



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE**

**16<sup>h</sup> JULY 2021**

### **HYBRID MEETINGS**

#### **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Community Liaison Committee with an update in respect of the Councils position of holding hybrid meetings and the live webcasting of meetings. These developments aim to encourage engagement and improve public participation in the democratic process.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge and provide comment on the Councils approach to taking forward hybrid meetings and live webcasting

#### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Community Liaison Committee on [23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021](#) , Members were advised of changes to the approach the Authority will take to conduct their Committee meetings due to the implementation of the [Local Government and Elections Act \(Wales\) 2021](#).

#### **4 WEBCASTING AND HYBRID MEETINGS**

- 4.1 The introduction of a webcasting and hybrid meeting service will require the Council Business Unit to conduct a number of trial meetings to ensure the final product is a professional webcast stream of Council meetings. For this reason,

the introduction of live webcasting and hybrid meetings will be rolled out on an incremental basis to allow for experience to be gained with the live system operations and to ensure adequate training has been provided to all members and officers that will be using the equipment.

- 4.2 Training will include a voting app that will be available for Members to utilise through the Modern.Gov (meeting management system) app, managing a hybrid meeting, adapting questioning techniques and strengthening the knowledge base already held by Members, whilst also considering promotion of public participation.
- 4.3 To assist members in the continued use of the system the development of useful guidance manuals in respect of the Chamber equipment and the hybrid voting app, including a video tutorial will be produced
- 4.4 It is anticipated that a series of briefing sessions to all Members will be undertaken throughout the summer so they can familiarise themselves with the equipment and operational arrangements for webcast and hybrid meetings. It is proposed that the formal broadcast of the [Overview & Scrutiny Committee](#) will take place in September in conjunction with the wider roll out to remaining committees.
- 4.5 Arrangements will account for the number of Members permitted to attend the Chamber in person to 26 (socially distanced). This figure will include officers from the Council Business Unit who will operate the hybrid infrastructure and will be in proportion to the political balance and following discussions with Group Leaders

## **5. SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

- 5.1 Officers from the Council Business Unit have already undertaken a series of meetings with Community Council clerks to aide discussions in taking forward hybrid meetings to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021
- 5.2 Concerns were expressed from a number of clerks on the ability to take forward hybrid meetings due to the cost implications of purchasing the necessary equipment and also the complexity of undertaking a hybrid meeting which is likely to require more than one member of staff in attendance in order to facilitate the meeting.
- 5.3 To support the Community Council clerks in developing their operational arrangements, officers from the Council Business Unit recently attended a pilot hybrid meeting of Llantrisant Community Council with a member of the ICT department.

- 5.4 Officers attended and observed the meeting to understand the current set up of Community Council meetings and issues they are working through to undertake a Community Council meetings. Officers observed the meeting set –up, suitability of the venue to undertake a hybrid meeting and also the equipment that the Community Council were able to use to conduct a hybrid meeting.
- 5.5 Following the visit officers will now gather information to support Community Councils in determining what equipment they deem essential to undertake successful hybrid meetings. Officers will also include a number of options to suit varying Community Council budgets.
- 5.6 Officers from the Council Business Unit will feed back to the Community Council clerks network in a meeting at the end of July 2021 and also support clerks to determine what other support they require to take hybrid meetings forward. If facilities allow at this time, it is hoped this meeting could take place through a hybrid arrangement.

## **5.EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report and no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed necessary for the purposes of this report.

## **6. CONSUTLATION**

- 7.1 Not applicable.