

REPORT OF BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AND IT MANAGER

SUBJECT: MEANS OF HOLDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN THE FUTURE

Purpose of Report

Interim statutory guidance on multi-location meetings, further to section 47 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (referred to as “the 2021 Act”) has been published. This report asks Members to note both the provisions in Section 47 of the 2021 Act and the associated guidance with regard to the Authority’s statutory responsibilities in regard to the provision of multi-location meetings. Members are asked to consider the corresponding options available to the Authority as detailed in this report, agree the desired platform for each Committee for 2021/22 and arrive at a consensus for the future platform required by May 2022.

Introduction/Background

A “multi-location meeting” is defined in the guidance as a meeting of an authority whose participants are not all in the same physical place. In some places these are colloquially described as “remote” or “hybrid” meetings. The Act does not refer to these meetings as “remote”, but that they are attended by “persons who are not in the same place”.

The Interim Statutory Guidance document clarifies the requirements of Section 47 of the 2021 Act as the following:

1. National Park Authorities (as defined as a ‘Local Authority’) are subject to Section 47 of the 2021 Act requiring that arrangements for multi-location meetings are put in place.
2. National Park Authorities are not subject to Section 46 of the 2021 Act requiring Principal Councils to broadcast meetings and make recordings available as, in accordance with the definition, a National Park Authority is not a Principal Council.
3. National Park Authorities will be subject to a requirement (for certain) meetings to be broadcasted and recordings made available by May 2022 as National Park Authorities are defined as a ‘Local/Relevant’ Authority.

In summary, in accordance with the 2021 Act, during 2021/22 meetings must be multi-location but are not required to broadcast; by May 2022 meetings must be multi-location and must be broadcasted.

Below is the list of the Authority's current facilities and to what extent they can meet the requirements for 2021/22 (once restrictions have been lifted). Note: the Authority is not required to fulfil the requirement to broadcast meetings until May 2022 however, as the ability to broadcast is already in place, the recommendation is to continue providing the service. In accordance with the requirement, recordings will not be retained until May 2022.

Facility	In Person	Multi-location	Public Attendance	Broadcast	Technical Facilities	Notes
Video Conference	N	Y	N	Y ¹	Lifesize (and Livestreaming) is currently used for all Committee Meetings, the contract expires in August 2021, and this will either be renewed or replaced with a new platform.	Video Conferencing will remain the sole platform for meetings until social distancing restrictions are lifted.
Llanion Green Room	Y	Y	Y	Y ¹	A Video Conference facility with Livestreaming will be in place by August 2021	The Green Room is a porta cabin and as such weather conditions such as heavy rainfall does have a detrimental effect on audio quality.
Oriel y Parc Discovery Room	Y	Y	Y	Y ¹	A Video Conference facility with Livestreaming will be in place by August 2021	The roof is of a construction that weather conditions such as heavy rainfall may have a detrimental effect on audio quality. Although space is limited, there is room for a small number of the public to physically attend as observers. There is a potential option to open up the adjacent St. David's room to provide more public space, or for it to be used as a separate room from which to view the broadcast.
PCC Chambers ²	Y	Y	Y	Y ¹	Video Conferencing and Webcasting	PCC have advised that it is likely that the Chamber (which can accommodate 70 people post restriction lifting) together with a full Video Conferencing and Webcasting

						service will be available for external hire ² in 2021.
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¹ Broadcasting and Recording is not a statutory requirement for 2021/22

² PCC have not yet published 2021 pricing for the hire of Chambers, Video Conferencing and Webcasting Facilities, however as a guideline, the 2019/20 charging to external bodies is below together with an approximation of costs based on a 4 hour meeting:

- Hire of Chamber: £117 per day
- Webcast £128.50 per hour of webcast = £514:00
- Webcasting Operator: £41.50 per hour (including initial set up and post meeting archiving recording) = £207.50

A typical four hour meeting, based on 2019/20 pricing, would therefore cost £838.50 (not including refreshments or car parking).

2021/22 Recommendation (once restrictions are lifted):

It is recommended that Members agree the undermentioned meetings are hosted via the platforms below.

Committee	Recommended Platforms	Alternative Platform	Rationale
NPA	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	PCC Chambers	Addresses a previously voiced preference for full Authority meetings to be held face to face.
Development Management	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	PCC Chambers	Addresses concerns regarding any technical issues a speaker may have or loss of connection during debate.
Audit & Corporate Services	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	Video Conference Only	Members and Officers have the option to attend in person or via Video Conference.
Operational Review	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	Video Conference Only	Members and Officers have the option to attend in person or via Video Conference.

Sustainable Development Fund	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	Video Conference Only	Members and Officers have the option to attend in person or via Video Conference.
Personnel	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	Video Conference Only	Members and Officers have the option to attend in person or via Video Conference.
Member Support & Development	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	Video Conference Only	Members and Officers have the option to attend in person or via Video Conference.
Standards Committee	Green Room / Discovery Room ¹	Video Conference Only	Members and Officers have the option to attend in person or via Video Conference.

¹ The Discovery Room facility at Oriel y Parc is a commercial offering to external bodies, as such, if this option is selected, bookings will need to be secured for 2021.

May 2022 Recommendation

From May 2022 the Authority will be subject to the requirement to broadcast and record meetings, with the known audio quality limitations due to the construction of both the Green Room at Llanion and Discovery Room at Oriel y Parc, a permanent facility which is fit for purpose must be considered now in order to ensure this is in place.

Known options for consideration

Options	Observation
PCC Chambers	Whilst the technology and facilities are superior to that which the Authority can provide, it may deemed to be more than is required and cost prohibitive.
Re-purpose and fit out the Planning Office, providing public access through the old entrance from the Enforcement Office	The dimension of the room (coupled with a public entrance facility) would work well however, this would require the re-location of the entire planning department and a financial investment for to re-fit the room and re-instate the public entrance.

Green Room Replacement	The existing porta cabin is at end of its useable life however, this would require a significant financial investment and alternative meeting locations would be required during construction.
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RECOMMENDATION:

Members are asked to consider the corresponding options available to the Authority as detailed in this report, agree the desired platform for each Committee for 2021/22 and arrive at a consensus for the future platform required by May 2022.

(For further information, please contact Debbi Church, Business Improvement and IT Manager debbic@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)

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