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## **PART 8 COVID - 19 INTERIM STANDING ORDERS**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 As required by the [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#), certain changes are required to the Bury Council Constitution (May 2020 as amended) (the Constitution). The provisions in this legislation are effective from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020 until 7 May 2021 or earlier if revoked by further legislation
- 1.2 These standing orders, as approved by the Monitoring Officer, shall apply from 22 April 2020 until 7 May 2021 or earlier if revoked by further legislation and shall be known as the COVID19 Interim Standing Orders.
- 1.3 These standing orders shall only apply to virtual meetings of the council including committees.
- 1.4 These standing orders include the changes agreed for virtual meetings at the annual Council meeting on 20 May 2020. At the meeting of the Council on 20 November 2020, it is proposed that these further changes to the Constitution are ratified by the Council.

### **2. Interpretation**

- 2.1 In the constitution and these standing orders the following words, phrases, meaning shall have the following interpretation

“attend” means attending by remote access

“attendance” means attending by remote access

“chamber” means the remote meeting

“delivered” means by electronic means only

“designated office” means the council’s website only

“meeting” means the remote meeting

“open to inspection” means available on the council’s website only

“place” means the remote meeting

“present” means attending by remote access

“public forum” means a remote meeting

“public gallery” means public access to a remote meeting

“published, posted, or made available at the offices of the council “ means available on the council’s website or available by email.

“Remote access” means attending or participating in a meeting by electronic means, including telephone conference, video conference, live webcasts and live interactive streaming

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“room” means the remote meeting

### **3. Amendments**

3.1 In the current constitution version (May 2020 as amended) the following standing orders are amended:

#### **3.2 Further amendments to COVID19 Standing Orders**

Part 3 Section 1 Functions

The Monitoring Officer is authorised to make further changes to the COVID19 Standing Orders as a result of any further legislation, guidance and including best practice and learning relating to the conduct of virtual meetings of the council or committees.

#### **3.3 Right to speak**

Where a member of the public or councillor (that is not a member of the meeting) has the right to speak under the Constitution they *will* be invited to participate by either providing their text in writing to be read out by a Democratic Services Officer at the meeting, providing an audio and video recording to be played at the meeting or speaking via a live stream.

#### **3.4 Public Inspection of Background Papers**

For all purposes of the constitution, the terms “notice”, “summons”, “agenda”, “report”, “written record” and “background papers” when referred to as being a document that is:

- (a) “open to inspection” shall include for these and all other purposes as being published on the website of the council; and
- (b) to be published, posted or made available at offices of the council shall include publication on the website of the council.

#### **3.5 Council Meetings and Attendance**

A Member in remote attendance is present and attends the meeting, including for the purposes of the meeting’s quorum, if at any time all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the Member in remote attendance is able at that time:

- (i) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other Members in attendance.
- (ii) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and
- (iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

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(c) A Member in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance contained in (a) above are not met. In such circumstance the Chair may, as they deem appropriate;

- (i) adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance of a Member contained in (a) above to be re-established;
- (ii) count the number of Members in attendance for the purposes of the quorum; or
- (iii) continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the Member in remote attendance.

### **3.6 Appointments**

Any appointment which is specified as 'annual' continues until the next annual meeting.

### **3.7 Voting**

A named vote will be taken for each item on the agenda. Each individual member will be asked by the officer from Democratic Services by means of a roll call to indicate if they are for, against or are abstaining.

Only, where there is a requirement to record the named vote, will the results of the roll call be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

### **3.8 Interests**

At all meetings, Members declaring an interest in any item should do so by notifying to Democratic Services prior to the meeting in writing, or verbally when the Chair requests such declarations at the appropriate time on the agenda, where a written declaration has not been possible. Anyone declaring a pecuniary or prejudicial interest must leave the meeting entirely.

Where a Member is required to leave the meeting, the means of remote attendance and access is to be severed whilst any discussion or vote takes place in respect of the item or items of business which the member or co-opted member may not participate.

