

Meeting of:	Democratic Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 29 June 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (If yes, why)	Not Applicable
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Updated Multi-Location Meetings (MLM) Policy
Portfolio Holder:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Strategic Leadership Team:	Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Lead Officer:	Head of Democratic Services

1.0 What is this report about?

1.1 Cabinet received an update on 20th December 2021 which provided a progress update on the legislative requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and implementation of 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 meeting.

1.2 On 25th April 2022, Cabinet approved the initial Multi-Location Meetings (MLM) Policy, which has been subsequently updated in March 2023, December 2023 and July 2024.

1.3 This report is intended to provide Cabinet with a revised MLM Policy having regards to the Act and Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings.

1.4 Cabinet will be requested to consider and approve the revised draft MLM Policy attached as Appendix A to this report

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	T H A T the Democratic Services Committee considers the Draft Multi-Location Meetings Policy attached at	For Democratic Services Committee Members to input into the development of

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
	Appendix A to the report and refer any feedback points to Cabinet for further consideration ahead of Cabinet approval.	the policy ahead of consideration by Cabinet.
2.2	T H A T 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.	Having regard to statutory guidance received, accessibility requirements and the Council's Public Participation obligations.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

3.1 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 meeting, 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.

3.2 Section 46 of the Act requires Local Authorities from 5th May 2022 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

3.3 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, Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings were and continue to be undertaken via the Council’s video conferencing system, MVI, hosted by VP-AV Limited, to broadcast proceedings live via YouTube. On demand hyperlinks for the live streams are also made available on the Council’s

website for the public to view (save for where confidential matters are discussed).

- 3.4 As also referred to in the Statutory Guidance, MLMs offer Local Authorities the potential to update and transform the way they do business. It provides opportunities for 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 and the Guidance also advises that attendance levels during the pandemic bear this out.
- 3.5 Minor updates were made to the Council's MLM Policy in April 2023, which sought to include clarity surrounding the number of working days for agendas to be published and in December 2023, when it was agreed for the MLM Policy to be included within the Council's Constitution.
- 3.6 A further update was undertaken in July 2024, following a Hybrid Meeting Platform update being presented to Democratic Services Committee. This was a broader update which encompassed the implementation of the Easy Conference Connect remote platform with training and support being provided for Members.
- 3.7 This update entailed Scrutiny Committees meeting on a remote only basis unless a matter of county wide interest has been determined in conjunction with the Scrutiny Chair and Chief Executive, and that Shared Regulatory Service's Committee could be held on a hybrid basis subject to the Chair's agreement.
- 3.8 The Regional Internal Audit service also undertook a two-part review of the Council's hybrid meeting solution during Winter 2025, with two distinct areas of focus. The initial area of focus was based upon the use of the hybrid meeting solution to support the Council's governance arrangements and the Council's delivery of its MLM Policy. The second part related to the technical aspects of using the Easy Conference Connect meeting solution for Council meetings.
- 3.9 Both internal audit reports identified that there was Substantial assurance, meaning that there is a sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited. In total, there were four low priority actions identified including:
- 3.9.1 A contingency plan for the storage of recordings should be drawn up in the event of potential access issues to the social media platform.
 - 3.9.2 Procedures should be documented to support business continuity.
 - 3.9.3 Continued efforts should be made to further improve the accessibility of live broadcasts and archived recordings for Welsh language speakers.
 - 3.9.4 The service should ensure that the DPIA is reviewed and updated in line with the stated annual review requirement.
- 3.10 The audit findings and their subsequent responses were considered by Democratic Services Committee on Tuesday, 3rd March 2026 where the Committee noted the findings and endorsed the action plans in relation to the recommendations.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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. A Draft MLM Policy is set out at Appendix A. This Policy provides guidance regarding the Council processes when conducting MLMs. Cabinet will be asked to consider and recommend to Council approval of the Policy for inclusion into the Council's Constitution.

4.4 Following the internal audit exercise and developments in practice with Members since the previous update, the latest iteration of the MLM has undergone minor changes to reflect updates within the Council since the previous iteration and the findings of the audit.

