

VIRTUAL MEETING ETIQUETTE AND ADVICE

This guidance is intended primarily for Councillors taking part in virtual meetings, but is also relevant for officers and other participants.

1. The chairman will introduce each meeting by checking who is in attendance and summarising the rules and procedures that apply.
2. Virtual meetings are formal meetings of the Council, viewed by the public, so Members should dress in a smart and business-like manner as they would for a meeting at the Civic Centre.
3. Members should consider where in their homes their IT equipment is placed – to avoid disturbance from other members of the household or other distractions.
4. Check that there is nothing in the background that would be inappropriate, or show something you don't want members of the public to see. For example, pictures of children or other family members, posters or book titles.
5. Try to ensure that your camera is placed to give a clear, front-on view of your face and avoid sitting in front of a window or other light source that may put your face into shade.
6. Using headphones or a headset will improve sound quality.
7. To improve broadband performance, Members should consider whether other use of the broadband connection in the household can be reduced during the meeting.
8. Members should aim to join a virtual meeting at least ten minutes before the advertised start of the meeting, to ensure that any technical issues can be resolved before the meeting commences.
9. When joining a WebEx meeting, Members should open the "Participants" and "Chat" options (usually at the bottom of the screen), and choose their favoured screen layout (the layout options are usually at the top right of the screen).
10. During the meeting, Members should keep their microphones muted except when called to speak by the chairman.
11. Members should avoid being distracted during the meeting by other members of their households, or by multi-tasking e.g. dealing with emails, texts and social media.

12. If a Member experiences technical difficulties during the meeting, they should inform the chairman and meeting manager if possible, but then avoid disrupting the meeting; Members should only participate in formal votes where they have been able to hear all the debate on an item.
13. Members of the committee should provide a mobile telephone number or other means of contact to assist in resolving any issues with the Member`s connection during the meeting.
14. The chat facility is useful, but Members should be careful not to broadcast inappropriate comments to all participants. The chat facility may be used for the following –
 - (a) to indicate to the chairman that you wish to speak;
 - (b) to seek clarification or ask questions;
 - (c) for officers to provide guidance to the chairman;
 - (d) to attempt to resolve minor technical issues.
15. It is inappropriate to use the chat facility to –
 - (a) carry out a parallel conversation about the issues being considered;
 - (b) carry out superfluous chitchat or make party political comments.