Councillor Hybrid Meetings Protocol

This guide is provided to Members and Officers to support in the use of Microsoft Teams and how to participate in hybrid meetings.

The document provides steps and pictorial guidance to help you on any aspects of the hybrid meeting process. For those already familiar with Microsoft Teams a quick bullet point step by step is provided below.

Please can all Members and Officers read the full document initially.

Join a remote meeting using Microsoft Teams

Step 1   You will receive a calendar appointment via email from the Democratic Team. You should accept or decline this appointment depending on your attendance.

Step 2   You will need to click the link within the outlook calendar, or within the calendar in Microsoft Teams to join the meeting.

Step 3   You will be taken to a 'holding' screen. This is where you are able to see if your camera and microphone are turned off or on. It is best to keep your microphone off until you are ready to speak.

Step 4   Once happy with settings, click 'Join Now'. This will take you into the meeting with everyone else.

Step 5   If you wish to raise a question during the meeting, click the raise hand icon to indicate to the chair you wish to speak. The Chair will note the hands raised and will call you in to speak accordingly.

Step 6   Once the meeting has finished, click the red square with the white telephone icon to leave the meeting.

Top Tips

Do

- ✓ Consider blurring your background under the settings in the video, this will prevent anything in your background being visible including pictures of family etc. which may be distracting for other meeting participants.

- ✓ Consider your personal appearance, you'll be on show throughout the meeting.

- ✓ Ask family members to stay out of shot as people wandering about making coffee can be distracting.

- ✓ Be aware of the tools and functionality. You do not want to be talking away for a couple of minutes only to have your microphone muted and no one can hear you.

- ✓ If your internet connection is poor, consider turning off the incoming video under settings. This will reduce the amount of network needed to participate.

- ✓ Remember to use the raise hand function to indicate to the chair when you want to speak. Unmute your microphone when you start to talk otherwise others won't be able to hear you.

- ✓ Consider using headphones to listen to the meeting, whether in the General Offices or on Microsoft Teams, the audio through headphones will be clearer than the sound coming through your laptop or other device and will also ensure there is no feedback between the microphone and the speakers.

- ✓ Try and keep your device still and on a hard surface. If you are holding it or it is on your lap, every movement you make will come across on the image you project to everyone.

- ✓ If you find your picture is dark on the screen, try turning on the room lights or have a lamp on to the side of you.

- ✓ Think about your surroundings and be aware of what is being discussed. For example, if you are discussing an exempt item, you should make sure no one else is able to see or hear the content of the meeting, if you are unable to be in a room on your own, using headphones would help.

- ✓ Remember that everything you do on screen will be seen by everyone in the meeting and can be viewed by the public, therefore, it is recommended that you do not smoke or eat during the meeting (as would be the case if you were physically in the meeting at the General Offices).

Don't

- ☒ Use the chat functionality for anything other than voting and interacting with the chair.

- ☒ Leave your microphone on unless you are speaking. Everyone will be able to hear everything you say throughout the meeting unless your microphone is muted.

- ☒ Be tempted to dress down just because you are taking part remotely. Think about how you look on the video and how this will be portrayed on the live stream to the public. It will still be a meeting of the Council like any other.

- ☒ Wait until the meeting time to log in and set up. Test everything in advance, try calling other people to make sure you can hear and be heard.

☒ Stay in the meeting for any longer than is required and make sure you leave the meeting properly. If you don't people will still be able to see and hear you. At the end of the meeting, turn off your microphone AND camera to minimise the risk of people hearing things you don't want them to.

Microsoft Teams Functions
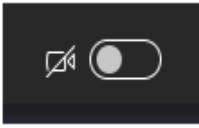
This is the Camera icon that lets you toggle the camera on and off by pressing the grey circle next to it. You can turn this on and no one will be able to see your picture, except you. You camera will only be available for others to see you once you Join the meeting. Use this time to adjust the position of your surface pro or device to get the best picture you can for you. Whatever you see here, the people will see on the live stream.

