Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

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PROTOCOL ON THE OPERATION OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Local Authority and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, all meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Sub- Committee held during the Covid-19 restrictions will take place in a 'virtual' format. This document aims to give details on how the meetings will take place and establish some rules of procedure to ensure that all parties find the meetings productive.

2. Notification of Meeting

Once the date for a meeting has been set, an electronic appointment will be sent to all relevant parties. This will include a link to access the virtual meeting as well as guidance on the use of the technology involved.

3. Format

For the duration of the Covid-19 restrictions period, Overview & Scrutiny Sub- Committee meetings will be delivered through video conference call, using Zoom software. Instructions sent with meeting appointments will cover how to use the software. Additional IT support will also be provided to any Member requesting this in advance of the meeting.

4. Structure of the Meeting

Although held in a virtual format, Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting will follow, as far as is possible, the standard procedure for these meetings, with the following principal stages:

- Chairnan's annoucnements
- Apologies for absence
- Disclosures of interest
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Presentation and consideration of reports

5. Technology Issues

Agendas setting out the items for the meeting will be issued in advance in the normal way, to all parties, in accordance with statutory timetables. The agenda will also be published on the Council's website – www.havering.gov.uk in the normal way. The guidance below explains how the meeting is to be conducted, including advice on what to do if participants cannot hear the speaker and etiquette of participants during the meeting.

Remote access for members of the public together with access for the Press will be provided via a webcast of the meeting at www.havering.gov.uk.

If the Chairman is made aware that the meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to any technological or other failure of provision, then the Chairman shall temporarily adjourn the meeting immediately. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period as determined by the Chairman in consultation with the Clerk, then the remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he or she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

6. Management of Remote Meetings for Members

The attendance of Members at the meeting will be recorded by the Democratic Services Officer clerking the meeting. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Constitution will also apply to a virtual meeting of Audit Committee.

Democratic Services Officers will monitor participant involvement during the virtual call to ensure that there are no drop outs. Members will be informed at the beginning of the meeting to use the chat function if they have missed part of the debate, and to requestfor the clerk or Chairman to recap briefly over what was said.

In the event that a Member's video feed has failed but he/she is able to hear what is being said then the Member should confirm as such using the chat function to the clerk.

In the event that a Member's audio and video feed has failed then the Chairman will invite the Committee to determine whether to proceed or adjourn the meeting to a later date.

7. Etiquette at the meeting

For some participants, this will be their first virtual meeting. In order to make the hearing productive for everyone, the following rules must be adhered to and etiquette observed:

- The meeting will be presided over by the Chairman who will invite participants to speak individually at appropriate points. All other participants must remain silent or muted until invited to speak by the Chairman;
- If invited to contribute, participants should make their statement, then wait until invited to speak again if required;
- If it is possible, participants should find a quiet location to participate in the Zoom meeting where they will not be disturbed as background noise can affect participants.
- If there are intermittent technological faults during the meeting then the Chairman will ask the speaker to repeat from the point where the disruption started. Whilst intermittent disruption is frustrating, it is important that all participants remain professional and courteous.
- The Committee Procedure Rules as shown in the Council's Constitution will apply to the meeting in the normal way, as far as is practicable.

8. Meeting Procedures

Democratic Services Officers will facilitate the meeting. Their role will be to control

conferencing technology employed for remote access and attendance and to administer Member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Chairman.

The Council has put in place a technological solution that will enable Members participating in meetings remotely to indicate their wish to speak via this solution. This will be via the 'raise hand' function in the Participants field of the Zoom software used for the meeting.

The Chairman will follow the rules set out in the Council's Constitution when determining who may speak, as well as the order and priority of speakers and the content and length of speeches in the normal way.

The Chairman, at the beginning of the meeting, will make reference to the protocol for the meeting.

Members are asked to adhere to the following etiquette during remote attendance at the meeting:

- All Councillors and participating officers are asked to join the meeting no later than twenty minutes before the start to allow themselves and Democratic Services Officers the opportunity to test the equipment.
- Any camera (video-feed) should show a non-descript background or, where possible, a virtual background relating to Havering and Members should be careful to not allow any exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video-feed.
- During general discussion, rather than raising one's hand or rising to be recognised or to speak, Members attending remotely should avail themselves of the remote process for requesting to be heard and use the 'raise hand' function in the participants field of the Zoom software.
- Members may only speak when invited to by the Chairman of the meeting.
- Only one person may speak at any one time.
- All speakers and attendees, both Councillors and members of the public, are welcome to remain on the Zoom call until the conclusion of the meeting. The meeting will also be webcast so that it can be viewed by non-participants.
- When referring to a specific report, agenda page, or slide, participants should mention the report, page number, or slide so that all Members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times

Any voting will be conducted by the Clerk asking Members individually of their voting intentions The Democratic Services Officer will announce the result of the vote and the Chairman will then move on to the next agenda item.

A record of votes and how individual Members voted will be appended to the minutes, following the meeting.

Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares a disclosable pecuniary interest, or other declarable interest, in any item of business that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting. The Democratic Services Officer or meeting facilitator will move the Member to the Zoom waiting room until the item is complete, and then return them to the meeting.

9. Public Access to Meeting Documentation following the Meeting

Members of the public may access minutes, decision notices and other relevant documents

through the Council's website. www.havering.gov.uk

For any further information on the meeting, please contact
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