

# **Guidelines on conducting remote meetings of the Council or a committee [Version as at 4 April 2022]**

## **Introduction**

These guidelines are prescribed by the President of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) under Schedule 3 to the Rules of Procedure (“RoP”) to provide details on the conduct of a remote meeting of the Council or a committee<sup>1</sup> pursuant to an authorization of the Council under section 27(1) of the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382) and RoP 81A(1) (“a remote meeting”) (“Guidelines”).<sup>2</sup> The provisions of RoP, House Rules and any other rules and procedures made under RoP shall remain in force where appropriate.

## **Technical tool**

2. As determined by the President pursuant to the resolution made and passed by LegCo under section 27(1) of Cap. 382 on 19 January 2022, the Zoom video conferencing platform is deployed for the conduct of a remote meeting of the Council or a committee.

3. For the purposes of joining a remote meeting, Members are required to install Zoom<sup>3</sup> on their devices (e.g. laptops/desktops/smart phones/tablets) which are equipped with camera, microphone and speaker, and to run the latest version of Zoom on their devices so that the “Virtual Background” feature of Zoom can be used.

## **Meeting arrangements**

### Joining a remote meeting

4. Before each remote meeting, the Meeting ID, Passcode and Invite Link will be sent to Members **by restricted email**. Members must not share the Invite Link with anybody.

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<sup>1</sup> In these Guidelines, “committee” refers to any committee defined in RoP 93(e).

<sup>2</sup> These Guidelines may be revised/updated as and when directed by the President.

<sup>3</sup> Zoom is available for download at <http://zoom.us/download>.

5. Members who wish to join a remote meeting are required to log in personally to the meeting **30 minutes before the scheduled start time**. After login, they are required to stay in the “Waiting Room” before they are admitted to the meeting. Once they are admitted, they must **toggle video on to show their faces** to help authenticate their identity. Uninvited participants will be removed from the meeting.

6. Members are required to **use their full Chinese names as “Display Name” in Zoom** throughout the meeting for easy identification by the President or the chairman of a committee or any other presiding Member (as the case may be) (collectively hereafter referred to as “the Chair”) during the meeting.

7. All participants of a remote meeting are required to find a **suitably quiet and stationary position with a stable internet connection** and access to Zoom. If they are using Zoom on smart phones, they should **set the screen orientation to landscape mode (i.e. a horizontal orientation)**.

8. Members are required to **display a colour background** by using the “Virtual Background” feature of Zoom when they are participating in a remote meeting. As specified by the President, **three different colour backgrounds**, namely **orange, green and purple**, are respectively provided for: (a) Members returned by the **Election Committee**; (b) Members returned by **functional constituencies**; and (c) Members returned by **geographical constituencies** through direct elections. **Members of each group are required to use a virtual background in the same colour.**

#### Conducting a remote meeting

9. Where a remote meeting is conducted, Members of the Council or a committee attending the meeting and other participants shall **join and participate in the meeting remotely from a place within Hong Kong using a local IP address via Zoom through the Invite Link**.

10. Members of the Council or a committee attending a remote meeting and other participants shall have their **faces shown on the screen** while they are participating in the meeting.

11. Members of the Council or a committee who participate in a remote meeting in accordance with paragraphs 9 and 10 shall be **counted as present for the purposes of constituting the quorum** for the meeting and of voting at the meeting.

12. In a remote meeting, the microphone function of Zoom will be controlled by the LegCo Secretariat. Members who intend to speak are required to **use the “Raise Hand” feature of Zoom to indicate their intention**. Their microphone will only be turned on at the Chair’s direction.

13. Members may use the **“Chat” messaging function** of Zoom to communicate with the Chair or the relevant Clerk during a remote meeting. Members who intend to raise a point of order are required to **use the “Raise Hand” feature of Zoom and send messages to the Chair or the relevant Clerk via “Chat”** to indicate their intention. All messages in “Chat” will be deleted after the meeting.

14. For each remote meeting, the LegCo Secretariat will designate an email account for Members to submit to the Chair and the relevant Clerk any documents relevant to the meeting.

