

ADDENDUM TO STANDING ORDERS ON CONDUCT OF COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL DURING THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY – COVID 19

1. Introduction

- a) This Guidance has been agreed by the elected Members of Fingal County Council and is to be applied to all Council and Committee Meetings.
- b) The Council has been advised, on the basis of legal analysis,
 - i) that meetings of the Council and its Committees must take place in a physical place and Members must be present to cast a vote,
 - ii) that the decision-making functions of the Local Authority, whether in relation to Reserved Functions or any other decision, may only be exercised where the Council or Committee is sitting in a physical place and Members are present.
- c) The governance and oversight functions of the Council and Committees in relation to the performance and delivery of services by the executive are essential functions of the Members.
- d) The requirement to implement Public Health Authorities' guidance on workplace protection including physical distancing and "cocooning" is fundamental to any decision to convene meetings of the Council including Committee Meetings. Meetings will only be convened where:
 - i) a facility is available which enables physical distancing requirements to be implemented i.e. minimum 2 metres between people; and
 - ii) the operation of the meetings ensures that Members who may not be in a position to attend due to adhere to "cocooning" advice, self-isolation or other measures to address the pandemic can fulfil their functions as Members.

2) Council & Committee Meetings

Council meetings will happen in two formats. The full Council and all Committees will hold virtual meetings during the Public Health Emergency, except where it is clear that full distancing precautions can be taken and all Members are fully able to participate in the meetings.

Virtual meetings and physical meetings.

- a) Virtual Meetings will take place via Microsoft Teams of the full Council and all committees of the Council, in accordance with the normal calendar as agreed and Standing Orders.

- b) In so far as is practicable within the constraints of this guidance, the meetings will operate within the Standing Orders of the Council. Interpretation will be as determined by the Mayor / Chair.
- c) Virtual meetings will be webcast, with the exception of the Organisation and Procedure Committee.

Decision Making Functions – Meetings in Person

- i) The Council has been advised that for the exercise of decision-making functions it is necessary for the Council to convene in person.
- ii) Meetings in person of the Council will occur in order to formally confirm decisions taken at a virtual Council meeting where the following circumstances apply:
 - (1) agreement exists amongst Members on the number of Members required to attend in the context of the required Quorum and the spatial distancing requirements
 - (2) agreement exists among Members that the Members attending the meeting in person will respect the decision of the virtual meeting and will confirm the decisions taken at the virtual meeting;
 - (3) physical distancing requirements can be met;
- iii) At these meetings
 - (1) staff attendance will be kept to a minimum;
 - (2) the duration of Meetings will be kept to a minimum;
 - (3) no business other than the confirmation of minutes and confirmation of the decisions or reports of virtual meetings (including the adoption of this addendum to standing orders) will be on the agenda.
- iv) In the context of public health advice, non-attendance at meetings in person will not count towards overall attendance where it is agreed that reduced numbers are required or Members are following that advice.
- v) Meetings will be webcast.

3) Other

- a) The Mayor and the Chief Executive will continue to provide a weekly update to Council during COVID 19
- b) A monthly Chief Executive's Report will be circulated to Council to align with the Calendar of Council meetings.