4.5 Welsh Government have also consulted upon extending the duties around broadcasting to all statutory Committees of Council but have yet to indicate the timeline for any changes in legislation. However, it is important to note that the Council currently exceeds these proposed changes as indicated within its consultation response.

4.6 The most prevalent updates within the document are included within the below sections:

4.6.1 Section 19 Meeting Broadcasts has been updated to include:

- A table to include an overview of which Committees are undertaken on a "remote" or "hybrid" basis (allowing for in-person attendance), and
- Update to include increased compliance of the Welsh Language Standards in streaming meetings.

4.6.2 Section 20 Attending Meetings safely has been updated to include:

- Personal safety information for Members whilst attending meetings, including potential scenarios and practical considerations for Members.

4.7 The proposed changes have been identified to reflect upon the learnings outlined previously within the report, the development of the Council's approach to hybrid meetings, the introduction of the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer – Digital Specialist position to undertake further research and development in this space alongside also embedding practice for the forthcoming municipal year and for future cohorts of Members.

5.0 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

5.1 There has been a range of evidence used to inform this document. As previously outlined, this policy has been based upon Welsh Government's Statutory and Non-Statutory guidance for Principal Councils in Wales.

5.2 In reviewing the changes, the Council has reviewed several MLM policies from other Councils in Wales subject to the same legislation to identify if there are any areas of practice which should be incorporated.

5.3 The findings and learnings of the internal audit as to how the Council delivers hybrid meetings, which includes Member feedback, has also been taken into consideration as part of the revision of the Policy.

6.0 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

6.1 If the Council are to agree the recommendations, the Council's MLM will be published on the Council's website and facilitated by Democratic Services in the delivery of future Council meetings.

7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

7.1 This Policy is aligned to a number of priorities within Vale 2030, but most noticeably, "Being the Best Council We Can Be", as it directly supports actions identified where the Council seeks to "Improve accountability and transparency by sharing more information about how decisions are made and scrutinised, priorities set, and budgets determined" and "Provide residents with more meaningful and engaging opportunities to participate and have a greater say in our work".

8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

8.1 The Council's MLM Policy articulates a longer term, strategic view as to how meetings of Council should be undertaken and seeks to allow for residents and Members to be involved in the democratic meetings of Council and prevent barriers to participation. The Policy has been designed in collaboration with Digital as it addresses a number of integrated challenges such as cyber security and the effective use of technology.

Resources

9.0 Finance

9.1 The costs associated with this Policy will be met from existing budget provision, however, where required, any future cost pressure bids relating to this Policy will be reported as appropriate. Consideration to funding any replacement equipment will be required in terms of available resources, cognisant of the Council's financial situation.

10.0 Workforce

10.1 There are no direct impacts to the workforce because of this report. The MLM Policy will be actioned by the existing Democratic Services team.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 **Does an Equalities Impact Assessment need to be completed? If not, why?** An Equalities Impact Assessment has been not completed because this is an amendment to an existing Policy, which impacts upon all Members of the Council and residents of the county. The Policy by design aims to address several barriers to accessibility including remote participation, audiovisual challenges, digital skills alongside promoting the use of the Welsh language.

11.2 The proposed Policy demonstrates how the Council is meeting its legislative requirements under Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and various other legislation such as Local Government Act 2000.

Key Contacts

12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

Lead Officer: James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446 709 457	Democratic Services Officer James Langridge-Thomas, Operational Manager (and Statutory Head of) Democratic Services jangridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk 01446 709 457
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Appendix

Appendix A – Vale of Glamorgan Council Multi-Location Meetings Policy (Draft)

Background Documents

[Draft Multi Location Meetings Policy](#), Cabinet, Monday 25th April 2022

[Hybrid Meeting Platform Update](#), Democratic Services Committee, Tuesday 16th July 2024

[Internal Audit Review of the Council's Multi-Location Meeting Arrangements](#), Democratic Services Committee, Tuesday 3rd March 2026

[Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales](#), Welsh Government

[Consultation on extending the duty on local authorities to broadcast meetings](#), Welsh Government

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Multi-Location-Meetings-Policy/Multi-Location-Meetings-Policy.aspx

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Multi-Location Meetings Policy

The Multi-Location Meetings Policy has been prepared having regard to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance on multi-location meetings issued by Welsh Government June and July 2023 and amended in August 2023.

