected Members and any participants must ensure that the room from which they are accessing the meeting is secure and must ensure that the door of the room is closed so that no disturbance occurs during the course of the meeting as it is important to ensure a degree of formality in the proceedings.
- 13.2 Participants are encouraged to use a suitable "corporate" background. (A library of "corporate" background images will be made available to Members for their use.) Remember that as proceedings will be live, viewers will effectively be able to view you working in your home.
- 13.3 Members are reminded of their responsibilities under the Members' Code of Conduct during meetings and in particular when considering exempt items during a meeting. Members should ensure that they cannot be overheard during discussions around confidential information. Members should consider the use of headphones for such meetings and make sure that they plan ahead.

## **14. Etiquette at Remote / Multi-Location Meetings**

### **14.1** Participants should:

- (i) Dress appropriately for the meeting;
- (ii) Ensure that their microphone is muted if not speaking;
- (iii) Respect the Chair and others present;
- (iv) Behave appropriately and be mindful of the Members' Code of Conduct; and
- (v) Use the chat facility appropriately.

**14.2** Disruptive Behaviour – If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chair will order their removal from the meeting. With regard Elected Members, the procedure outlined within the Council's Constitution will apply.

**15.** All meetings will be facilitated by a Democratic Services Officer.

**16.** The following ICT equipment will be required by participants for Hybrid and Remote meetings –

- Microphones / Headsets;
- Cameras – if meeting is broadcasted;
- High speed Internet access; and
- Access to the relevant software (Chrome - internet browser) being used for the meeting.

## **17. Viewing and Attending a Meeting Links**

**17.1** For Members of the public wishing to view the meeting the link to the agenda and to the broadcasting of the meeting will be available on the Council's website.

**17.2** A link will be sent to Participants attending irrespective of whether the meeting will be undertaken via Hybrid or Remote means.

## **18. Calendar of Meetings**

**18.1** The Council's Calendar of Meetings is agreed by Cabinet on an annual basis and can be found on the Council's website at [\[Council Meetings\]](#). The Calendar will also include details of the time of the meeting. However, meetings can be subject to change or additional meetings included in the Calendar by the Chair of a Committee and / or the Chief Executive, as and when required. For details of the venues or whether meetings will be held Hybrid or via Remote means members of the public are requested to view the agenda papers online once published in advance of the meeting (see Section 4 above).

**18.2** Following Local Government Elections the Council will have the opportunity to determine the most suitable date and time for meetings to take place. The

Council will also be able to consider each Municipal year which meetings will be held predominantly physically, Remotely or Hybrid and also have regard to the Council's Diversity Action Plan.

## **19. Invitations to Meetings for Participants**

- 19.1 Invitations will be provided to all meeting participants electronically, and the invitation will detail whether the meeting will be Hybrid, Remote or physical.
- For meetings taking place on the CIVICO Hybrid meeting solution, Members will receive a Microsoft Outlook calendar meeting reminder for the meeting but will be required to log into their CIVICO account to join the meeting at the appropriate time.
  - For meetings taking place on Microsoft TEAMS, the URL joining link for the meeting will be included within the Outlook invitation itself.
- 19.2 Elected Members and officers will be provided with a shortcut icon on their Vale of Glamorgan desktop to connect to both the CIVICO Hybrid meeting solution and Microsoft TEAMS, whether the meeting is being held Remotely or Hybrid (CIVICO only).
- 19.3 Other participants attending remotely – members of the public and / or witnesses – will be sent a URL link to join the meeting.
- 19.4 Prior to meetings Democratic Services Officers who support each of the Council Committees will also get in touch with registered speakers and / or witnesses to provide assistance if required.
- N.B. All participants are advised to contact Democratic Services at [Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) or telephone 01446 709413 at least 48 hours before the meeting should they require assistance prior to the meeting.

## **20. Record of Attendance**

- 20.1 The attendance of each Committee member will be recorded by the Democratic Services Officer supporting the Committee. These records will be combined or added to the Decision Notice and minutes of the meeting and published on the Council's website.
- 20.2 Committee members are to inform Democratic Services no later than seven days (including the day of the meeting) if they are unable to attend a meeting and their apologies will be recorded in the Decision Notice and thereafter the minutes of the meeting.

## **21. Broadcasting of Meetings**

- 21.1 The broadcasting of meetings does not replace the formal record of the meeting and together with the decisions taken will be published on the Council's website and retained in hard copy in accordance with the Council's retention policy.

