

Recommendation to Dorset Council

14 December 2023

From Audit and Governance Committee 13 November 2023.

Flexibility to Hold Virtual Licensing Sub-Committees

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: [J Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic](#)

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Report Status: [Public](#)

Recommendation:

1. That Council is asked to approve a 12-month trial period to give the Licensing Sub-committee the flexibility to meet virtually when appropriate to do so; and delegates to the Licensing Committee the authority to take a decision on whether this flexibility should continue and be made a permanent arrangement.
2. That delegation is given to the Director of Legal & Democratic (Monitoring Officer), to approve the virtual meeting protocol after consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee and the Executive Director for Place.

Reason for Recommendation

There are numerous benefits of holding meetings virtually, including savings on officer, member and attendees travelling time, staff resources for running committee meetings and travel costs.

Appendices

1. Flexibility to Hold Virtual Licensing Sub-Committees

Background papers

There was a court case earlier this year, whereby a District Judge concluded that it was lawful to hold a virtual meeting of a licensing sub-committee, for the purposes of applications under the 2003 Licensing Act.

[Remote licensing hearings are lawful, judge confirms | Cornerstone Barristers](#)