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

Updated – July 2026



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1. Introduction.

- 1.1. Welsh Government have published final guidance, (June and July 2023 and amended in August 2023) namely, the [Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance on Democracy within Principal Councils](#) which outlines the requirements the Council needs to take in facilitating multi-location meetings.
- 1.2. Welsh Government has consulted upon the duty to extend the requirements to broadcast meetings. Whilst the broadcast legislation is primarily aimed at meetings of Full Council, the proposed amendments to legislation extend to other statutory Committees of the Council and is currently awaiting Welsh Government directive as outlined within the [consultation response](#).
- 1.3. This Policy has therefore been revised having regard to this guidance and upon the experiences of the Council since the policy's inception. The Council's current position surrounding the broadcasting of meetings is reaching above the aspirations of both the current and proposed legislation.

2. What is a Multi-Location Meeting?

- 2.1. 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 locations.
- 2.2. [Under the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#), 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.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. 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. Please see section 10 for further details.

- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. Section 2 of Welsh Government's 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](#).

3. Notices, Agendas, Reports, Decision Notices, Minutes, Background Papers.

- 3.1. The Authority will ensure that relevant information shall be included on the Notice of the Meeting (Agenda) advising 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, must remain available in an electronic format and be available for a minimum of six years following the date of the meeting.
- 3.3. Agendas, Reports, Decision Notices and Minutes of formal meetings will be published on the [Authority's website](#). A small number of copies shall be available to members of the public physically attending a meeting. Agenda papers are available at least five clear days (which includes weekends) prior to a meeting.
- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. Background papers are different to Appendices that are already referenced within, and appended to, a published report. Background papers are other sources of information that are related to the subject matter of the report, disclose facts or matters on which the report (or an important part of it) is based, or were relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, but not appended to it. Background Papers are hyperlinked within the background section of published Council reports, and therefore available for public inspection via the Council's website.

- 3.6. There is no longer a requirement to post Notices of Meetings at the Council's offices, although the Vale Council has adapted its practice to assist the public, with a permanent notice including a QR code to the Council's calendar of Committee meetings remaining available.
- 3.7. 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, making documents available for inspection.

4. How are Multi-Location Meetings (MLMs) Conducted?

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. Hybrid Meetings – will be conducted and broadcast live (save for confidential matters) via the Council's hybrid meeting solution provider, from the Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, with some individuals attending physically in the Council Chamber.
- 4.3. Entirely Remote Meetings – will also be conducted and broadcast live (save for confidential matters) via the Council's hybrid meeting solution provider.
- 4.4. Entirely in-person 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, (save for confidential matters).
- 4.5. Meetings of the Council will be conducted in line with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members at Section 19 of the [Council's Constitution](#) and the Conduct of Members – The Principles at Appendix 1 to Section 19.
- 4.6. Members must ensure they are adequately prepared to attend all Council meetings for which their attendance is required, taking into consideration technical and physical requirements. Please see sections 15 and 20 for further information.

5. How Can I Participate in or Observe a Council Meeting?

Definitions:

- 5.1. A participant at a meeting with the Vale of Glamorgan Council is defined within the statutory guidance as a person who takes an active part in the meeting by invitation. 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.
- 5.2. An observer at a meeting is defined in the 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.

Common Arrangements for All Active Participants:

- 5.3. All active participants, whether Members, Officers, witnesses, or registered speakers will receive an individual invitation link by email, irrespective of whether the meeting is Hybrid or Remote. This link is unique to the recipient and should not be shared.
- 5.4. Active Participants should join the meeting promptly and ensure they have the necessary equipment and connectivity to participate fully. See section 15.

Elected and Co-Opted Members:

- 5.5. When first appointed, Elected and Co-Opted Members will complete a survey to confirm their language preferences for meetings of Committees of which they are a Member.
- 5.6. Elected and Co-opted Members attending in person are encouraged to bring their Council devices and supporting equipment such as chargers to access agenda papers electronically via the Committee Hub section of MemberNet.

Officers and Expert Witnesses:

- 5.7. Officers may attend as active participants by invitation.
- 5.8. Where expert witnesses are invited to attend meetings, their language preference will be identified by Democratic Services when attendance arrangements are made.

