



Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Special Democratic Services Committee – 27 September 2021

Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings

Purpose:	To consider the Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings.
Policy Framework:	Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and Interim Statutory Guidance.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings be noted. 2) The Head of Democratic Services prepare a Multi-Location Meetings Policy.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Government has published Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings. These are permitted under S47 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.2 Multi-location meetings offer authorities the potential to update and transform the way they do business. It allows Local Authorities to become more flexible and efficient and raise their profile in the local community and to bring their work directly into people's homes. Public access to multi-location meetings is likely to be significantly higher than the level of audiences of formal meetings when all were held physically.
- 1.3 A Multi-Location Meeting is a meeting of the relevant authority (Principal Council) whose participants are not all in the same physical place. These are often referred to as Remote or Hybrid Meetings.

2. Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings

- 2.1 The Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings (May 2021) is outlined at **Appendix A**. It may also be viewed at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-08/interim-statutory-guidance-on-multi-location-meetings.pdf>
- 2.2 The Authority must set out the details of its arrangements for Multi-Location Meetings. These arrangements must be guided by a number of general principles. The Head of Democratic Services will prepare a Policy for the Committee to consider and will also consider whether any amendments need to be made to the Council Constitution.

3. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 3.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 3.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed and no adverse implications have been noted. The Committee is being asked to identify and support councillor training which will have a positive impact on the community as a whole ensuring that councillors are able to undertake work within the

community and the council and make decisions which benefit the community as a whole.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Apart from the costs of equipping the Council Chamber, Guildhall and Gloucester Room from the digital democracy fund there are no directly associated costs with any new policy.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Section 47 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides for attendance at local authority meetings. It specifically provides that an authority must make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that local authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meetings.
- 5.2 The Act also provides that where a meeting is required to be broadcast and is open to the public (council, a committee or sub-committee of council, Cabinet, a committee or sub-committee of Cabinet, a Joint Committee of 2 or more councils, then members should be able to speak to and be heard by each other and to see and be seen by each other.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A Interim Statutory Guidance on Multi-Location Meetings.