15. The Chair shall have all the powers as provided for in the current provisions of RoP.

#### Voting at a remote meeting

16. Only Members who are present when voting takes place shall be permitted to vote.

17. Voting at a remote meeting shall be conducted **by a show of hands via Zoom** in accordance with the provisions of RoP 47 and the procedures prescribed herein the Guidelines as appropriate. To facilitate vote counting, **Members’ faces and hands raised shall be clearly shown on the screen when they are casting a vote**.

18. Upon a question being put to vote, a Member may claim a division by **using the “Raise Hand” feature of Zoom** to indicate such wish to the Chair.

19. When a division is ordered at a remote meeting of the Council, a committee of the whole Council (“CoWC”), the Finance Committee (“FC”) or its subcommittees, Members will be **notified of the impending voting through the Short Messaging Service (“SMS”) subscribed by the LegCo Secretariat**. The voting shall be held **five minutes after the SMS message has been issued**.

20. For any voting in a committee (other than CoWC, FC and its subcommittees), irrespective of whether a division is ordered, members will be **notified of the impending voting by the LegCo Secretariat through SMS if the chairman orders or upon request of a member**. The voting shall be held **five minutes after the SMS message has been issued**.

21. When a division is ordered at a remote meeting where no electronic voting system (“EVS”) is provided for the purposes of a division, the voting shall be conducted via Zoom in accordance with the relevant provisions of RoP 49 and the procedures prescribed herein the Guidelines as appropriate.

22. When a division is ordered at a remote meeting where EVS is provided, the Chair may direct that the Members present and voting shall cast their votes in the division by using such EVS in accordance with its operating requirements, the relevant provisions of RoP 49 and the procedures prescribed herein the Guidelines as appropriate.

23. When a division has been ordered at a remote meeting and EVS is directed to be used for the division, Members will be **notified of the impending voting through SMS**. The voting shall be held **five minutes after the SMS message has been issued**.

24. Where EVS is used for a division conducted at a remote meeting, a **password unique to each Member will be issued to Members through SMS for verifying and authenticating the identities of Members present and voting. Members must not disclose the password to anybody. After Members’ identities are verified and authenticated by their inputting the unique password in the relevant webpage accessible under the Members’ Portal (“the webpage”), Members will be allowed to cast their votes in EVS. Members must toggle video on to show their faces on the screen throughout the voting process. Each vote must be cast by Members personally under any circumstances.**

25. After casting their votes, Members shall **ascertain the accuracy of their votes displayed on the webpage**. Before ordering the voting to stop, the Chair will ask Members to check their votes on the webpage. If any Member indicates that he/she has problems voting through EVS, the Chair will ask the Member concerned to indicate his/her voting intention verbally. After addressing Members’ problems or if no Member indicates any problems, the Chair will order the result to be displayed and then declare the result of the division.

26. Should EVS fail to function at any point during the division, the Chair shall order the division in progress to start afresh in accordance with the relevant provisions of RoP 49 and the procedures prescribed herein the Guidelines as appropriate.

## **Privilege**

27. Relevant provisions of Cap. 382 apply to a remote meeting as if it were a physical meeting.<sup>4</sup> Members and designated public officers joining and participating in a remote meeting from a place within Hong Kong in accordance with paragraph 9 will be covered by the privileges and immunities under Cap. 382.

## **Other related issues**

28. Simultaneous interpretation services for Cantonese, Putonghua and English will be provided for all remote meetings.

29. Minutes of meetings will be kept for all remote meetings.

30. The LegCo Secretariat will arrange live broadcast of open remote meetings via the LegCo Webcast and/or a publicly accessible social media platform. Archives of all open remote meetings will also be available for the press and public access via the LegCo Webcast.

31. Technical assistance and support hotline(s) will be provided for Members in need to facilitate their participation in a remote meeting.

## Legislative Council Secretariat

4 April 2022

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<sup>4</sup> Under section 27(3)(b) of Cap. 382, provisions of Cap. 382 (other than section 8(4) which requires copies of the administrative instructions issued by the President and authenticated by the Clerk to be exhibited in a conspicuous position in the precincts of the Chamber) apply to a remote meeting as if it were a physical meeting.