

Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Protocol for remote meetings of the LEP Board

1. Pre-amble

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, meetings of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) may be held remotely; that is, without any or all Members physically present in a room.

This Protocol sets out how remote meetings of the LEP Board are to be conducted.

2. Timescales

In consultation with the Chair of the LEP, the LEP Chief Executive will determine which meetings shall be held remotely.

3. Definitions

In this Protocol:

“Meeting” means any meeting of the **LEP Board**

“Member” means a member of the **LEP Board**

“Procedure Rules” means all or any of the following adopted by the LEP Board, as the context requires:

- Procedural Rules,
- Access to Information Annex,
- Code of Practice for Recording Meetings, and
- Members’ Code of Conduct

“Remote Access” means by electronic means, including by telephone conference, video conference, live webcasts, and live interactive streaming.

“Remote Attendance” means attending a meeting by Remote Access and complying with the requirements set out in paragraph 6 of the Protocol about being heard and seen by other attendees.

4. Interpretation of Procedure Rules

Procedure Rules continue to apply, interpreted in accordance with this Protocol. If any Procedure Rule conflicts with the Protocol, the Procedure Rule shall be interpreted by the Chair of the LEP or the Head of Legal or Governance Services in accordance with Procedure Rule 2.

5. Place of meetings

Any reference in Procedure Rules to “**a meeting**” is not limited to a meeting of Members all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place.

In Procedure Rule 4 (and in any other Procedure Rule where the context so requires), any reference to a “**place**” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.

6. Attendance at meeting

In Procedure Rule 10 (quorum) (and in any other Procedure Rule where the context so requires) any reference to being “**present**” at a meeting includes being present through Remote Access, subject to a Member being in Remote Attendance. This means the Member must be able to:

(a) **hear and be heard by all other Members** in attendance (and where practicable see them and be seen by them), and

(b) **hear and be heard by any officer of the Combined Authority** in Remote Attendance who is **entitled to attend and speak** at the meeting (and where practicable see and be seen by them), and

(c) **hear and be heard and seen by any other person** in Remote Attendance **invited** by the Chair to attend and speak at the meeting (and where practicable see and be seen by them), and

(d) **be heard by any member of the public** attending the meeting (and where practicable seen by them).

For transparency, a Member in Remote Attendance should **try where practicable to connect on camera**, as well as audio. This will also help the meeting run smoothly.

Before the meeting starts, Governance Services will provide the Chair with a list of Members expected to be in Remote Attendance. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair will ask any Member in Remote Attendance who is not able to be seen by attendees to **confirm their attendance verbally**, as a way of confirming their identity.

Leaving and joining the meeting

Members should **join the meeting promptly** to avoid interruption and should **attend the whole meeting** wherever possible.

Members (including those who may be seen) should **inform the Chair** and the Governance Services Officer as soon as practicable if they

- **join the meeting part-way through,**

- **leave the meeting** before it is finished, **or**
- later **re-join** the meeting.

This will help the record of attendance to be accurate and ensure quorum has been met; the minutes will record these declarations.

7. Public access to meetings

Any reference in a Procedure Rule (however expressed) to a meeting being “**open to the public**” includes access through Remote Access.

A meeting shall not be taken as open to the public unless full details about how the public may access the meeting through Remote Access are published on the LEP’s web-site, at least 5 clear days in advance of the meeting where reasonably practicable.

8. Voting

The Chair should ask Members to collectively affirm any recommendation verbally. A Member in Remote Attendance must **inform the Chair if they do not wish to affirm the resolution**, at which point the Chair may ask for a show of hands, subject to the Chair asking any Member in Remote Attendance who cannot be seen to confirm verbally how they are voting. Any individual vote in these circumstances will not be formally recorded in the minutes.

9. Documents

Any reference in a Procedure Rule (however expressed) to a document being “**open to inspection**” includes being published on the LEP’s website.

Any reference in a Procedure Rule (however expressed) to “**the publication, posting or making available of a document at offices of the Combined Authority**” includes publication on the LEP’s website.

10. Officers

An Officer may present a report (or otherwise contribute) to a meeting where this is provided for in the Procedure Rules or normal practice, but only where they have Remote Access to the meeting which enables them to be heard by attendees.

A Governance Services Officer must be present at the meeting and must be in the room if a meeting is held in a physical room, even where any Member is in Remote Attendance.

11. Other attendees

Any other person may attend and contribute to a meeting (in accordance with Procedure Rules or otherwise invited to do so by the Chair), provided that they have Remote Access to the meeting which enables them to be heard by attendees.

12. Conduct of the meeting

The Chair should be proactive and verbally note the order of speaking at the beginning of discussion on an item.

Members in Remote Attendance who can be seen by other attendees and wish to speak on an item, should **raise their hand**. The Chair should check with any Member in Remote Attendance who can't be seen whether they wish to speak on each item. Members who cannot be seen may use a 'prompt' function to request time to speak or do so verbally if connected by telephone only.

Members should

- only **speak when invited to** by the Chair,
- **state their name** before making a comment if not visible via video,
- **not speak over each other**,
- keep their **microphones on mute** if they are not speaking,
- **state the relevant page or slide number** when referring to a particular document

13. Exempt and confidential items

The **usual requirements** in relation to these continue to apply.

These items should be considered at the **end of a meeting** to facilitate prohibiting the public's access during these items.

The Governance Services Officer is responsible for ensuring that the public do not have access to the meeting during these items.

The Chair must not allow the meeting to discuss any exempt or confidential item until the Governance Services Officer has verbally confirmed that the public does not have access to the meeting.

A Member in Remote Attendance must not breach their **duty of confidentiality** to the LEP by allowing any unauthorised person to be present in the same room as them when the meeting discusses an exempt or confidential item.

14. Technical difficulties

If the Chair is made aware that the public's Remote Access to the meeting is lost or interrupted, the Chair should adjourn the meeting during any item which is open to the public.

The Chair should also adjourn the meeting if the Governance Services Officer loses their connection.

The Chair may briefly adjourn a meeting if made aware that a Member in Remote Attendance has lost their connection to the meeting.

If a significant number of Members in Remote Attendance lose their connection at the same time, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to another date or time, even where the meeting is still quorate.

During any period when a Member has lost their connection, they are not deemed to be present at the meeting. If this happens, a Member should consider whether their absence during the item is such that it is inappropriate for them to take part in the vote.

The Chair may also defer an item if any other person who was expected to participate or contribute in relation to that item loses their connection.

15. Conflicts of interest

Members must **comply with the Members' Code of Conduct**, including making declarations of interest at a meeting. Any declarations made will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

A Member in Remote Attendance with an interest in an item who wishes to leave the meeting should first **declare their interest verbally** to the Chair **before leaving**. The Governance Services Officer attending the meeting will tell the Member when they may re-join (that is, when the item has been concluded).