Members of the Public – Observers:

- 5.9. Hybrid and in-person meetings can be observed from the public gallery of the Council Chamber at the Civic Offices in Barry, with the exception of confidential matters.

- 5.10. With regard to observing Remote or Hybrid meetings online, members of the public will be able to view a meeting by accessing the relevant YouTube link for the meeting available on the Council's website.
- 5.11. Members of the public who do not have access to the internet to view meetings remotely can request to attend a public viewing in a suitable location in the Civic Offices by contacting Democratic Services no later than one working day before the date of the meeting e.g. if the meeting is held on a Monday Democratic Services to be notified no later than 5pm the preceding Friday.

Members of the Public – Speakers:

- 5.12. A member of the public wishing to speak at a Council meeting where public speaking is allowed must complete the online registration process at least three clear working days prior to the day of the meeting. Language preferences should also be indicated during registration.
- 5.13. Public questions for Full Council meetings must be submitted in accordance with the Council's published procedure.

6. Quorum

- 6.1. 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 by any means; 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.
- 6.2. Attendees are monitored by Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officers and, if the numbers present fall below the quorum required, the Chair will be notified, with the meeting ending immediately.
- 6.3. Elected Members are required to pass apologies for absence to the lead Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer in advance of the meeting. However, belated apologies may be accepted by Democratic Services up to the publication of the Decision Notice for the meeting.
- 6.4. Meeting platforms operated by the Council have a participants list function which demonstrates to the Chair and Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer which participants are connected to the meeting at any given time.

7. Withdrawal from a Meeting due to a Prejudicial Interest.

- 7.1. Should an Elected Member declare a Prejudicial Interest at an in-person, Hybrid or Remote meeting, the Member must withdraw from the meeting by exiting the room or leaving the online 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 please see Section 19.3 of the [Council's Constitution](#)).
- 7.2. The Elected Member will be invited back into the meeting once the item relating to the prejudicial interest has concluded. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer supporting the meeting will notify the Elected Member to rejoin the meeting by an agreed means either by email, text message or telephone call to rejoin the meeting. Should that person not respond to the call to re-join, the meeting will continue without them, providing it is quorate.

8. Voting at meetings

- 8.1. Where there is no dissent at a meeting, certain decisions will be resolved without a vote being formally recorded.
- 8.2. Where a vote is required, voting will either take place electronically, via a roll call or a mixture of both should technical difficulties arise with voting electronically.
- 8.3. All voting results will be announced by either the Chair, the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer or the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer present before moving to the next item of business.
- 8.4. Should a Member leave the room and not return, their vote may not be cast by another Member. However, if the voting device or audio on the laptop is unavailable the Member themselves may use the message facility on the remote meeting platform to relay their vote to the Chair.
- 8.5. Should a recorded vote be requested in accordance with paragraph 4.23.5 of the [Council's Constitution](#), as mentioned in 8.2 above, voting will either take place electronically, via a roll call or a mixture of both should technical difficulties arise with voting electronically.
- 8.6. In all forms of meeting carried out via the Council's hybrid meeting solution, the vote will be carried out electronically and the names of those voting for, against or abstaining will be automatically recorded and results displayed on screen.

- 8.7. In the event of technical difficulties during any meeting, if a physical roll call of votes is taken this will be undertaken by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer or Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer present at Full Council and for any other meeting by the supporting Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.
- 8.8. 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 vote.
- 8.9. The above voting procedures are in addition to the procedures outlined in paragraph 4.23 of the Council's Constitution.

9. How Will Exempt Matters be Dealt With?

- 9.1. 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 any means) before continuing with the agenda.
- 9.2. The Chair of the meeting shall inform the public when the meeting is moving into private session (Part II). The livestream must cease before any discussion on the item commences. The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer will confirm with the Chair when the livestream has been stopped.
- 9.3. Moving to Part II must be moved and seconded by Elected Members of the Committee. Any persons in attendance, who are not permitted to remain for Part II session, will be asked to withdraw by either the Chair or the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer present.

