

<b>Report on</b>	Council & Committee Meeting Governance Arrangements
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	A McCreesh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer</b>	A McCreesh, Chief Executive P Moffett, Head of Democratic Services

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update members on the committee and council meeting governance arrangements in the context of the <i>Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020</i> in place to allow for remote meetings, remote attendance by members and members of the public, where applicable. To consider the current standing of the Regulations.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	Members will be aware that in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic the Department for Communities brought legislation forward to the NI Assembly in April 2020 to allow for the transaction of Council meetings virtually/in-remote form. The ability for the NI Assembly to do this flowed from Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 passed by the UK Parliament on 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2020.
2.2	The Regulations referenced in 1.1 above became operational on 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2020. These Regulations are time limited and as such temporary. The Regulations are due to expire on 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 meaning that virtual/remote meetings held under the guise of these Regulations can only be done so up on midnight of 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2021.
2.3	The Department for Communities (DfC) has confirmed that the new Regulations will now not be in place before 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 to allow for a seamless continuation of remote/virtual meetings. DfC has advised that they are working towards having the new regulations in place for Council AGMs in June. Mid Ulster Council's AGM will take place on Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> June.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>This expiration of the existing Regulations in the absence of new ones being in place will affect how we approach any council/committee meetings held between 7<sup>th</sup> May and 31<sup>st</sup> May. On the basis that DfC are working to have new Regs. in place for June 2021 the following meetings fall in the affected period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Committee: Tues 11<sup>th</sup> May</li> <li>• Development Committee: Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> May</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council: Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> May</li> </ul>
3.2	The Planning and Policy & Resources Committees will be held before the current Regulations expire.
3.3	Subject to further direction being provided by DfC on this matter and in the interests of continuing the transaction of council/committee business during this period it is recommended that meetings continue in the format as they have been to date (i.e. our hybrid/virtual meetings with the participation of members)
3.4	<p>To facilitate this, it is recommended that any decisions arrived upon at these meetings will be implemented by the Chief Executive, under the authority granted to that position by 3.3 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers, where it states;</p> <p><b>3.3 Emergencies and Cases of Urgency</b></p> <p><i>'Taking such measures, including incurring expenditure, as may be required in emergency situations or cases of urgency, subject to advising the appropriate Chair and reporting to the appropriate committee as soon as possible'</i></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: Not applicable
	Human: Not applicable
	Risk Management: Not applicable
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not applicable
	Rural Needs Implications: Not applicable
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	That the council consider the contents of this report to continue with meetings in the current format and any decisions made at meetings from 7 <sup>th</sup> May until the new Remote Meeting Regulations are in place be implemented by the Chief Executive under 3.3 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	None