

## **Remote Meetings - Standing Orders Adopted on 24 June 2020**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The following additional standing orders are an addendum to the Standing Orders (SOs) for **Middleham Town Council** (the '**Council**') to enable the effective management of meetings held remotely during Coronavirus pandemic; in all other matters, the Council's SOs adopted in 2014 (the '2014 SOs') shall apply.

### **CONVENING**

- a. A remote meeting of the Council or of one of its committees will be convened in accordance with Paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- b. The Council will ensure that all non-confidential meeting papers are posted on its website and where possible, on the website of the principal authority for its district area.

### **CHAIMAN'S ROLE:**

All meetings shall commence with a statement from the Council Chairman, outlining the procedures to be undertaken to hold a lawful and effective remote meeting and will highlight the requirement for all councillors and non-councillors with voting rights to observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors are deemed present for the purposes of any remote meeting, when they can speak, hear, and be heard (and where practicable see and be seen) by all those in attendance (whether by video conferencing or by telephone).

Where the Council has taken reasonable measures to provide guidance and support to a councillor to join a remote meeting, but that member is experiencing difficulties that are outside of the control of the Council, the lack of attendance of the member shall not invalidate a properly convened and quorate meeting

All councillors present will be required to state their name prior to the commencement of the meeting.

### **QUORUM:**

No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

### **VOTING:**

Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.

The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.

At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

The chairman will request a response to each proposal verbally, from each member present.

The chairman will confirm that response verbally.

The chairman will read out all votes cast once collected.

The minutes will reflect the decision of the Council.

If there is a 'raise my hand' facility on the platform being used, this may be used as an alternative method of counting votes, the votes being counted by the clerk and vice chair.

### **COUNCIL/COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:**

On each item of business to be transacted, which requires discussion (where members are joining the meeting by telephone or audio only):

- The rules of debate, as set out in article 1 of SO 2014 shall apply.
- The Chairman will ask each member, in turn, whether he/she wishes to contribute to the discussion.
- After each member has been heard, the Chairman will call for a proposal on the item of business to be transacted, by a member present (member to state their name prior to making the proposal)
- Once a proposal is moved, if required, the Chairman will call for that proposal to be seconded by a member present (member to state their name prior to speaking)
- The Chairman will request any amendments to said proposal from each member present, prior to moving to a vote on that proposal.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AN ITEM OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED AT THE MEETING:**

- A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.
- Dependent upon the platform being used, a member ineligible to be present during a discussion shall leave the meeting and be invited back when that item is complete. Inviting back may require a telephone call or email being sent to that member.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 30 minutes, unless directed by the chairman of the meeting; a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.

The Chairman will ask each member of the public, joining the meeting by telephone, if they wish to contribute to this session.

Members of the public joining the meeting by video link shall use the 'raise my hand facility' or physically raise their hand – the clerk/vice-chairman will make a note of these and they will be invited to speak by the chairman.

### **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

All meetings of the Council and its committees must be available for the press and public to attend (i.e. open to the public) and the 2014 SO contain provisions for this

The Council or a committee may resolve to exclude the press and public, from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings), due to publicity of the matter being prejudicial to the public interest, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons.

- In respect of any proceedings where the press and public are excluded, Council shall ensure that the press and public cannot hear or see the proceedings either by using a video platform that lists those present or by reconvening at a different time with only members present. In the latter case, this is a continuation of the original meeting; the original meeting has not ended until the confidential business is dealt with. To facilitate this, the Clerk shall seek to ensure that any matters which may require consideration after exclusion of the press and public at the end of the list of business to be transacted at that meeting.
- If the platform being used allows the Council to remove people from the meeting, this facility can be used (i.e. once the Council has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting the host (clerk/RFO) will remove members of press and public from the meeting.