10. Hybrid / Remote Attendance – Is a Member “Present”?

- 10.1. 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 broadcast, this will include when providing any declarations of interest. At a meeting, the Monitoring Officer and / or Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer shall provide advice to the Chair in respect of the local

determination and will consider issues such as temporary interruptions associated with connection issues. The Chair's decision will be final (pages 178-179 of the [statutory guidance](#) refer).

- 10.2. 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, subject to the meeting remaining quorate. The Chair of the Committee may adjourn the meeting if they consider appropriate whilst any technical issues are resolved.
- 10.3. If a Member has left their microphone or camera on for a prolonged period as a result of failure in technology, connectivity or user error the supporting Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer shall be able to mute or remove the Member from screen to allow for the smooth continuation of a meeting.

11. Public Questions at Council and Public Speaking Procedures.

- 11.1. Should a member of the public or an organisation wish to ask a question at Full Council meetings they must give notice in line with the [Council's procedure](#).
- 11.2. Public speaking procedures for Committees (where procedures are in place) can also be found on the [Council's Website](#).

12. Formality and Privacy at Meetings.

- 12.1. Participants joining Remote or Hybrid meetings (MLMs) are encouraged to access the meeting from a location that is free from disturbance and maintains a degree of formality. While meetings are generally held in public and may be broadcast, choosing a quiet and secure environment helps ensure smooth proceedings and respectful engagement. The use of a headset is also encouraged.
- 12.2. Participants are encouraged to use a suitable background effect. A series of Corporate background images are available to Elected Members for their use via the Committee Hub. Members are reminded that, as proceedings will be live, viewers will effectively be able to view their remote location.
- 12.3. Elected 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 provided for such meetings.

13. Etiquette at Remote / Hybrid Meetings.

13.1. Good Conduct (page 162 refers) of [Welsh Government's Statutory and Non-Statutory guidance](#) states that in line with the Nolan Principles, MLMs, as with any other public meeting, should demonstrate high standards of conduct.

13.2. The Nolan Principles were added as a statutory instrument within [The Conduct of Members \(Principles\) \(Wales\) Order 2001](#) and these, as mentioned can be found at Section 19 Appendix 1 of the [Council's Constitution](#).

13.3. Participants should:

- Allow plenty of time to prepare for the meeting and run regular software updates on their VoG laptop (by powering off and on each day);
- Ensure that the equipment being used has sufficient battery charge for the duration of the meeting or is plugged into a mains power point;
- Join the meeting at least fifteen minutes before the meeting is due to start to check audio and video arrangements;
- Dress appropriately for the meeting;
- Ensure their name / and or role e.g. Councillor "John Williams" is displayed correctly on screen;
- Use headphones, where appropriate, to avoid background noise;
- Use a background effect where appropriate;
- Ensure that their microphone is muted if not speaking;
- Ensure that their camera is off when not actively participating;
- Use the chat facility appropriately, see 13.4 below;
- Respect the Chair and others present;
- Behave appropriately and be mindful of the Members' Code of Conduct.

13.4. Remote attendees should only use the chat facility available within the remote meeting platform to:

- Alert the Chair they wish to speak;
- Advise the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer of any technical difficulties; or
- If their audio fails to advise of the vote they wish to place;
- Provide apologies for other elected Members;
- Indicate to the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer that they wish to give a verbal declaration of interest.

- 13.5. 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.
- 13.6. When using the hybrid meeting solution, Members are required to activate the “Raise Hand” button which will add them to the speaking queue managed by the Chair and / or Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.
- 13.7. In relation to disruptive behaviour, if a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chair will warn the person concerned (Section 4.27 of the [Council's Constitution](#)). If they continue to interrupt, the Chair will order their removal from the meeting.
- 13.8. With regards to disruptive behaviour from Elected Members, the procedure outlined within the Council's Constitution will apply (see Section 4.26).

