

Name:	Audio/Audiovisual Conferencing		
Type:	Council Policy		
Owner:	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible Officer:	Governance and Strategy Manager		
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Legislation Reference:	Section 98(3)(a) <i>Local Government Act 2019</i>		

## 1 PURPOSE

This policy authorises Member's attendance at a Council Meeting or Executive Committee Meeting by way of audio/audiovisual conferencing and describes the duties and obligations of a Member who attends by audio or audiovisual means.

## 2 PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to facilitate access and participation in meetings by permitting Members to be present and participate remotely by means of audio or audiovisual conferencing.

## 3 DEFINITIONS

*For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:*

Term	Definition
Audio/Audiovisual Conferencing	means a facility that enables audio and visual communication between persons at different places.
Meeting	means an Ordinary or Special Council Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting.
Executive Committee	means a Committee required under legislation, being the Administrative Review Committee, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Performance Appraisal Committee and Risk Management and Audit Committee.
Member	means an Elected Member or Independent Member of the Risk Management and Audit Committee.
Carer's Responsibilities	means the care for a partner or family member who is in need of care and support.

## 4 POLICY STATEMENT

### 4.1 Attendance

- 4.1.1. A Member may apply to attend a Meeting via audio or audiovisual conferencing when the Member is physically prevented from attending a meeting due to:
- a granted leave of absence, being a greater distance than 100km from the appointed place of meeting;
  - carer's responsibilities;
  - ill health;
  - disability; or
  - a natural disaster.

- 4.1.2. Members are required to seek prior approval by Council or Committee Decision to attend a meeting via audio or audiovisual conference.
  - 4.1.3. A Member may seek leave by the Chief Executive Officer to attend a meeting via audio or audiovisual conferencing on short notice should unforeseen circumstances arise under section 4.1.1.
  - 4.1.4. A Member attending via audio/audiovisual conferencing cannot chair a meeting unless all members participating are doing so via audio/audiovisual conferencing.
  - 4.1.5. If the Chair is attending by audio/audiovisual conferencing, then the meeting must by resolution appoint a member physically present as the presiding member.
  - 4.1.6. Members will be connected to the audio/audiovisual conferencing system prior to the commencement of the Meeting.
  - 4.1.7. Members will be entitled to participate as if they were physically present at the meeting.
  - 4.1.8. In the case of secret ballots, the Member will provide their vote to the Chief Executive Officer in confidence, who will then place it into the ballot box.
  - 4.1.9. Members may not be able to view presentations being made at the meeting, however will be provided with copies of the presentations electronically, if available.
  - 4.1.10. If Council is unable to accommodate a Member's request to audio/audiovisual conference the Member will be advised in advance of the meeting.
- 4.2. **General Responsibilities**
- 4.2.1. Members in attendance via audiovisual conferencing are to consider the appropriateness of their personal presentation and surrounding environment.
  - 4.2.2. The Chair will confirm which participants are present at the commencement of the meeting.
  - 4.2.3. A Member who is attending by audio or audiovisual means must advise the Chair if they are about to leave the meeting and advise the Chair immediately if they re-join the meeting.
- 4.3. **Conflicts of Interest**
- 4.3.1. It is the responsibility of Members attending remotely to ensure they do not participate in an agenda item, or hear the discussion, if they have declared a conflict of interest in the matter.
  - 4.3.2. The Member must ensure they declare the conflict and disconnect from the conferencing system at the appropriate time.
  - 4.3.3. Where a Member has disconnected from the conferencing system due to a conflict of interest, the Chair must contact the Member as soon as the agenda item has concluded.
- 4.4. **Confidentiality**
- Members attending a meeting remotely must:
- (a) Ensure that people who are not Members cannot see, overhear, or listen to the Member or the meeting;
  - (b) Not record the meeting; and
  - (c) Ensure that confidential papers are not accessible by any person who is not a member.

## 5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

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- 5.1 *Leave of Absence Form*
- 5.2 *Breach of Code of Conduct Elected Member*

## 6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

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- 6.1 *Local Government Act*
- 6.2 *Palmerston (Procedures for Meetings) By-Laws*