

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL
STANDING ORDERS
REGULATING THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL IN
HOLDING REMOTE MEETINGS

Standing Orders under the Local Government Act, 2001 must be adopted by the Council to come into effect on and from 14th December, 2020.

Meetings of the Council

Purpose

These Standing Orders provide the means and guidance for the conduct of any remote or hybrid meeting of South Dublin County Council and its subcommittees held under the provisions of the Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Section 29) (Local Authorities) (Designation) Order 2020 (S.I. No. 445 of 2020) Order 2020.

For any period of time that Level 5 restrictions have been imposed by Government, all necessary Council meetings will be permitted to proceed online.

Remote Meetings: definition of place

1. Given the designation of local authorities, the meetings of SDCC may now be held
 - the Council Chamber
 - an external venue used to accommodate meetings of the Council
 - one or more Council buildings or rooms, linked remotely
 - a virtual meeting using MS Teams, or another online platform as chosen by the Council
 - a combination of the above to provide for physical and/or remote attendance by elected members.

A decision to hold any statutory meeting remotely or with some members attending remotely should only be taken as a last resort and in respect of each meeting i.e. on a meeting by meeting basis. The provisions re virtual meetings or attendance by elected members remotely shall not apply to Council meetings that adopt or amend the County Development Plan, or the annual Budget Meeting or AGM. In the case of any meetings that allow a combination of physical/and or remote attendance by elected members the Mayor shall physically attend the meeting to Chair the meeting.

That these provisions, which are being introduced under the Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 Section 29 Order 2020 (S.I. No. 445 of 2020, the 2020 Act being emergency legislation, which contains a sunset clause because the law is meant to be emergency temporary legislation, will be reviewed formally by the Council at a monthly Council no later than the date of June 2021.

Management of Remote Meetings

2. Members should notify the Meetings Administrator in advance if they intend to attend the meeting remotely.
3. Any member participating in a meeting remotely must, when they are speaking, be able to be heard (and seen, where practicable) by all other members in attendance, and the remote participant must, in turn, be able to hear (and see, where practicable) those other members participating.
4. The Mayor will at the outset, and at any reconvening of a meeting, call a roll call of participating members and ensure that they can hear and, where practicable, see those in attendance. Any member participating remotely should also confirm at the outset and at any reconvening of the meeting that they can hear and, where practicable, see the proceedings. Members should inform the meeting if they lose connection in accordance with provisions on connectivity within the agreed standing orders.
5. The attendance of those members at the meeting will be recorded by the Meetings Administrator.
6. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Standing Orders will also apply to a remote meeting. Members attending physically and remotely will together constitute a quorum.
7. Each member participating remotely has personal responsibility to ensure and confirm to the Meetings Administrator that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be either hearing or seeing consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings, in accordance with standing orders that apply.
8. Subject to compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Meeting Administrator may facilitate the recording of the meeting for the purposes of taking minutes. However, this recording shall only be used for this purpose and will be deleted once the minutes are agreed.

Meeting procedures

9. The Meetings Administrator will coordinate the facilitation of the meeting. An appropriate official will assume responsibility for controlling the conferencing technology employed for remote access and attendance, and to administer the member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Mayor.
10. Members should allow sufficient time to establish a connection prior to the commencement of the meeting to allow themselves and the Meeting Administrator the opportunity to test the connection.
11. The Mayor, at the beginning of the meeting, will explain the protocol for members' participation. The Mayor's ruling during the debate will be final.
12. Members who wish to speak should use the notification process as directed by the Mayor, and then speak when invited.
13. The rules of debate as set out in existing standing orders will apply.

Voting

14. A vote taken remotely in accordance with the Standing Orders of the local authority constitutes a valid vote towards the decision of the Council. Voting will take place by a roll call vote.
15. Where a member loses connectivity during a statutory vote, every effort will be made to re-establish a connection. If a connection cannot be restored within a reasonable timeframe, as determined by the Chairperson, the elected member may phone the Mayor or the Meetings Administrator to vote, who will inform the members of the vote and the vote will be recorded accordingly.

Leaving a Remote Meeting

16. Members leaving the meeting should make every effort to inform the Mayor by the appropriate means that they are exiting the meeting to ensure there is a Quorum remaining and so that it is not presumed to be a loss in connectivity.

Declaration of Interests

17. Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares a disclosable pecuniary or other beneficial interest, under Part 15 of the Local Government Act 2001, in any item of business that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting, advising the Mayor and members at the time of departure and this shall be recorded in the minutes. Their departure will be confirmed by the Meetings Administrator, who will invite the relevant Member by agreed means set down in the standing orders to re-join the meeting at the appropriate time.

Attendance of Public and Media at a Remote Meeting (Section 45(3) Local Government Act 2001 – 2014)

18. Members of the public and media may be present at a remote meeting which is not webcast live but must maintain silence and observe any directions given by the Chair or by any employee in attendance.
19. Members of the media and public should give prior notice of joining virtually in accordance with agreed local arrangements. To manage numbers and attendance, the meetings administrator may consider utilising electronic invitations compatible with the platform in use.
20. Where the authority is webcasting live, attendance of public and media is via that means.

MEETINGS IN COMMITTEE

21. In line with the provisions of Section 45 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Council may by resolution decide to meet in committee for the whole or part of the meeting concerned.
22. Should the Council elect to meet in Committee for some or all of the meeting the Meetings Administrator or designated person will ensure that there are no members of the public or media in remote attendance or remotely accessing the meeting or are able to hear or see the proceedings once the exclusion has been agreed by the meeting.
23. Where the Council has by resolution decided to meet in committee for the whole or part of the meeting concerned, each member participating remotely has personal responsibility to ensure and confirm to the Meetings Administrator that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to be either hearing or seeing consideration of such items, and/or recording the proceedings, in accordance with standing orders that apply.