14. Officer Support and Training.

- 14.1. All formal meetings will be facilitated by either a Democratic and Scrutiny Services or Cabinet Officer. Their primary responsibilities being:
- Agendas to be made available (at least 5 clear days, which includes weekends, before the meeting);
 - Monitor attendance and assist any participant to join or re-join the meeting;
 - Facilitate the meeting, livestream, 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 8 of this Policy).
- 14.2. The contact details for the Lead Officer will be set out within the agenda front sheet for the meeting.
- 14.3. Any training needs or requests can be submitted to the Digital Specialist Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.
- 14.4. All Members and Officers of the Council will receive training to be able to participate at meetings held on the Council's hybrid meeting platform, whether this be an online meeting platform or equipment in the Council Chamber.
- 14.5. Other participants will also receive support from the Democratic Services Team on an ad hoc basis in order to participate.

15. Infrastructure Requirements.

- 15.1. The following ICT tools will be required by participants for Hybrid and Remote meetings:
- Microphone / Headset;

- Camera – if meeting is broadcast;
- High speed and stable internet access (advice can be provided on minimum standards where required);
- Access to a modern internet browser;
- Access to the relevant meeting platform/software being used for the meeting.

15.2. Council laptops and headsets have already been provided to all Members and Co-Opted Members (with voting rights), and this equipment should be prioritised for meeting attendance. **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.**

16. Calendar of Meetings.

16.1. The Council's Calendar of Meetings, including timings, is agreed by Cabinet on an annual basis. The details within the agreed Calendar are then used to populate the Council's [Minutes, Agendas and Reports webpage](#). 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 how meetings will be held, members of the public are requested to view the agenda papers online once published in advance of the meeting (see Section 3 above).

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

17. Invitations to Meetings for Active Participants.

17.1. Invitations will be emailed to all meeting participants electronically, and the invitation will detail how the meeting will be held.

17.2. For meetings taking place on the Council's hybrid meeting solution, participants will receive a unique link to their email address (Elected and Co-opted Members to their Vale of Glamorgan email address as standard). Please note that the invitation is unique to the individual and should not be forwarded to another person, as it will prevent the original recipient from accessing the meeting and will display with their name and role details.

17.3. Prior to meetings taking place, Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officers who support each of the Council Committees will also contact with registered speakers and / or witnesses to provide assistance if required.

17.4. All participants are advised to contact Democratic Services at democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or telephone 01446 709855 at least 48 hours before the meeting should they require assistance prior to the meeting.

18. Record of Attendance.

- 18.1. The attendance of each Elected and Co-opted Member will be recorded by the Democratic and Scrutiny Services or Cabinet Officer supporting at Committee meetings. These records will be combined or added to the Decision Notice and Minutes of the meeting. The Attendance of Elected Members is also published on the Council's website.
- 18.2. Members are required to inform Democratic Services of any apologies in advance of the meeting taking place. See Section 6 for further information.

19. Meeting Broadcasts.

- 19.1. [Section 46](#) of the Act requires that the Authority shall ensure that meetings of a Principal Council 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 livestream of the meeting shall be published on the Council's website and archived thereafter for future viewing. The Statutory and Non-Statutory guidance at page 160 states Principal Councils must make arrangements for broadcasting certain meetings live and ensuring that broadcasts are available electronically afterwards.
- 19.2. Meeting broadcasts do 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 six-year retention policy.
- 19.3. [The Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021 Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance requires Principal Councils](#) (Part 3 1.50) to broadcast meetings of Full Council live as they happen. However, the Vale of Glamorgan Council has agreed to broadcast the vast majority of meetings for greater transparency (excluding those items that are confidential / exempt in nature). The Guidance also states that a failure to comply with this requirement will not necessarily make any proceedings invalid.
- 19.4. Having regard to Section 46 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings shall be conducted as follows via the Council's hybrid meeting platform as standard:

Hybrid	Remote
Annual Meeting	Senior Management Appointment Committee (<i>with interviews being held in person as far as reasonably practicable</i>)
Full Council	Standards Appointments Committee
Cabinet	Public Rights of Way
Planning Committee	Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee
Governance and Audit Committee	Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee
Shared Regulatory Services Joint Committee Annual Meeting	Welsh Church Act Estate Committee
Start Well Scrutiny Committee	Investigating Committee
Live Well Scrutiny Committee	Appeals Committee
Place Scrutiny Committee	Licensing Sub-Committee
Resources Scrutiny Committee	Early Retirement / Redundancy Committee
Joint Performance Scrutiny	Community Liaison Committee
Public Protection Licensing Committee	Discretionary Housing Payments Review
Statutory Licensing Committee	Trust
Standards Committee	
Democratic Services Committee	

19.5. Depending on the active participants involved in remote meetings, the Council may choose to use Microsoft Teams as the meeting platform for that particular meeting. In that case, the meeting will not be broadcast live, but the Microsoft Teams recording shall be uploaded to the Council's YouTube Channel immediately following the meeting.

