

REPORT TO BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 28TH JUNE 2022

FUTURE MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 On 23rd September 2021 the Council agreed to introduce a Choice Based Blended Model of Fully Virtual and Hybrid Meetings, which incorporates the principle that meeting groups should be able to choose how they want to meet. Work is currently ongoing to develop an options appraisal for upgrading Council venues to provide a high quality hybrid experience. In the meantime this report asks the Committee to provide a view on preferred arrangements for meetings for 2022/2023, having regard to existing limitations.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

1.2.1 **agree that the Buchan Area Committee continue to offer a hybrid set-up for all Area Committee Meetings scheduled for 2022/2023, as far as is possible, and**

1.2.2 **note that officers will report back to Committee in the event that the Committee's preferred option cannot continue to be facilitated within existing resources**

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 Full Council agreed to adopt a Choice Based Blended Model of Fully Virtual and Hybrid Meetings at its meeting on 23rd September 2021. The principles of the Choice Based Blended Model provide that meeting groups should be given the choice of whether they want to meet on a fully virtual or hybrid basis.

2.2. On 28 April 2022 Full Council agreed to instruct an options appraisal for the upgrading of audio and visual equipment in Council venues to facilitate a high quality hybrid experience. In the meantime it was agreed that meeting groups would be asked to confirm their preferred meeting arrangements, having regard to the audio visual provision in existing venues.

3 Discussion

3.1 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee met regularly in person in Buchan House, Peterhead, with occasional remote attendance by attendees through the use of a Surface Hub.

- 3.2 Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee has largely met on a fully virtual basis. At the request of the Committee, on 7th June 2022 the Buchan Area Committee meeting took place via a hybrid set-up. On the whole, the meeting was successful, with only a few issues as follows –
- the laptops and surface hubs did not appear to work in-sync, affecting the Planning powerpoint presentation. It was only when all cameras were turned off that the presentation become more manageable
 - the quality of the livestream recording was poor in comparison to that when the meeting was fully virtual
 - for some Members and Officers, there is a preference to have 2 screens, however, resources does not allow for this within Buchan House at this time
- 3.3 The options for meeting arrangements for Council Committees in line with the Choice Based Blended Model are:-
- (i) *Fully Virtual* – meetings would take place on the Microsoft Teams platform with all attending virtually and the meeting livestreamed to ensure public access.
 - (ii) *Hybrid* – meetings would have a mixture of in person attendees and virtual attendees using the Microsoft Teams platform. The meeting would be livestreamed where possible. A high quality hybrid experience can be offered from Committee Room 5 in Woodhill House, although hired equipment has been used for meetings of Full Council.
- 3.4 Given the success of the meeting on 7th June, it is considered that the Buchan Area Committee can continue to have Area Committee meetings via a hybrid set-up; ensuring that Officers are complying with the principles agreed by Full Council in terms of the Choice Based Blended Model and that a solution is available at the meeting venue for those Members or Officers who wish to attend virtually.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The facilitation of Committee meetings helps the Council deliver all six Strategic Priorities and the underlying principle of right people, right places, right time.
- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			X
Staffing	X		
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland	X		
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability	X		
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

- 4.3 There are staffing implications in the provision of hybrid meetings, as additional Committee staff are required in order to facilitate the meeting. The impact on resources is being closely monitored.
- 4.4 The integrated impact assessment previously carried out and reported to Full Council on 23rd September remains relevant and there have been no material changes since that date. There is a positive impact on the protected groups Disability and Pregnancy and Maternity in ensuring there is an option for virtual attendance at meetings.
- 4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP004 – Business and Organisational Transformation ACORP006 – Reputational Management ACORP009 – Operational Risk Management (including health and safety).

5 Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.1.1 of the [List of Committee Powers in Part 2A](#) of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the approval of meeting arrangements for the Committee in order to deliver the functions delegated to it.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services

Report prepared by: Theresa Wood, Area Committee Officer
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