This is your Microphone button. Again press the grey circle to toggle it on and off. Turning it on now tests the sound and no one else can hear you.
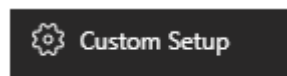
These options let you toggle with your sound and microphone settings. We would recommend listening to the meeting through headphones as the audio is clearer than through the device but this will be down to personal preference. Depending on if you have headphones plugged in or not will depend on the option that appears here.
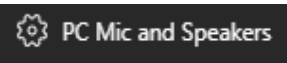
You can also change your background at this point. To do this your Camera will need to be turned on, then:
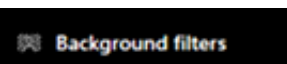
- Click Background filters
- A list of background pictures will appear on the right of the screen
- Click your desired picture
- This will now be set as your background
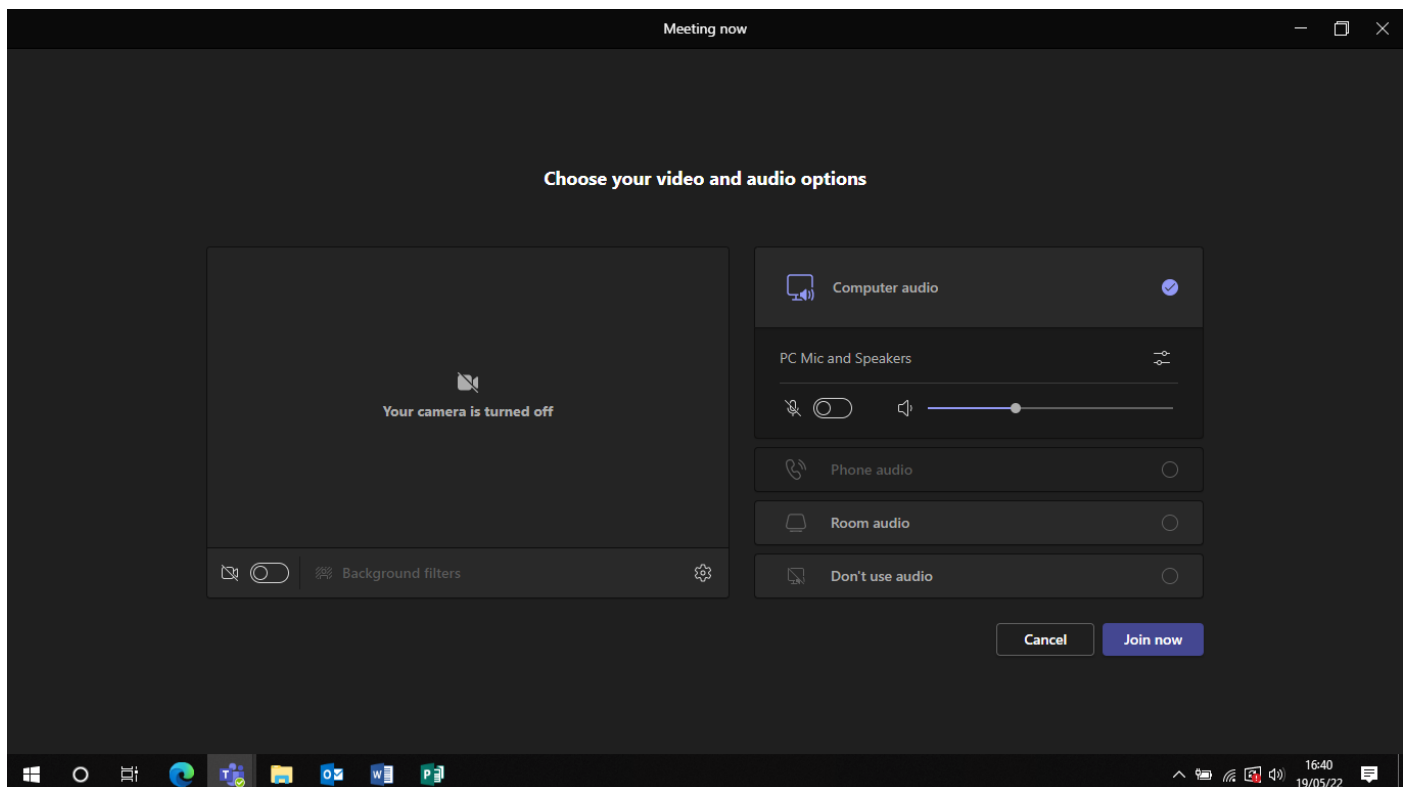
Once you are happy with everything and ready to join the meeting, click Join Now at the bottom right of the screen. Once you click this and join the meeting, everyone within the meeting will be able to see and hear you as long as your microphone or camera is active.

