

Guidance Note for Attendance at Council and Committee Meetings and Councillor Related Events at Sandwell Council House During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Formal decision-making meetings have been required to be held in person following the rescission of the remote meetings legislation in May. The Council continues to balance these requirements with the safety of attendees at meetings

This guidance has been produced in consultation with Sandwell Public Health and is designed to help you understand what to expect, and what will be expected of you, when visiting the building for a meeting, and to mitigate the new covid-19 related risks associated with the omicron variant.

All meetings will take place in the Council Chamber.

Set out below are the key issues that you need to consider before attending a meeting, along with government guidance, whilst attending a Council building:

- **You must not attend if:-**
- you are currently experiencing the following symptoms:
 - a high temperature,
 - loss of smell/taste,
 - a new and continuous cough
- you have been in contact with:
 - anyone who has recently tested positive for Covid-19,
 - anyone who has any of the above symptoms,
 - any members of your household who have COVID-19 symptoms or are self-isolating.



- Attendees are recommended to undertake a lateral flow test (LFT) before the meeting. If you have a positive test result, please take the steps recommended by the NHS or Public Health. **You must not attend** if you have had a positive LFT result.
- Please arrive at the link reception (signposted) where you will be directed to the Council Chamber whilst maintaining social distancing.
- Please arrive in plenty of time for your meeting and enter the building alone, unless you need assistance.
- Please sanitise your hands upon entry to the building, using the hand sanitising stations provided.
- You are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering upon entering the building and for the duration of your visit especially when 2m social distancing cannot be maintained (unless exempt or experiencing severe difficulties communicating).
- Take all steps to avoid the potential for groups congregating in any area of the building and particularly at entrances or exits.
- A one-way system will be in place. Follow any signage.
- Social distancing is an important control measure to keep everyone safe. Ideally 2m social distancing will be maintained but this is not always possible in all locations. At those times 1m plus additional controls (e.g. face coverings) will be in place. 1m is the absolute minimum for social distancing and must be adhered to at all times (apart from emergencies e.g. a fire).
- Ensure that your attendance is recorded and that your contact details are up to date. QR codes will be posted outside the Council Chamber for use of the NHS test and trace app. In the event of a report of a positive test from a member or officer, the Council will comply with NHS reporting requirements and you may be notified of the need to self-isolate.
- Windows/doors will be opened where possible to allow good ventilation. Where the weather is inclement, you might wish to consider bringing additional clothing.
- Avoid direct face to face contact with fellow attendees.
- Avoid any sharing of desks, chairs and equipment. Sanitising wipes will be provided, and desk surfaces or other high touch contact points will be wiped prior to the meeting starting and after it has concluded. The sharing of items such as stationery is discouraged, should this be necessary, items should be thoroughly wiped before being exchanged.
- In the event of an emergency you are not required to observe the 2metre social distancing rule.



- Due to the length of time that a meeting may last, it is likely that attendees will be considered to have been in close contact.
- If you become symptomatic after a meeting has taken place, please report this immediately so that anyone potentially affected can be contacted.