### **3.9 Public Speaking and Public Questions**

At all meetings where the Constitution provides for public questions, the public will be invited to submit one question and one related supplementary question in writing. The questions must be received by Democratic Services by midday two days clear calendar days before the date of the meeting.

**3.10** Members of the public wishing to speak at a Planning Control Committee or Licensing and Safety Panel meeting will be able to do so, unless available technology prevents this. This will continue to be in accordance with the Probity in Planning Code of Conduct, but the one speaker for and one against, will be entitled to make written submissions, prior to the meeting.

### **3.11 Planning and Control Committee – Site Visits**

Protocol For Site Visits – where a site visit cannot safely take place in accordance with the Protocol, a virtual site visit will be undertaken and the same process for actual site visits will be followed as far as reasonably practicable. A decision following such a virtual site visit will be made in accordance with the provisions of the last paragraph of the Protocol namely, that the members themselves should consider whether probity in planning is being upheld and whether in the circumstances they feel they are able make an informed, objective and appropriate decision on the basis of the information before them.

### **3.12 Bury Council Virtual Meetings Protocol (Standards Committee Guidance 12/10/20)**

#### **Introduction**

Participating in virtual rather than face to face meetings can be easy and straight forward, but they do require participants to comply with certain 'rules of etiquette' before, during and after meetings. This Protocol sets out the rules Bury Council expects participants in meetings conducted using Microsoft Team or other virtual technology, to comply with.

#### **Before the Meeting**

Before the day of the meeting ensure you have the following;

- Equipment – computer, laptop, tablet, phone, head set
- Equipment is fully charged
- Checked your microphone and camera are working
- The ability to access the virtual software and have downloaded it as required, e.g. Microsoft Teams
- Made a note of the dial-in telephone number and the conference ID in case you have Wi-Fi problems (if you are unclear on this please contact Democratic Services)
- Accepted meeting requests
- The agenda and other documentation required for the meeting – electronically or hard copy
- A quiet and where possible confidential place to participate in the meeting without being disturbed.

#### **On the Day of the Meeting**

On the day of the meeting, as well as double checking the above and the time of the meeting, you must;

- Set up in a quiet and where possible confidential place,
- Make sure there is no light/window behind you,
- If using a tablet or phone, ensure it is stood securely and not moving around,
- Advise others around you that you are entering a meeting,
- Make sure you have everything you need, a drink, notepad, pen,
- Dress appropriately for the meeting,
- Enter the meeting 5 minutes early to ensure your camera/microphone is working and that you can be seen and heard (if using Microsoft Teams click on Join Microsoft Teams Meeting),
- Make sure your camera is at eye level so your face can be fully seen

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- When joining, if asked, enter your first and second Name and title if you wish, set an appropriate/neutral background for the meeting and click 'join now,'
  - Ensure that the Chair and officers from Democratic Services/Legal have noted your attendance.

### **During the Meeting**

Whilst the meeting progresses you must ensure you treat the meeting in the same manner as a face to face meetings and have regard to the Code of Conduct for Councillors and Other Elected Members;

- Remember you likely are visible at all times particularly where meetings are recorded or streamed,
- Mute your microphone at all times when you are not speaking,
- Ensure your microphone is unmuted and your camera is on when speaking,
- If you have connection issues consider turning off your camera when you are not speaking,
- Only use the 'chat' facility if one is available to notify the Chair you wish to speak (do not use this facility for any other reason unless asked to do so by the Chair, as it is both visible to all other participants and could be disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act),
- Wait for the Chair to invite you to speak,
- Do not talk over other people,
- If you have technical problems, leave the meeting and try to return. If you are unable to do so, try an alternative method and/or telephone/dial-in.

### **After the Meeting**

When the meeting ends;

- Leave the meeting clicking on the red button on the top right of the screen,
- Close down the Microsoft Teams application,
- Ensure any documentation from the meeting is securely stored or destroyed.

ENDS