

Effective chairing of remote meetings

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Today's facilitator



- Alison Edwards
 - Leadership team- LGA
 - It builds on other LGA resources which can be accessed after the session.
 - I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the London Office of Technology and Innovation for some of the material in this webinar.
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Today's session

- Introduction
 - Some basic good practice principles
 - How it all works
 - Putting it into practice
 - Ensuring democracy is fulfilled
 - Hints and tips
 - Resources
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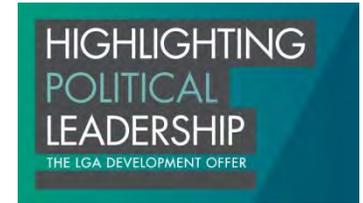
Introduction

- This is a webinar on chairing remote meetings.
 - Many of the principles of good face to face meetings apply in remote meetings as well.
 - Some of the things we discuss will be familiar.
 - But some aspects of this will be new.
 - So we shall talk about the similarities-
 - And the differences.
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Remote meetings

- Council staff and councillors across the UK are now working remotely.
 - This presents challenges for holding traditional council meetings.
 - Getting used to the technology such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts Meet, Skype.
 - The etiquette of participating in meetings.
 - This includes committee meetings, ‘statutory’ meetings such as planning/licensing, public meetings.
 - Find out what technology your council is using.
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Your role in meetings



- To give your residents or members of the public confidence that the business of the council will be carried out in accordance with the council's constitution and procedural rules.
- Making sure that meetings are run effectively and inclusively, in line with any agreed agenda, to deal with the business at hand - this will include preparation and follow-up.
- This is the same whether face to face or through remote meeting technology.

Meeting– preparation



- Is a meeting the right way to deal with the issue?
 - What are the objectives of the meeting?
 - Know what is on the agenda.
 - Are there other people who should attend?
 - Ensure you are there on time.
 - Make time to 'be there'.
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In the meeting

- Welcome your fellow participants.
 - Listen before speaking.
 - Concentrate on process over detail.
 - Use eye contact and body-language to encourage people.
 - Use questions skilfully to achieve results.
 - Manage time so the agenda items get fair discussion.
 - Manage interventions- especially from the public.
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At the close



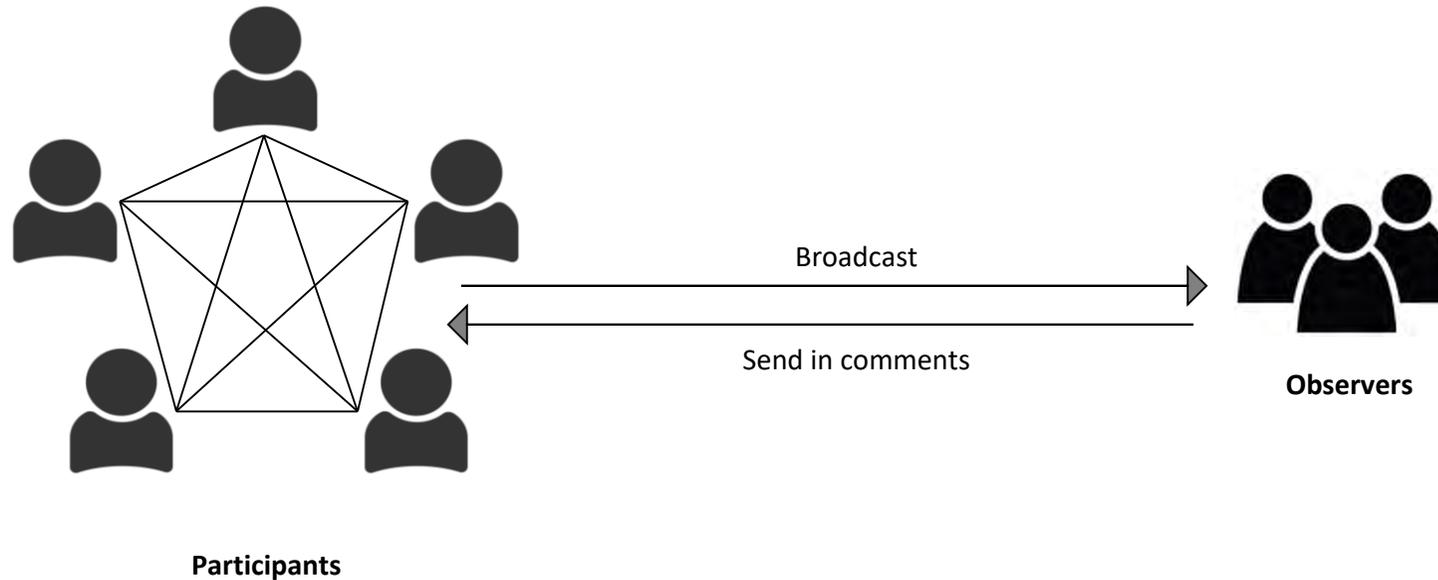
- Know who will do what by when, especially if the **who** is **you**.
 - Clarify how outstanding issues will be resolved.
 - Confirm arrangements for follow up documentation.
 - Feedback to those who need it.
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Remote meetings

How does it work?

