

Notice of Motion submitted pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.27

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor A Clark on behalf of the Green Party:

Transparency and Accountability Motion

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has stepped up to the challenge of continuing to perform our duties and serve our community - including rapidly identifying, testing and executing a new system of meeting and voting online that meets current regulatory and constitutional requirements. It is a great credit to the Officers and all the Members who have demonstrated flexibility and versatility in order to ensure the success of this new way of working together.

We therefore propose that we amend the way that this Council records the business of its meetings beyond the pandemic response period, in order to continue to:

- encourage and enable the greatest possible participation in meetings and local democracy by Members and Residents alike,
- build trust between Residents and Members who represent them, and
- enable greater understanding of how the Council conducts its business and makes decisions.

The measures proposed are all designed to complement the Council's Digital Strategy, and to bring the meeting practices of the Council in line with many other local authorities that have already put such measures in place successfully. At such time as we find ourselves able to meet again in person, the investment already made in the microphone system in the Council Chamber at King's Hill, as well as a portable system available for meetings held in the Angel Centre, to provide a hearing loop, mean that only a small estimated additional investment will be required, if any, in order to put these measures in place. Electronic voting has also recently been tested by Members with positive feedback on the functionality and security of the system proposed.

We believe these measures will also ensure that we respond to the potential equality impact on residents who would like to observe and participate in meetings by asking questions, as well as Members. This especially applies to those with caring responsibilities, short- and long-term disabilities, pregnancy and post-natal care, unavoidable work commitments, illness or who are on low incomes without access to affordable transport in the evenings.

To ensure that the objectives above are addressed, this motion proposes that:

- (1) Every Council Meeting, Cabinet, Advisory Board and Committee Meeting be live streamed on a secure internet connection, as well as recorded, beyond the pandemic period. Recordings should be made available on the Council's website for members of the public to access within 2 working days of the meeting having taken place.

- (2) Electronic voting be introduced for every Council Meeting, Cabinet Meeting, Advisory Board and Committee Meeting.
- (3) Recorded votes be extended to every Council Meeting, Advisory Board and Committee Meeting on Member request.
- (4) As long as government regulation continues to allow (especially in the instance that the current concession introduced during the pandemic response period be made permanent), that the option for full remote participation in meetings, including remote voting for Members of Council, Cabinet and Advisory Boards, be continued.