Once you have joined the meeting other participants will appear on the screen. Depending on the number of people in the meeting, you can only see a certain amount of attendees on screen. When you speak, you will appear on screen. It will look similar to the below.
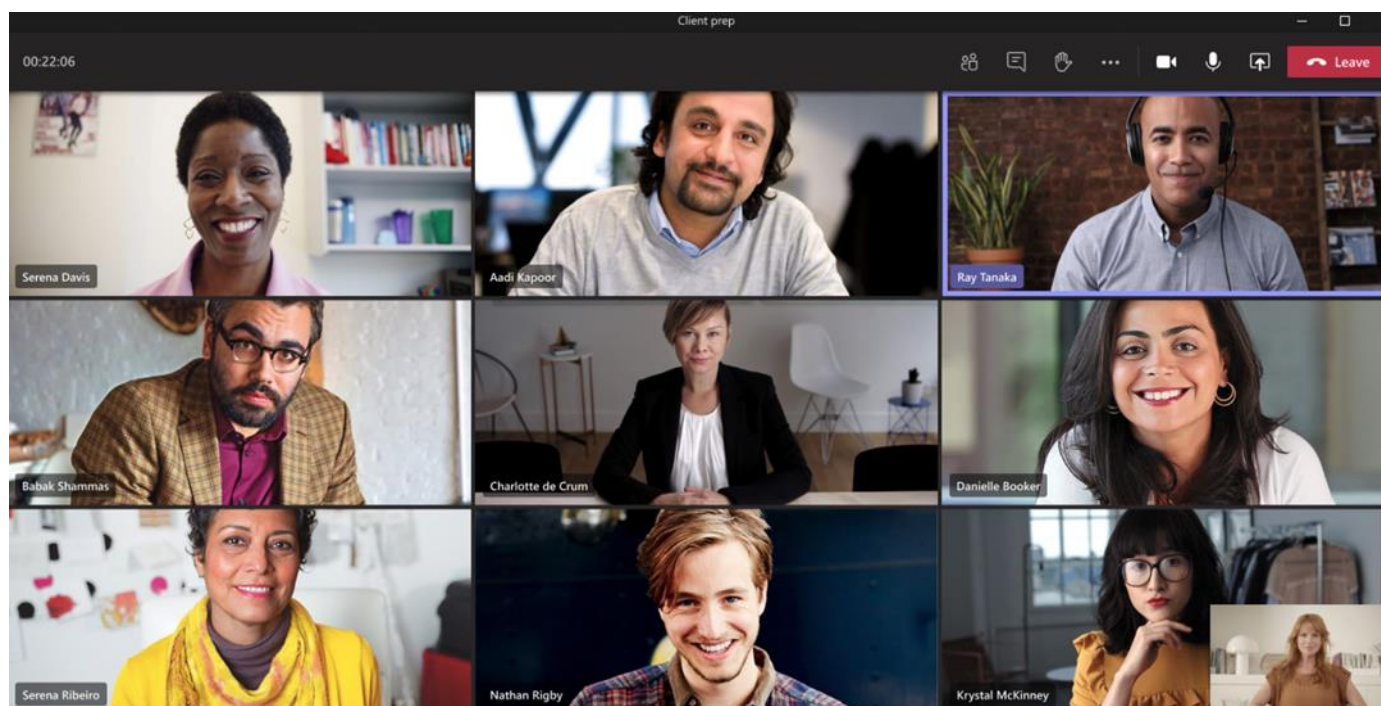
You should familiarise yourself with the tool bar at the top of the window to understand what the buttons do and when to/when not to use them. An overview of those buttons is below.

This button lets you toggle the camera on and off. Now you are in the meeting you should leave your camera on at all times. This will ensure that your image appears on the live stream as well as to other members of the meeting.

This button lets you toggle your microphone on and off. By default you should turn your microphone off until you are ready/invited to speak. To turn it on/off simply click the button once.

WARNING: This button lets you present your desktop to the rest of the people in the meeting. It is unlikely you will need to use this in a formal meeting environment but be mindful that once you click this, others will be able to see what is on your computer.
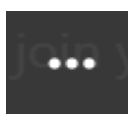
The three dots are additional options you can turn on and off. The two settings in here you might use are 'blur background' this will simply blur your background image and only show you clearly on the screen. The other option could be to turn off the incoming video signal however you should only use this where your internet connection is very poor and you are struggling to follow proceedings.
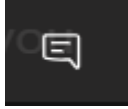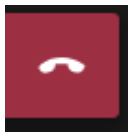
This is the chat button for the meeting. If you click onto this icon a pop up window will appear on the right hand side of the screen. You should only use the chat function if there is something you need for the meeting to be aware of i.e. you are having sound issues, or need to leave the meeting early etc. The chat is not to be used for other reasons. Be mindful that everyone in the meeting, but not on the recording, can see the chat content.
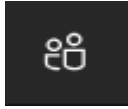
This button allows you to see a list of the other participants at the meeting.

This button allows you to Raise your virtual hand to indicate to the Chair that you wish to speak. Wait until the Chair brings you into the discussion before speaking.

