

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Standing Orders for Remote Meetings

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These Standing Orders are made pursuant to Regulation 5(6) The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

The regulations enable the Council to hold meetings without all, or any, Elected Members being physically present in a room. This permits remote meetings to be held through electronic, digital, virtual locations, live webcast, live interactive streaming, video and telephone conferencing.

In order for Elected Members to be able to attend meetings of the Council remotely, they need not be physically present, provided they are able to hear and be heard (and, where possible, see and be seen by) other Elected Members and members of the public and press attending remotely or in person.

1. Purpose

These Standing Orders are intended (where necessary) to override those parts of the Constitution governing meetings. Where there is a conflict between the Constitution and these standing orders, these standing orders shall prevail.

2. Duration

These Standing Orders shall last until such time as they are replaced by amended Standing Orders for the same purpose or the state of emergency is declared to be over or by other regulatory intervention.

3. Process

3.1. The Council facilitates remote attendance and access to its meetings through the platform of Microsoft Teams. This platform enables:

3.1.1. Contributions to be received from people using a wide variety of devices not all of which are on the Council network;

3.1.2. Being accessible to both participants and observing members of the press and public;

3.1.3. Presentations and documents (maps, plans, etc) to be displayed and spoken to; and

3.1.4. Meetings being able to be recorded.

- 3.2. Elected Members will be informed of meetings via telephone and email and not by post.
- 3.3. Before the meeting, any document to be referred to during the meeting should be shared with participants and published (where appropriate) in advance on the Council's website, ensuring that every page and slide is numbered, wherever possible.
- 3.4. Following the meeting the minutes and decision records shall be published on the Council's website.

4. Public Interaction

- 4.1. Where the Constitution gives a right to the Public to speak, this shall remain.
- 4.2. A right to speak may be exercised by either the person attending the remote meeting, by the person sending in a recorded message or a written statement in advance of the meeting to be read out at the meeting. 'Speak' shall mean someone exercising their right to speak in one of these three ways.
- 4.3. Requests to 'speak' must be submitted by the time stipulated in the Constitution and must include the written statement or recorded message if the member of the public will not be attending the remote meeting. An individual link to the meeting shall be given to the member of the public so that attendance at the meeting may be achieved.
- 4.4. In the event of any misuse of the link or any misuse during the meeting the link may be severed or the member of the public muted by the Chair of the meeting at any time. Such severance or muting shall be at the absolute discretion of the Chair and no right of appeal shall exist.

5. Public Interaction at Planning Committee

- 5.1. No more than two people in support may 'speak' and no more than two people may 'speak' objecting to the application.
- 5.2. A statement to be read out or a recorded message to be played at the meeting should be submitted to Democratic Services, after the Agenda has been published and before 5pm on the day which is two days before the meeting is due to take place. For example if the meeting is to be held on Wednesday then the statements/messages should be with Democratic Services by 5pm on the Monday.

- 5.3. If more than one request to 'speak' is received in support of an application then Democratic Services will contact the applicant/supporters who have requested to speak so that they may co-ordinate between themselves who will speak and look to divide their time/word count. If the Applicant wishes to 'speak' priority will be given to the Applicant.
- 5.4. If more than one request to 'speak' is received objecting to an application then Democratic Services will contact the objectors who have requested to speak so that they may co-ordinate between themselves who will speak and look to divide their time/word count.
- 5.5. The time limit shall remain at 5 minutes, if a written statement is submitted then the Council will look to a word count based on an assumption that it would be read out at a speed of 130 words per minute. If the right to 'speak' in support or objecting is being split and one person is providing a written statement and one person is providing a written statement then Democratic Services will be informed how the time is to be split between the speakers in advance.

