



Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Protocol – Guidance for Teams Virtual/Remote Meetings

Joining the meeting

Attendees are encouraged to join the meeting promptly (i.e. at least three minutes before the scheduled start time) in order to avoid disrupting the meeting.

Attendees should use the link within the calendar invite for the meeting which will say 'Join Microsoft Teams Meeting', which will open the Microsoft Teams app on the laptop/tablet automatically.

Starting the meeting

At the start of the meeting, the Chair will check all required attendees are present (viewing the participant list).

The Chair will ask members and officers to **turn off all unnecessary microphones**, unless they are speaking. This prevents background noise, coughing etc which is intrusive and disruptive during the meeting. Members will then need to turn their microphones on when they wish to speak.

The Chair will also ask all participants to **turn off all unnecessary video**. It is important to turn off the video (unless you or the Chair is speaking). This helps with call quality and avoids anyone being filmed/recorded without realising. The Chair should keep their video on at all times.

Quorum

The number of members required to be present for a quorum for a meeting shall be as set out in the constitution. However, for the purposes of determining whether a quorum of members is present at a meeting, the Chair shall include all those members in remote attendance.

The Meeting and debate

For members who wish to speak in the debate, they should click on the meeting chat facility and simply write their name or use the 'raised hand' function on the toolbar which allows

participants to virtually 'raise a hand' i.e. signalling that they wish to speak. The Chair will then be aware you wish to speak and can take the requests in the appropriate order.

It is important that the chat function is used solely for this purpose or to raise a point of order, otherwise it is very distracting if other questions / conversations are happening within the chat, simultaneous to the meeting.

When referring to reports or making specific comments, members should refer to the report and page number so that all Members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

If the debate appears to be coming to an end, the Chair may ask if any other member wishes to speak before concluding the debate.

When you speak, remember to switch on your mic and video, refer to any relevant page numbers and speak clearly.

Meeting etiquette reminder

- behave like you would do in a formal meeting settings
- do not have members of your household in the same room as you
- any video feed should show a non-descript background e.g. using the 'blur' function
- mute your microphone when you are not talking
- switch off video if you are not speaking
- only speak when invited to do so by the Chair
- speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)
- if you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number
- the only person on video will be the chair and the other person speaking

After the meeting

Please ensure you leave the meeting by clicking on the red phone button to hangup. The Secretariat can also end the meeting and will do so, if participants fail to leave the meeting properly.

Technical issues

In the event that the Chair or Secretariat identifies a failure of the remote participation facility, the Chair should declare a recess while the fault is addressed.

If it is not possible to address the fault and the meeting becomes inquorate through this fault, the meeting will be abandoned until such time as it can be reconvened. If the meeting is quorate, then it should continue.

Those attending remotely would be aware and accept that the meeting would continue and a vote would be taken without their attendance.

Equality

It is important for authorities to ensure that the needs of any members with a disability are taken into account when considering the practicality of a remotely attended meeting, taking any reasonable adjustments into account.