- 21.2 Having regard to section 46 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the meetings to be conducted and broadcast on a Hybrid basis, (excluding meetings that are wholly or in part confidential in nature) are Full Council, Cabinet, Planning, Governance and Audit Committee meetings and a Scrutiny Committee meeting that is to consider a matter of significant County wide interest. The matter of significant County wide interest being determined by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee in conjunction with the Chief Executive.
- 21.3 Other Committee meetings (including the Annual Meeting) will be conducted and broadcast on a Remote basis (excluding meetings that are wholly or in part confidential in nature) or unless determined otherwise by the Chair of the relevant Committee in conjunction with the Chief Executive and / or Monitoring Officer and / or Head of Democratic Services). Some meetings such as the Senior Management Appointment Committee may be conducted on an 'in person' basis only (e.g. where interviews are being conducted) and as such will not be broadcast where they are wholly or in the main Part II in nature.
- N.B. All Committee meetings will be undertaken, as outlined in Section 21 above, and broadcast live on the Council's website and the recordings uploaded thereafter for future viewing on the Council's website.
- 21.4 All agendas on the Council's website will clearly state whether the meetings will be held via Hybrid or Remote means and / or held physically.

## **22. Online Meeting Platforms**

- 22.1 The Council will use the CIVICO Hybrid meeting platform as its primary Remote / Hybrid meeting solution for conducting and broadcasting Hybrid meetings and Microsoft TEAMS for Remote meetings. The logistic and technical requirements for managing video and audio recordings for members sharing a physical space alongside individuals joining remotely requires specialist technology which is currently being met via the Council's webcast provider CIVICO. Members are encouraged to use their Vale devices whilst attending meetings. Members of the Committees will also have access to the Microsoft TEAMS meeting platform for use in Remote meetings and informal day to day discussions and correspondence.
- N.B. Members are responsible for ensuring access to adequate high-speed internet when joining remotely. Advice can be provided on minimum standards where required. The Council accepts no responsibility should a Member choose to use a personal device and encounters connectivity issues prior to or during a meeting they wish to attend.

## **23. Attendance at Meetings Whilst out of the Country**

- 23.1 Members wishing to attend meetings whilst out of the Country and using their own personal or Vale of Glamorgan Council devices will be able to do so by

accessing free Wifi facilities as the Council will not be able to reimburse costs. However, to enable access to meetings on Vale laptops abroad Members will be required to notify the ICT Service Desk and / or Democratic Services at least **two weeks** prior to departure so that the necessary security measures that will be required can be put in place on the device in time.

- 23.2 Should Members wish to access meetings using mobile phones, due to the cost of international calls the Council would not be able to reimburse call costs with access via phones personal or otherwise then being a matter for the Member.
- 23.3 Technical support on any Council supported devices whilst abroad will not be able to be provided by the Council's ICT or Democratic Services Officers.

## **24. Confidential and Exempt Information (Part II)**

- 24.1 Some information, in accordance with Legislation, may not be able to be made publicly available. This is known as confidential or exempt information (Part II). When such information is to be considered at a formal meeting the documents will only be made available to those entitled to view them on the Council's internal network. Such matters are usually scheduled at the end of an agenda in order to minimise any inconvenience to observers who will be required to leave the meeting prior to the items being considered. The Chair will request that members of the public and press are excluded from the meeting (whether the meeting is being held by Remote, Hybrid or physical means) before continuing with the agenda. Any recording of the meeting will also cease.
- 24.2 If a meeting is being broadcast the recording will be paused and a notification displayed on the broadcast that the meeting is no longer open to the public.

## **25. Training**

- 25.1 All Members and officers will receive training to be able to participate at meetings which will include the use of the meeting platform software for joining Remote meetings and the use of the microphones in the Council Offices when meetings take place physically in the building. Other participants will also receive support from Democratic Services regarding how to access the meeting.

## **26. Support for Meetings**

- 26.1 In the first instance support for meetings will be provided by Democratic Services Officers who will ensure the following:
- Agendas to be emailed electronically (normally at least 5 clear days before the meeting);
  - Monitor attendance at Remote meetings and will assist any participant to join or re-join the meeting;

- Facilitate the meeting, voting and take the minutes of the meeting. (Voting at the meeting will be undertaken in adherence to the requirements of the Council's Constitution and in line with Section 9 of this Policy)
- Facilitate the recording and livestreaming of meetings (in conjunction with an ICT officer).

### **Privacy Notice for Democratic and Scrutiny Services**

(This Privacy Notice is supplemental to the Council's Corporate Privacy Notice linked below)

[https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/Website-Privacy-Notice.aspx](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Website-Privacy-Notice.aspx)

This Privacy Notice is specifically for Democratic and Scrutiny Services.

Democratic and Scrutiny Services provides support and administration for the Council's Committee system in order for it to operate effectively.

In particular it:

- Organises and schedules meetings,
- Decides whether the meeting will be public,
- Issues public notices in relation to the meeting,
- Invites individuals to attend,
- Deals with correspondence received in relation to the business of the meeting,
- Deals with queries in relation to business of the meeting,
- Takes minutes of the relevant meeting,
- Issues agenda papers and minutes,
- Deals with any other issue relevant to the business of the meeting,
- Arranges for the retention of documents and reports relating to the Committee.

