

Title: Minor Changes to the Constitution
Lead Officer: Graham Leach, graham.leach@warwickdc.gov.uk (01926 456114)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Day
Wards of the District directly affected: All

Summary

The report proposes two minor changes to the Constitution to allow for remote meetings if regulations are introduced by Parliament.

Recommendation(s)

That Council procedure rules are amended to enable the Council or its Committees, Cabinet, or any Sub Committees to meet remotely if legislation or regulations are passed by Parliament

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 The Prime Minister has announced new proposals to help mitigate the risk of spreading the latest variant of Covid19.
- 1.2 In response to this, Group Leaders have discussed ways to minimise the risk of interaction at public meetings, as lawfully they cannot meet remotely.
- 1.3 Officers are aware of continued representations to Government about re-introducing regulations for remote meetings to help mitigate risk of transmission. These have grown in strength in recent days and therefore officers wish to place the Council in the best place if changes are made.

2 Alternative Options available to (name of Committee/Cabinet etc.)

- 2.1 The Council could choose not to progress this option but this could mean that it delays the opportunity to hold remote meetings if legislation is passed between now and the end of February.

3 Consultation and Member's comments

- 3.1 Group Leaders are supportive of the proposals.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 4.1.1 The proposals in the report are lawful and are intended to promote the safety of those involved in the meeting.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 There are no financial implications of the report.

4.3 Council Plan

- 4.3.1 In respect of Warwick District Council Business Plan the proposals are intended

to ensure that the Council can continue to operate remotely if regulations permit and safely by minimising physical interaction at meetings. This enables both Councillors and officers to operate more effectively.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

4.4.1 If remote meetings are brought into place again there would be a small reduction in carbon emissions through the removal of the need to attend meetings in person.

4.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality

4.5.1 The proposals are considered to have no direct impact on any of the protected characteristics and potentially allow more people to directly participate in the meetings.

4.6 Data Protection

4.6.1 For remote meetings there is a Data Protection Impact Assessment in place already that considers and addresses the risks. These focus on minimising the risk of sharing personal details (such as an email address or phone number) through a broadcast online and through the invites to meetings.

4.6.2 There is also consideration of any confidential items being considered with other parties being present at remote locations. Guidance on this will be provided to Councillors if this becomes relevant.

4.7 Health and Wellbeing

4.7.1 If remote meetings are put in place these will have a small positive effect by reducing physical interaction at meetings and therefore reducing the risk of spreading viruses. There is also the benefit of reduced travel time to meetings.

5 Risk Assessment

5.1 The proposals seek to mitigate risks of attending physical meetings at this time. The main risks associated with the proposal is sufficient internet connection which can be supported by accessing the meetings via telephone.

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

6.1 That the proposals for remote meetings in recommendation 1 should be introduced to minimise risk to all parties at this time, but these are subject to the Government introducing legislation.

Background papers: None

Supporting documents: None

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

Committee/Date	Council 13 December 2021	
Title of report	Minor Changes to the Constitution	
Consultations undertaken		
Consultee *required	Date	Consultee
Ward Member(s)		
Portfolio Holder WDC	9/12/201	Andrew Day
Financial Services *		
Legal Services *		
Other Services		
Chief Executive(s)	9/12/21	Chris Elliott
Head of Service(s)	9/12/21	Phil Grafton
Section 151 Officer	9/12/21	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	9/12/21	Phil Grafton
CMT (WDC)	9/12/21	
Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)		
Other organisations		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee/Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy/Budget framework		No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?		No
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?		No
Accessibility Checked?		Yes