LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Date: Monday 3rd May, 2021

Time: 7:30p.m.

Venue: Remote meeting via Zoom

Joining Details:

Meeting Link: https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75787878501?pwd=cjZsMVdCcUlya3ZsaHB0a0pBQW43UT09

Meeting ID: 757 8787 8501

Passcode: Tt64du

E.M.Maddock

Dr. E. M. Maddock PSLCC,
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer. Dated 27th April, 2021

AGENDA

To Members of Lower Withington Parish Council,

You are hereby summoned to remotely attend the Annual Parish Council Meeting, as shown above, to consider and determine the following business:

1. **Election of Chairman**
   (a) To elect a Chairman for the 2021/22 civic year.
   (b) To receive the newly elected Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest -** To receive Declarations of Interest in any items on the agenda.
4. **Election of Vice Chairman**
   (a) To elect a Vice Chairman for the 2021/22 civic year.
5. **Calendar of meetings 2021/22**
   (a) To consider and determine dates of Parish Council meetings for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 civic years.
6. **Public Forum for Questions**
7. **Reports from External Organisations**
   (a) Gawsworth & Chelford Wards Policing Team - Report on matters of interest / concern within the Parish.
   (b) Cheshire East Ward Member Cllr. L. Smetham - Report on items of interest to the Parish Council.
   (c) Cheshire East Council Engagement Session (Place Directorate) held 29th April, 2021.
8. **Minutes**
   (a) To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 29th March, 2021 as a correct record.

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

9. Finance

(a) To receive and consider the Financial Statement 2021/22 as at 3rd May, 2021. (Appendix A)

(b) To note receipts since the meeting held 29th March, 2021. (Appendix B)

(c) To authorise payments listed at Appendix C.

(d) Internal Audit 2020/21

i. To receive and consider the Internal Audit Action Plan and determine any actions required in relation thereto. (Appendix D)

ii. To receive the Internal Audit Report contained within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. (Appendix E)

(e) Final Accounts and Audit Arrangements 2020/21

i. To consider and approve the signing of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return). (Appendix F)

ii. To approve and adopt the 2020/21 Final Accounts and Supporting Notes. (Appendix G)

iii. To approve the signing of the Accounting Statements 2020/21 (Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return). (Appendix H)

iv. To approve the signing of the Certificate of Exemption from Limited Assurance Review contained within the Part 2 Annual Governance and Accountability Return for submission to the External Auditors. (Appendix I)

(f) Banking Arrangements

i. To review any changes required to the Authorised Signatories.

(g) VAT Reclaim

i. To confirm the actions of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer in submitting a VAT reclaim to HMRC in the sum of £1,061.87.

(h) Annual Review of Risk Assessment

i. To consider and approve the financial risk assessment 2021/22. (Appendix J)

10. Planning Applications

(a) To receive and note recent planning decisions issued by Cheshire East Council. (Appendix K)

(b) To consider the following planning applications -

i. Any applications received following issue of Agenda will be included for discussion.

(c) To consider the following application for a certificate of lawfulness -

i. 21/1928M - Woodcroft Cottage, Whitecroft Heath Road, Lower Withington. Certificate of proposed lawful use for construction of a new stable block within residential curtilage of Woodcroft Cottage.
[This is not a planning application and will not be determined on the planning merits of the case rather, the application is a legal determination which seeks clarification that the development/use is lawful in planning terms. Also the existence of any private rights which the applicant may have to carry out the use/development is irrelevant. The application will be determined on the basis of evidence submitted by the applicant and other information available to the Council. The Council is required to take steps to ascertain the accuracy of the

information presented in the case. I am therefore writing to ask if the Parish Council wish to confirm or refute any of the facts presented in the application.]

11. Highway Maintenance and Enhancements

(a) To receive an update on provision of double white lines on A535 near to junction with Catchpenny Lane.

(b) Update on recently reported highway matters;

i. Rotten sign post on A535 near to Daisy Bank Farm.

ii. Flooding in vicinity of Dicklow Cob Village Green.

(c) To consider issues relating to surface water drainage at Catchpenny Lane.

(d) To receive highway matters for attention from Members.

12. Parish Council Projects

(a) To receive suggestions for possible options for future Parish Council projects.

13. Parish Council Communications

(a) To receive an update relating to a review of the Parish Council website.

(b) To consider options available to improve communications within the community.

14. Community Issues

(a) To receive updates, if available, relating to the Dingle Bank Quarry site.

(b) To receive information, if available, from Peaks & Plains Housing Trust regarding average turnover rates of properties within the Parish.