19.6. Unless determined otherwise by the Chair of the relevant Committee, in conjunction with the Chief Executive (or nominated deputy in their absence), Committee meetings will be conducted in line with the table above (19.4).

19.7. Meetings will be broadcast via the Council's YouTube channel, and with consideration of the Welsh Language standards, will be broadcast as:

19.7.1. Floor language – whereby the stream's audio is presented with the floor language only, and allows for individuals to contribute and be heard in either English or Welsh

19.7.2. English only – whereby the stream's audio is presented in English, with a translator speaking English during Welsh speaking sections of the meeting.

20. Attending Meetings Safely.

20.1. Meeting participants should ensure they have consideration for their personal safety and pragmatically risk assess any environment they choose to join a meeting from to ensure it is safe and secure in allowing them to access and contribute to the meeting.

20.2. Should a Member be unable to join a meeting safely, it is recommended that they provide apologies rather than attempt to join a meeting in an unsafe manner. If the Democratic and Scrutiny Services or Cabinet Officer deems the joining of the manner to be unsafe (such as driving), they are afforded the right to be able to remove the individual from the meeting in consultation with the Chair.

20.3. Examples of considerations surrounding personal safety include:

Example	Considerations
Joining in a public building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the device secure or is there a risk of theft or damage? • Is the Member in an isolated space if considering a confidential item to ensure confidentiality is maintained? • Is the space free of background distractions for the entirety of the meeting? • Will the location allow for a consistent quality of connection?
Joining using a personal mobile device	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Member able to view the meeting, including presentations, to be able to contribute fully? • Is the Member in an isolated space if considering a confidential item to ensure confidentiality is maintained? • Does the Member have mitigations in place to ensure adequate battery and signal coverage should a meeting run for a significant amount of time?

Example	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Member attempting to participate using hands free whilst driving – if so, how are they maintaining concentration on both driving and meeting contributions? • Will the device allow for a consistent quality of connection?
Joining in a home environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the space allow for adequate lighting and ventilation? • Are they seated in area that is ergonomically friendly and maintains good posture? • Is the area isolated if considering confidential information?

21. Attendance at Meetings Whilst out of the Country.

- 21.1. 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 Wi-Fi 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 corporate device in time.
- 21.2. 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 for access via a personal or corporate mobile.
- 21.3. Technical support on any Council supported devices whilst abroad will not be able to be provided by the Council's ICT or Democratic Services Department.

22. Privacy Notice

Privacy Notice for Democratic and Scrutiny Services

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

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;
- Governance and 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 broadcasts 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. 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 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.

Broadcasts

Please note that certain meetings of the Vale of Glamorgan Council will be broadcast, (as referred to in paragraph 20.1 above) 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

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

For further information regarding this procedure please contact:

Democratic Services via email – democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

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

Phone Number: 01446 709855

N.B. This policy is in addition to the Council's Procedure Rules as contained within the Constitution.

23. Web Addresses

- 23.1. **Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance for Principal Councils in Wales – supporting provisions within the Local Government Act 2000, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021:**
<https://www.gov.wales/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-democracy-within-principal-councils>
- 23.2. **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021:**
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/1/contents>
- 23.3. **The Vale of Glamorgan Council Website:**
<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/index.aspx>
- 23.4. **The Vale of Glamorgan Council Constitution:**
https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/Constitution/Council-Constitution.aspx
- 23.5. **Vale of Glamorgan Council privacy Notice:**
https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Website-Privacy-Notice.aspx
- 23.6. **Vale of Glamorgan Council Minutes, Agendas and Reports:**
https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/Council-Structure/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/minutes,_agendas_and_reports.aspx
- 23.7. **The Conduct of Members (Principles) (Wales) Order 2001:**
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2001/2276/contents>