6. Public Interaction at Licensing Hearings

- 6.1. Agenda papers will be published on the Council's website in a format and pagination common to all participants.
- 6.2. Before a remote hearing, parties should submit by email written submissions at least 24 hours before the hearing is due to start, summarising the points they wish to make at a hearing and the outstanding issues.
- 6.3. For observing by the press and public a web link to view, but not participate in, remote licensing hearings will be advertised on the Council's website.
- 6.4. Where a remote hearing is held, parties should be advised to log in 15-20 minutes before the start of a hearing. A telephone number of an officer will be provided to parties in case of technical difficulties.
- 6.5. Parties should be reminded that, even where an application has attracted representations, applications can be determined without the need for a hearing where all parties consent to dispense with a hearing. In these cases, written representations may be submitted and considered before a determination is made.

7. During Remote Meetings

7.1. The Chair may (if required and for good reason):

- 7.1.1. Pause (adjourn) the meeting by instructing the taking down of the stream (live feed) from public viewing and then resume it when needed.
- 7.1.2. Switch on each active participant's microphone when they are invited to speak and switch them off afterwards.
- 7.1.3. Mute someone speaking at any time.
- 7.1.4. Mute everyone speaking except themselves at any time.
- 7.1.5. Allocate different levels of access to people logging in (based on upon whether they are an Elected Member, an officer, a member of the public who has registered to speak or just an observer of the meeting).
- 7.1.6. Switch some active participants and the observers off, so they are paused and have neither 'live' visual or audio feed whilst the committee deliberates in private or an officer present gives the committee advice. By taking down the live feed content from the public and just displaying a holding slide, decision makers may hold a separate meeting on Teams. The live stream can then be resumed when needed.

7.2. Elected Members shall indicate their wish to speak by using the "raised hand" function to indicate to the Chair that they wish to speak. The Chair of the meeting will then call on the Elected Members in turn.

7.3. When not speaking, cameras and microphones shall be muted to the intent that only one video and audio feed shall be evident at any one time.

8. Voting

8.1. At the discretion of the Chair, voting will be conducted by:

8.1.1. Chat.

- 8.1.1.1. Each Elected Member deemed present indicating For, Against or Abstain in the "Chat" function of Microsoft Teams. The Chair will declare the vote or ask an officer present to do so;

8.1.2. A recorded vote.

- 8.1.2.1. To record a vote, the Chief Executive or in his absence a member of Democratic Services will perform an alphabetical roll-call of all Elected Members deemed present and ask them to state their voting intention (For, Against or Abstain). These will then be counted and

recorded. At the conclusion of the voting the Monitoring Officer or in his absence a member of Legal or Democratic Services shall announce the numbers of votes cast for, against and abstentions and announce whether the motion has been passed or lost. Not all recorded votes shall be minuted as such; or

8.1.3. Display of the “raised hand” tool.

8.1.3.1. With the recent upgrade of Microsoft Teams to include this function, the Chair may call for “all those in favour” or “against” or “those abstaining” to indicate at the appropriate time by using the raised hand tool.

9. Access to information

9.1. The requirement to ensure meetings are open to the public includes access by remote means, including video conferencing, live webcast and live interactive streaming. Where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means, the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person.

9.2. If the Chair is made aware that the meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, provided the meeting is not in exempt session the chair shall adjourn the meeting immediately. If the access to the public cannot be restored within a reasonable period then a new meeting shall be arranged.

9.3. Any requirements for the authority to ensure publication, posting or making available a document for inspection at offices of the Council shall be deemed so published if placed on the Council’s website.

10. Miscellaneous

10.1. Any recording mentioned above shall be compatible with the Microsoft suite of applications. All recordings shall be scanned for security purposes and content viewed. If any inappropriate content is found (being lewd, offensive, defamatory, abusive etc) it shall be deleted and not taken forward to any meeting.

10.2. The vagaries of the technology required to deliver a remote meeting are recognised and accepted. In the event of any technical difficulty the Chair shall have the absolute discretion as to the way such meeting is managed and conducted save where 9.2 above applies.

10.3. These standing orders may be reviewed and amended by the Monitoring Officer at any time during their continuation.