

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL



<b>Committee:</b>	Democracy Services Committee
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	5 July 2022
<b>Title of Item:</b>	Multi-Location meetings
<b>Purpose:</b>	An update on practical developments for holding hybrid meetings.
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b>	Geraint Owen, Head of Democracy Services

## Report to a meeting of the Democracy Services Committee

### 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- The Democracy Services Committee is asked to note the information submitted.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Since October 2020 all Council meetings have been held virtually with simultaneous translation provision via Zoom. By now, such meetings are second nature for the Councillors and everyone is familiar with the arrangements. We were able to hold 123 Council committee meetings virtually during 2021/22 as well as supporting 41 informal meetings for Councillors.
- 2.2 In December 2021, the Full Council decided on the long-term arrangements for holding Council committee meetings. The decision was to continue to hold meetings virtually wherever possible and hold hybrid meetings when there is a high level of interest from the public. Therefore, we are holding hybrid meetings for
- The Full Council
  - The Cabinet
  - Planning Committee
  - Scrutiny Committees

- 2.3 Obvious benefits and good practice have emerged from holding virtual meetings, practices that need to be maintained in future. In adopting the arrangements consideration was given to a number of different factors including
- promoting diversity in democracy by enabling remote access to virtual meetings and responding to the needs of Councillors who work and/or have young families
  - Contribute positively to reducing the impact of the Climate Crisis by identifying ways of reducing carbon by limiting travelling for councillors and officers
  - make wiser use of Councillors and officers' time by removing the need for travel.
- 2.4 In light of the decision to hold formal committee meetings virtually wherever possible and hold multi-location meetings when there is a high level of interest from the public, we have been working on amending the facilities in the meeting chambers to enable holding this type of meeting. It has been a challenge to bring the arrangements together, especially while ensuring that it all happens naturally through the medium of Welsh and enable simultaneous translation. It is easy to forget that all of the development work had to happen within Covid-19 restrictions, as we faced months of guidance to work from home.
- 2.5 I can now confirm that we have held meetings of the Full Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee as multi-location meetings. The first round of the scrutiny committee will begin in July - again as multi-location meetings. By now it is possible to hold multi-location meetings based at both chambers – Siambr Dafydd Orwig Chamber and Siambr Hywel Dda. I am grateful to you all for your co-operation as we continue to develop these arrangements.
- 2.6 Coupled with the above, work is taking place on developing other meeting rooms for informal hybrid meetings. One system will be ordered for each room with a focus on trying to ensure that the use of the system is the same in all rooms, although the hardware may vary depending on the size of the room.