(c) Community orchards

i. To receive an update relating to a request for permission to plant fruit trees at Dicklow Cob Village Green.

ii. To receive an update relating to possible sites within Dicklow Cob Village Green for a proposed community orchards (part funded by funds from the Police & Crime Commissioner).

(d) To consider whether a community resilience plan should be created for the Parish. (Additional information at Appendix L)

(e) To receive an update from Twemlow Parish Council regarding a proposal to develop a joint Neighbourhood Plan.

(f) Parish Litter Pick

i. To receive an update relating to the recent Parish litter pick.

ii. To consider and determine future storage options relating to the Parish Council litter picking equipment.

15. Correspondence

(a) To consider specific correspondence received by the Parish Council since the date of the last ordinary meeting and to determine such action as Members consider appropriate thereto:

i. Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government - Local authority remote meetings: Call for evidence. (Additional information at Appendix M)

ii. Cheshire East Council - Final Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document consultation. (Closes: 07/06/21) [Information at: https://cheshireeast-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/spd/]

iii. Cheshire East Council - Draft Housing Supplementary Planning Document. (Closes: 07/06/21)

[Information at: https://cheshireeast-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/spd/]

iv. Cheshire East Council - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2025 Consultation. (Closes: 14/07/21)
[Information at: https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/T3ODNZ/]

v. Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government - Changes to permitted development rights for electronic communications infrastructure: technical consultation. (Closes 14/06/21)
[Link to information: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-permitted-development-rights-for-electronic-communications-infrastructure-technical-consultation/changes-to-permitted-development-rights-for-electronic-communications-infrastructure-technical-consultation]

16. Community Governance Review

(a) To receive an update relating to the Community Governance Review being carried out by Cheshire East Council.

17. Co-option of Parish Councillor

(a) To consider options available to support the recruitment of a new councillor.

18. Matters for inclusion on next/future meeting agenda

19. Date of next meeting - To be determined.

To consider passing a resolution under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

20. Matters for consideration including those transferred from above items (as required)

E.M.Maddock

Dr. E. M. Maddock PSLCC,
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer. Dated 27th April, 2021

For further information and copy agenda please contact:
Tel: 01477 571444 Email: clerk@lowerwithington.com

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX A

Financial Statement - 2021/22

as at 3 May 2021

Actual 2020/21 £.	Details	2021/22 Budget £.	Actual to Apr. 21 £.	Agenda May. 21 £.	Budget Balance £.
	Receipts				
11,470.00	Precept	11,375.00	0.00	5,187.50	6,187.50
0.00	Balances	0.00	0.00		0.00
6.30	Investment Interest	0.00	0.00		0.00
0.00	Sale of Assets	0.00	0.00		0.00
0.00	Grants, Donations & Refunds	9,000.00	0.00		9,000.00
576.85	V.A.T. Refund		0.00		31.74
12,053.15	**Total Receipts**	**20,375.00**	**0.00**	**5,187.50**	**15,219.24**
	Payments				
3,512.64	Salary (Clerk)	3,350.00	0.00	585.46	2,764.54
0.00	National Insurance (Employer)	0.00	0.00		0.00
225.00	Allowances (Clerk)	275.00	0.00		275.00
0.00	Chairman/Member Allowances	0.00	0.00		0.00
45.65	Administration	280.00	0.00		280.00
144.00	Audit Fees (internal & external)	175.00	0.00	153.72	21.28
346.64	Insurance	400.00	0.00		400.00
152.00	Grants & Donations (inc. Sect. 137)	525.00	0.00		525.00
60.00	Website	155.00	0.00	5.00	150.00
220.60	Subscriptions/Affiliation Fees	330.00	0.00	165.60	164.40
38.00	Room Hire	325.00	0.00		325.00
0.00	Training	210.00	0.00		210.00
0.00	Professional Services	750.00	0.00		750.00
0.00	Assets - Purchase	2,000.00	0.00		2,000.00
0.00	Assets - Maintenance	1,100.00	0.00		1,100.00
5,145.34	Village Green Pathway Project	0.00	0.00		0.00
0.00	Neighbourhood Plan	9,500.00	0.00		9,500.00
0.00	Contingency	1,000.00	0.00		1,000.00
1,061.87	V.A.T.		0.00	31.74	
10,951.74	**Total Payments**	**20,375.00**	**0.00**	**941.52**	**19,465.22**

Cash/Bank Reconciliation	01/04/21	01/04/21	03/05/21	31/03/22
Balance B/Fwd.	27,245.18	27,245.18	27,245.18	31,491.16
Add Total Receipts	20,375.00	0.00	5,187.50	15,219.24
Less Total Payments	-20,375.00	0.00	-941.52	-19,465.22
Balance C/Fwd.	**27,245.18**	**27,245.18**	**31,491.16**	**27,245.18**
Cumulative Balances	**Balance**	**Balance**	**Balance**	**Balance**
	01/04/21	**01/04/21**	**03/05/21**	**31/03/22**
General Funds	10,921.52	10,921.52	15,167.50	10,921.52
Earmarked Reserves	16,323.66	16,323.66	16,323.66	16,323.66
	27,245.18	**27,245.18**	**31,491.16**	**27,245.18**