This button lets you end your participation in the meeting. The meeting will continue until all participants have left. If you click this by mistake and want to re-join the meeting, simply follow the original instructions and it will take you back into the meeting.

The Chat Overview and how to use
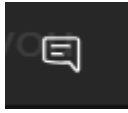
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Once you click the chat button in the meeting, it will appear on the right hand side of you screen. You will still be able to see the video of people talking and hear what is going on. This is a separate part of the system that allows text chat without it being public.
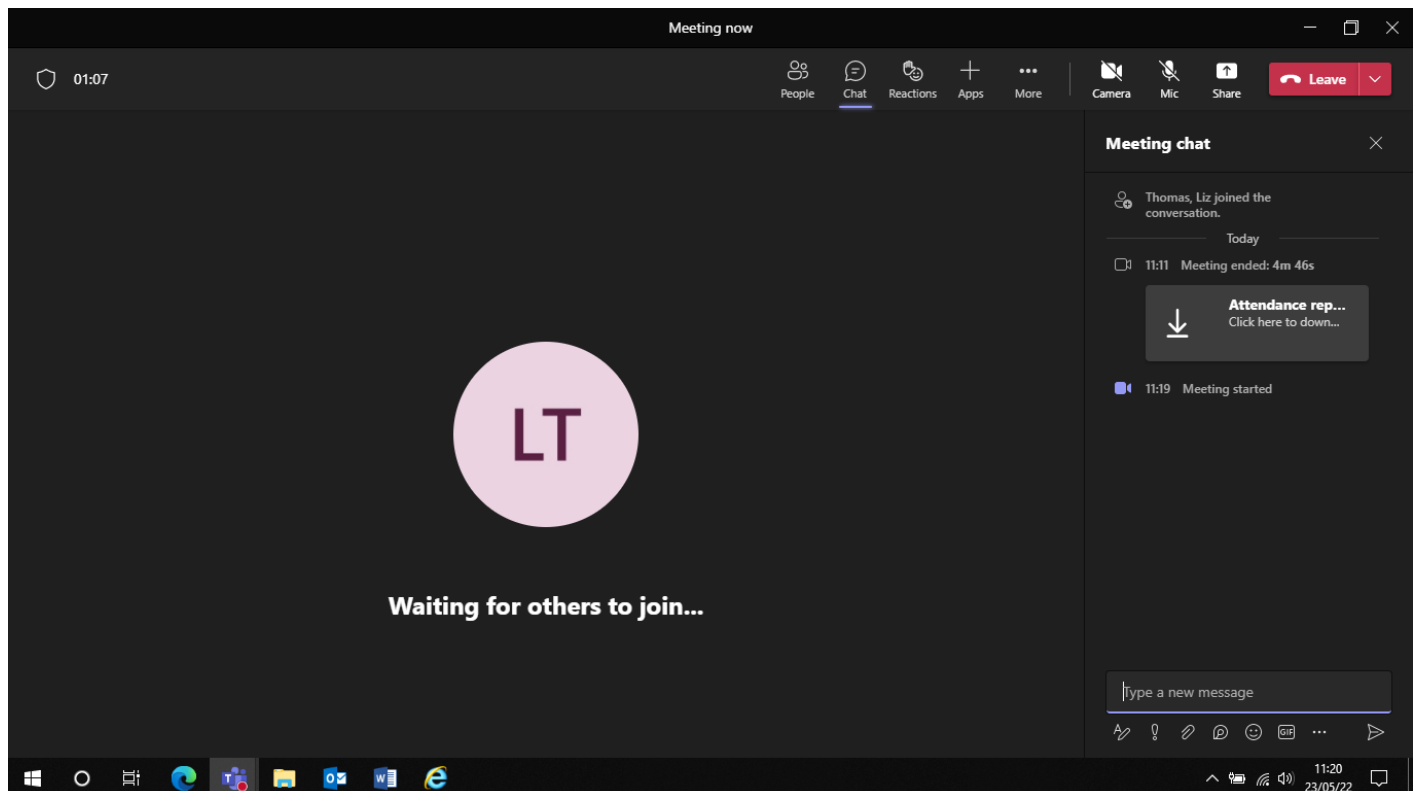
At the top of the chat window are people's messages that have already been submitted, these include your messages. At the bottom of the window you can type you message in the box that says 'Type a new message'. Simply enter the text here and press Enter on your keyboard (the big button on the right below backspace) and it will post your message for all participants to see.

Do not use that chat functionality to chat between each other, this is critical to allowing us to manage and chair the meeting effectively.