In the context of this notice the word meeting includes:

- Council meeting
- Council Sub Committee meeting
- Scrutiny Committee
- Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting
- Education Appeals Committee
- Audit Committee
- Any other meeting supported by Democratic and Scrutiny Services

In order to promote open Government and Democracy most of the Council's meetings are held in public and accordingly anything discussed at those meetings will be public and any minutes, recordings or webcasts will also be public. There are some circumstances however where it is not appropriate for matters to be discussed in public, for instance the personal business of individuals or information that is

financially/ commercially sensitive. The agenda of the meeting will make it clear how information is to be treated.

Accordingly, if:

- you are submitting information to be discussed at a Committee, or
- you are attending a Committee to speak, or
- you are submitting documents to a Committee, or
- you are submitting petitions to a Committee
- you are submitting representations to a Committee
- you are submitting or providing documents / petitions on behalf of others.

This information will be dealt with openly and in public unless the meeting, or part of the meeting, discussing it is not held in public in accordance with the exempt information provisions in the Council's Constitution

If you are obtaining information from third parties, you need to ensure that they understand the above and **consent** to their information to be put into the public domain. The Council may ask you to confirm this, and information may not be further published unless we are satisfied that third parties have been made aware of this.

### **How do we collect information from you?**

We collect information from you when you visit [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk). Also, when you contact us in writing, speak to us on the phone, email or talk to us face to face.

### **What types of information do we collect from you?**

In order to provide the service, the Council may need to process some or all of the following categories of personal information about members of the public or elected Members:

- Name and title
- Address
- Contact number
- Email address
- Comments in relation to Council business
- Special requirements to access meetings, including speaking in Welsh

### **How is your information used?**

In accordance with our public tasks the following applies:

- To be used at the meeting as set out above and where necessary names and comments made recorded in the minutes,

- When registering to speak at Committees, members of the public's details will be entered into a Council computer database.
- Any registrations to speak at Committee meetings and any information submitted to Councillors and Democratic and Scrutiny Services may be shared with Council Officers and affiliated partners (e.g., organisations the Council works with collaboratively to deliver services) for their professional observation and consideration.
- Any written correspondence received may be kept on file for future reference by the Council.
- Enable Members or Officers of the Council to investigate or assist with any issues which you may have raised. Also, so we can notify you of any updates.
- Refer your public representations across Committees in order to inform decision making.
- If your express permission is given, share with other members of the public who have registered to speak in order to nominate a spokesperson.

### **Who has access to your information?**

We will generally only share personal data with Vale of Glamorgan Council staff or elected Members who need it to perform their functions. However, as outlined above, if discussed in a public meeting the information will be publicly available.

In addition, we may rely on a number of exemptions, which allow us to share information without needing to identify a lawful basis for the sharing and without needing to provide you with information about the sharing.

### **Lawful bases**

Our **lawful bases** for processing your personal information are:

- Consent.
- The processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out by us in the public interest or in the exercise of authority vested in us.
- The processing is necessary in order to protect your vital interests or those of another individual.
- The processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which we are subject.

### **What are your rights in relation to the personal data we process?**

- **Access** – you can request copies of any of your personal information held by the Council.
- **Rectification** – you can ask us to correct any incorrect information.
- **Deletion** – you can ask us to delete your personal information. The Council can refuse to delete information if we have a lawful reason to keep this.
- **Portability** - you can ask us to transfer your personal data to different services or to you.

- **Right to object or restrict data processing** – you have the right to object to how your data is being used and how it is going to be used in the future.
- **Right to prevent automatic decisions** – you have the right to challenge a decision that affects you that has been made automatically without human intervention

### **How long will we keep your information for?**

We keep and dispose of all records in line with our record retention schedule. Please contact the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Department on 01446 709 855 or [Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk) for further information.

### **What security precautions are in place to protect the loss, misuse, or alteration of your information?**

We are strongly committed to data security and will take reasonable and appropriate steps to protect your personal information from unauthorised access, loss, misuse, alteration, or corruption. We have put in place physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard the information you provide to us. However, we cannot guarantee the security of any information you transmit to us. We recommend you take every precaution to protect your personal information.

### **Broadcasting**

Please note that certain meetings of the Vale of Glamorgan Council will be broadcast, you will be informed verbally if the meeting you are at will be. If it is then this means that you are being recorded both visually and in sound and that is made available on the internet. This is done for the purposes of supporting and promoting democratic engagement and public interest. We will retain the data for 6 years and then offer it to the archivist at the Glamorgan Records Office for permanent retention. You have the right to apply to access, rectify, restrict, object, or erase this data.

### **Complaints**

If you would like to make a complaint regarding the use of your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer:

**By post:** Freedom of Information Unit  
Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU.

**By phone:** 01446 700111.

**By email:** [DPO@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

For independent advice about data protection, privacy, and data sharing issues, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

For further information regarding this procedure please contact:

Democratic Services via email – [Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

Address: Vale of Glamorgan Council, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU

Phone Number: 01446 709413