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

CASH/BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT - 3rd May, 2021

CASH

Balance Brought Forward 01/04/21			
Current Account		11,792.63	
Business Reserve Account		15,452.55	
Plus Receipts		5,187.50	
		32,432.68	
Less Payments		941.52	
Balance Carried Forward 03/05/21		**31,491.16**	

BANK (Natwest)

Business Reserve Account -		15,452.55		01/04/21
Add income/transfer received since above Statement	0.00			
		0.00		
Less unpresented cheques				
		0.00		
			15,452.55	03/05/21
Current Account -		18,530.41		01/04/21
Add income received since above Statement	5,187.50			
		5,187.50		
Less unpresented cheques/ Transfer				
Approved	-6,737.78			
For approval	-941.52			
		-7,679.30		
			16,038.61	03/05/21
Total Bank Balances 03/05/21			**31,491.16**	

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX B

Receipts 2020/21

a.	NatWest Bank plc.	£0.12	Gross interest - January, 2021
b.	NatWest Bank plc.	£0.12	Gross interest - February, 2021
c.	NatWest Bank plc.	£0.14	Gross interest - March, 2021

Receipts 2021/22

a.	Cheshire East Borough Council	£5,187.50	Precept 2021/22 (50%)

APPENDIX C

Payments for approval

a.	Direct Debit	(aq) Limited	£6.00	Webmail service 2021/22
b.	Cheque No 000482	E. M. Maddock	£468.46	Salary: April - May 2021
c.	Cheque No 000483	H.M. Revenue & Customs	£117.00	Employee income tax
d.	Cheque No 000484	JDH Business Services	£184.46	Internal Audit fee 2020/21
e.	Cheque No 000485	Cheshire Association of Local Councils	£165.60	Affiliation fee 2021/22
f.	Cheque No 000486	Came & Company	£TBC	Insurance premium 2021/22

APPENDIX D

INTERNAL AUDIT 2020/21
ACTION PLAN

ISSUE: The risk assessment does not address the risks of supplier (procurement) fraud.

RECOMMENDATION: The risk assessment should be updated to include supplier (procurement) fraud including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls.

RECOMMENDATION FOR PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE:

The above issue is received and duly noted. An updated risk assessment is to be adopted by the Parish Council at the May, 2021 meeting which incorporates the recommendation of the Internal Auditor.

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX E

Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Lower Withington Parish Council
www.lowerwithington.com

During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2020/21 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	N/A	no petty cash held	
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick "not covered")*	✓		
L. The authority publishes information on a website/webpage, up to date at the time of the internal audit, in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.	✓		
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 13/04/2021

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: JDH BUSINESS SERVICES LTD

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: [signature] Date: 19/04/2021

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX F

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No	*'Yes' means that this authority:*
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*

9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Other information required by the Transparency Code *(not part of the Annual Governance Statement)*	Yes	No
The authority website/webpage is up to date and the information required by the Transparency Code has been published.		

www.lowerwithington.com ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX G

Summary Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31st March, 2021

2019/20 £.	Receipts	2020/21 £.
10,750.00	Precept	11,470.00
27.51	Investment Interest	6.30
7,351.00	Grants & Donations	0.00
39.59	V.A.T. Refund	576.85
18,168.10	Total Receipts	12,053.15
	Payments	
3,034.20	Salary (Clerk)	3,512.64
0.00	National Insurance (Employer)	0.00
200.00	Allowances (Clerk)	225.00
119.99	Administration	45.65
0.00	Member Allowances	0.00
0.00	Audit Fees (internal & external)	144.00
296.94	Insurance	346.64
72.60	Donations - (inc. Sect. 137)	152.00
60.00	Website	60.00
220.60	Subscriptions / Affiliation Fees	220.60
190.00	Room Hire	38.00
0.00	Training	0.00
701.33	Professional Services	0.00
1,888.88	Assets - Purchase	0.00
325.95	Assets - Maintenance	0.00
0.00	Village Green Pathway Project	5,145.34
0.00	Neighbourhood Plan	0.00
0.00	Contingency	0.00
576.85	V.A.T.	1,061.87
7,687.34	Total Payments	10,951.74

15,663.01	Balance B/Fwd. 01/04/20	26,143.77
18,168.10	Add Total Receipts	12,053.15
-7,687.34	Less Total Payments	-10,951.74
26,143.77	Balance C/Fwd. 31/03/21	27,245.18
	Analysis of Cumulative Funds	
15,446.25	NatWest Business Reserve Account	15,452.55
10,697.52	NatWest Bank Current Account	11,792.63
26,143.77	Total	27,245.18
	Above Funds held for the following purposes:-	
9,674.77	General Funds	10,921.52
16,469.00	Earmarked Reserves	16,323.66
0.00	Capital Reserves	0.00
26,143.77		27,245.18

The above Statement represents fairly the financial position of the Lower Withington Parish Council as at 31st March, 2021 and reflects its receipts and payments during the year.

