



REPORT of CHIEF EXECUTIVE

to
COUNCIL
12 DECEMBER 2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSE - REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To agree a formal response on behalf of Maldon District Council (MDC) to the government consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the draft consultation response at **APPENDIX A**.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This government consultation seeks views on the detail and practical implications of allowing remote and hybrid attendance at local authority meetings. It also tests views on the possible introduction of proxy voting for those occasions when an elected member, due to personal circumstances, may be unable to attend even remotely. Anyone can access and respond to the consultation at <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting/>
- 3.2 The consultation closes on 19 December 2024 and it is suggested that a formal response from MDC is given.
- 3.3 The Group Leaders have been engaged and they broadly felt the Council should support remote attendance for cases of exceptional circumstances i.e. illness, and that proxy voting would present issues, particularly in the case of semi-judicial Committees like planning where the debate should inform the way a Member votes.
- 3.4 A draft consultation response has been put together on this basis, with a copy attached at **APPENDIX A**. Members are requested to endorse this response or provide any additional comments.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This paper seeks approval for the draft consultation response as set back.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

- 5.1 None.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Thought has been given in the draft response to the impact on our residents.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Suggestions around remote and proxy voting are identified as ways to support those with caring responsibilities or even physical disabilities that would normally prevent their involvement in local politics, being able to engage.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – Thought has been given in the draft response to risk such as private and confidential discussion and pre-determination, for which we would need to also look at local protocols.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Not applicable (n/a).
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – N/a.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to:

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