A traditional video conference meeting enables full participation, conversations and screen sharing between all participants.

Also allows observers to observe proceedings



The Technology

- **Google Hangouts Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom all offer functionality that can support observers.**
- Google Hangouts Meet offers a “Live Stream”.
- Zoom refers to this as a “Video Webinar”.
- MS Teams calls it ‘Live Events’.
- Each platform also enables observers to pose written questions, typically through some form of chat function.
- What platform is your council using?

Before the meeting

Before the meeting, all participants should be made aware of the following etiquette:

1. Join the meeting promptly to avoid unnecessary interruptions.
 2. Mute your mic when you're not talking.
 3. If possible, switch off your camera when you're not speaking (to save bandwidth).
 4. If you'd like to speak, turn your camera on.
 5. Only speak when invited to by the Chair.
 6. State your name before you make a comment.
 7. If you're referring to a specific page or slide mention the page or slide number.
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- If any documents need to be referred to during the meeting, share them with participants in advance and ensure that every page and slide has a number.
 - Do your research beforehand. Remember you might not have 'on hand' officer assistance.
 - If it's appropriate for observers to be able to see the documents as well, post links to each document on your council website.
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Chairing an online meeting

- If referring to specific documents, clearly state the document and page number.
 - Be very directive! Invite specific participants by name to speak or to respond to a point.
 - If you're not sure who would like to speak next, invite participants who would like to make a point to turn on their camera. You can then invite them by name in turn.
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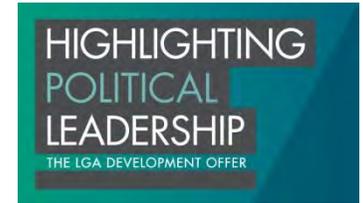
Recording proceedings

- Committees should have a ‘moderator’ to make notes to create the formal minutes.
 - For the smooth running of the meeting, it will help if the moderator can assist the Chair in spotting who wishes to speak.
 - If using a collaborative document to take votes, this person can take responsibility for sharing the relevant document and calling out the result.
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Voting- can be done in two ways

- **Using Process (simplest)**
 - The simplest way to record a vote is for the Chair to perform a roll-call of all committee members and ask them to state their vote, which can be captured by a moderator/officer.
 - If all participants can be seen on the video conference, they could alternatively indicate this with a hand signal:
 - Thumb up = Vote For
 - Thumb down = Vote Against
 - Flat hand = Vote Abstain
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Using Technology



- **An alternative option is to enable participants to write down their vote.**
 - In advance of the meeting, give exclusive access to participants to a collaborative document such as a Google doc, which all participants can edit at the same time
 - That document could be laid out as follows:
 - **VOTE Name / Number**
 - **FOR**
 - **[Participants type their names]**
 - **AGAINST**
 - **[Participants type their names]**
 - **ABSTAIN**
 - **[Participants type their names]**
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Taking Deputations / Speeches from Members of the Public



- **Some meetings will need to enable members of the public to share their views, for example during a planning meeting. Again there are two ways of doing this.**
 - **[Simplest Option: Share views in writing in advance](#)**
 - There is no legal requirement that committees must accept oral input from the public.
 - Instead, committees could make it clear in advance of the meeting that all submissions must be made in writing.
 - This could be done by sharing an email address to which they can write, or by creating a simple Google Form through which participants can submit their views.
 - Ensure that the deadline for making submissions is made very clear.
 - Submissions could be read out by someone during the meeting, or chaired by combining them into one document.
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- **Advanced option: Add as participants**
 - It is common practice for members of the public who wish to speak at a committee to give advance notice.
 - Those wishing to speak could be added as participants rather than as observers to the meeting.
 - In effect, this may require requesting their email address in advance of the session so that they can be sent the joining link for participants.
 - Presentations from the public would be handled in the same way as contributions from committee members.
 - They should be informed of the meeting etiquette and directly invited to speak by the Chair.
 - The Chair should be clear on the time limit for speaking, and give participants' notice when they have 1 minute / 30 seconds remaining.
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You are not alone...



- Work with officers before the meeting.
 - Work with officers at the meeting.
 - Find out who is there to support you.
 - Take advice.
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Thank you for listening to this webinar

Coronavirus- information for councils

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/coronavirus-information-councils>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/remote-council-meetings>

LGA political leadership resources:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership>

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