

## REVIEW OF THE REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL

Summary: The remote meetings protocol was approved by Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020. It is felt that a review of the protocol would be beneficial to address some of the minor issues that have arisen.

Conclusions: After almost a year of operating meetings remotely, there are some aspects of the process that can be improved – for elected members, the public viewing via the livestream and officers presenting.

Recommendations: **To recommend that Council approves the revised Remote Meetings Protocol**

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected; All
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager, 01263 516010, <a href="mailto:emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk">emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk</a>	

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Changes to the legislation

In April 2020, following the start of the pandemic, the Government introduced changes to legislation to allow the holding of remote meetings, via the 'Local Authorities and Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392'

Consequently, following a move to the holding of meetings remotely, the Council approved a Protocol for remote meetings at the Annual meeting of Council. At that time, very few committee meetings had been held remotely and officers relied on guidance and best practice to produce a draft protocol.

#### 1.2 Remote meetings

The Council has now held over 50 remote committee meetings. There have been many positive outcomes, including an increase in attendance and a growing number of views via the livestream. The software has proved to be very reliable and there has been very few technical issues. However, after almost a year of operating meetings remotely, there are some aspects of the process that can be improved – for elected members, the public viewing via the livestream and officers presenting.

## **2 Review of current protocol – key amendments**

### **2.1 Clarity of roles**

Several amendments have been made to the original protocol to ensure that it is clear to anyone attending the meeting or viewing it via the livestream, which members are appointed to the committee.

### **2.2 Corporate image**

To date, there has been no requirement for a standard corporate background to be used for remote meetings. It is proposed that this is included in the protocol to ensure a consistent, corporate approach across all committee meetings.

### **2.3 Etiquette**

Behaviour regarding video and microphones is strengthened in the revised protocol. This will assist in eliminating background noise and visual distractions

## **3. Corporate Plan Objectives**

### **3.1 Customer Focus**

Ensuring that the Council's democratic process runs as transparently and as effectively as possible, builds on the corporate plan objective of focussing on the customer and putting them at the heart of what we do.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

There are some aspects of the remote meeting process that can be improved – for elected members, the public viewing via the livestream and the officers presenting. These include issues of etiquette, a clarity of roles for those in attendance and a consistent, corporate approach.

### **Recommendation:**

**To recommend that Council approves the revised Remote Meetings Protocol**