PART 5 – RULES OF PROCEDURES (MEETINGS)
(SECTION 5 – VIRTUAL MEETING PROCEDURE RULES)

To be read in conjunction with Sections 1 to 5 at Part 5 of the Council’s Constitution

Approved 22 April 2020
Part 5 is set out in five sections as follows:

SECTION 1 – Council Procedure Rules
SECTION 2 – Cabinet Procedure Rules
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SECTION 4 – Public Speaking Rules
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1. **Introduction**

1.1 Different meetings arrangements are in place for the period 4 April 2020 to 7 May 2021 from the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 to allow formal, virtual meetings.

2 **Interpretation**

2.1 These Procedure Rules clarify the Council’s temporary legal powers to hold meetings via telephone audio conference, video conference or other electronic means to avoid convening public gathering during the public health emergency. In any instance where these Procedure Rules conflict with other Procedure Rules or other sections of the Constitution, these Procedure Rules prevail until 7 May 2021.

3 **Attendance**

3.1 All references to Members being ‘present’ at a meeting include participating through virtual methods, including audio conferencing or video conferencing.

3.2 All references to Members ‘attending’ a meeting include participating through virtual methods, including audio conferencing or video conferencing.

3.3 To qualify as a formal, virtual meeting, Members must be able to hear and (where practicable) see and be heard and (where practicable) be seen by other Members in attendance at the meeting. All other members of the public must as a minimum be able to hear and (where practicable) see the meeting.

3.4 All references to meeting locations include an entirely virtual meeting by audio conference or video conference with no published fixed location.

4 **Public Access**

4.1 All formal meetings will be accessible to the public through live webcasting of the audio or video content, except where exempt or confidential items are being discussed.

5 **Communications**

5.1 All references to ‘nominating’, ‘writing down’ or ‘presenting’ can include by email, instant message or other electronic methods of communication.

6 **Access to documents**

6.1 All references to the ‘supply’ or ‘provision’ of documents or ‘inspection’ of documents at the ‘Arun Civic Centre’ or ‘council offices’ will be via electronic methods such as on the Council’s website in the first instance, or via email.
where permissible. Where practicable, hard copies of documents by post may be available on request for those who do not have internet provision.

7 Conduct of meetings

7.1 The Chairman of a virtual meeting will manage the meeting with clear instructions and requests to participants. The Chairman will introduce or ask each participant to identify themselves at the start of the meeting. Members will request to speak via electronic means.

7.2 Council Procedure rule 16.5 will apply to all virtual meetings which confirms that speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. No speech may exceed 5 minutes in length without the consent of the Chairman.

7.3 If a question forms part of the speech, then the Member will have the right to ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original question or reply. A written answer will be provided if requested by the Members.

7.4 If the Chairman speaks, any other Members shall stop speaking and will await instruction from the Chairman.

7.5 If a Member is asked to stop speaking and to no longer be heard in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23, Cabinet Procedure Rule 9 and Committee Procedure Rule 11, the Chairman will stop all other speakers until that speaker has agreed to stop speaking or leaves the virtual meeting.

7.6 Requests to raise points of order or points of personal explanation as provided for in Council Procedure Rules 16.13 and 16.14; Cabinet Procedure Rules 8.13 and 8.14; and Committee Procedure Rules 10.13 and 10.14 must be communicated to the Chairman via electronic means and must be allowed as soon as practicable.

8 Interests

8.1 Council Procedure Rule 23.3; Cabinet Procedure Rule 9.1 and Committee Procedure Rule 11.1 continue to apply that Members will have regard to the Code of Conduct in any meeting. If a Member has a pecuniary or prejudicial interest in an item, they must leave the virtual meeting for the duration of that item, after which they will be invited to re-join the meeting.

9 Voting

9.1 At a virtual meeting, all votes called in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.4; Cabinet Procedure Rule 6.1; and Committee Procedure Rule 7.1 will be taken by the officer or a Chairman calling each member in turn to cast their vote verbally, or by electronic methods, and the Chairman will read out the result when it has been collated.
10 **Substitution**

10.1 Council Procedure Rule 27 will continue to apply, with the exception that the deadline for notification by the relevant Group Leader for all meetings will be 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.

11 **Attendance by other Members at Cabinet and Committees**

11.1 Cabinet Procedure Rule 7 and Committee Procedure Rule 8 will continue to apply with the exception that the Member must register to speak at least 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting and any question to be asked must be submitted in advance by the same deadline.

11.2 If a question forms part of the speech, then the Member will have the right to ask a supplementary question which must arise directly out of the original question or reply. A written answer will be provided if requested by the Members.

11.3 This Rule will not apply to the Development Control Committee as confirmed in Rule 13.2 below.

12 **Public Question Time**

12.1 Council Procedure Rules 11.1 and 11.2 and Cabinet Procedure Rules 12.1 and 12.2 will continue to apply.

12.2 The provisions at Council Procedure Rules 11.3 and 11.4 and Cabinet Procedure Rules 12.3 and 12.4 which allow questions to be asked in person, are replaced with any questions submitted being read out by the Chairman or Committee Manager at the relevant point in the meeting. Responses will continue to be provided to questioners and published to the website as the existing Procedure Rules confirm.

12.3 As this provision removes the questioner’s right to a supplementary question at the meeting, such a question can be submitted to the relevant Cabinet Member for written response within 5 working days of the meeting. The question and answer given will be added to the list of questions published to the Council’s website.

13 **Public Speaking at the Development Control Committee**

13.1 The number and order of speakers confirmed at Public Speaking Rule 4.1 will continue to apply. However, the provisions to speak in person are replaced with statements not exceeding 3 minutes to be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting which will then be read out by the Chairman or Committee Manager at the relevant point in the meeting.

13.2 For fairness, these provisions will also apply to the Ward Member and any other Member seeking the Chairman’s discretion to speak in line with Public Speaking Rule 4.2.