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Supporting Notes 2020/21

Assets

During the year the following assets were purchased at the cost shown:-

None	0.00
	£0.00

During the year the following assets were disposed of for the amount shown:- None.

At the 31st March, 2021 the following assets were held:-

Notice Boards (3)	1,000.00
Village Nameplate Signs (2)	107.44
Speed Indicator Device (SID) (2)	4,035.00
Defibrillator (1)	1,378.00
Plaque - Defibrillator (1)	52.64
Owl Tree Carving	600.00
Laptop Computer	332.50
Parish Boundary Signs (2)	154.28
Football Goal Posts (2)	116.58
Notice Board (1)	1,222.64
Litter picking equipment	220.93
Christmas lights	328.73
	£9,548.74

Leases

At the year end the following leases were in operation:- None.

Borrowings

As at close of business on 31st March, 2021 the following loans to the Council were outstanding:- None.

Debts

At the year end debts of £1,061.87 (VAT reclaim) were outstanding and due to the Council.

Capital Reserves None.

Earmarked Reserves

Democratic Services Fund	£2,000.00
Transparency Code Grant	£118.00
Village Green Investment Fund	£2,000.00
Highway Safety Schemes Fund	£5,000.00
Telephone kiosk project	£5,000.00
Dicklow Cob Pathway Project Grant	£2,205.66
	£16,323.66

Tenancies

During the year the following tenancies were held:- None.

Section 137 Payments

The limit for spending under Sect. 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for this Council in the year of account was £3,827.20 and payments made were:-

Payee	Nature of Payment	Amount
None		0.00
		£0.00

Agency Work

During the year the Council undertook the following agency work on behalf of other local authorities:- None.

Advertising and Publicity

The following costs for advertising and publicity were incurred during the year:- None.

Contingent Liabilities None.

Pensions For the year of account the Council made no contribution to staff pensions.

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX H

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	15,663	26,144	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	10,750	11,470	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	7,418	583	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	3,034	3,513	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	4,653	7,439	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	26,144	27,245	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	26,144	27,245	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	9,549	9,549	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	
		✓	*The Council as a body corporate acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
			N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

E.M.M date of SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 10/04/2021Y

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

APPENDIX I

Certificate of Exemption – AGAR 2020/21 Part 2

To be completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure did not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2021, and that wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015

There is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor, **provided** that the authority has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the authority after 31 March 2021 and a completed Certificate of Exemption is submitted no later than **30 June 2021** notifying the external auditor.

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certifies that during the financial year 2020/21, the higher of the authority's total gross income for the year **or** total gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed **£25,000**

Total annual gross income for the authority 2020/21:	£12,058 R AMOUNT £00,000
Total annual gross expenditure for the authority 2020/21:	£10,952 R AMOUNT £00,000

There are certain circumstances in which an authority will be **unable to certify itself as exempt,** so that a limited assurance review will still be required. If an authority **is unable to confirm the statements below then it cannot certify itself as exempt** and it **must** submit the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return Part 3 to the external auditor to undertake a limited assurance review for which a fee of **£200 +VAT** will be payable.

By signing this **Certificate of Exemption** you are confirming that:

- The authority was in existence on 1st April 2017
- In relation to the preceding financial year (2019/20), the external auditor **has not:**
  - issued a public interest report in respect of the authority or any entity connected with it
  - made a statutory recommendation to the authority, relating to the authority or any entity connected with it
  - issued an advisory notice under paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 8 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ("the Act"), and has not withdrawn the notice
  - commenced judicial review proceedings under section 31(1) of the Act
  - made an application under section 28(1) of the Act for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, and the application has not been withdrawn nor has the court refused to make the declaration
- The court has not declared an item of account unlawful after a person made an appeal under section 28(3) of the Act.

If you are able to confirm that the above statements apply and that the authority neither received gross income, nor incurred gross expenditure, exceeding £25,000, then the Certificate of Exemption can be signed and a copy submitted to the external auditor **either** by email **or** by post (not both).

The Annual Internal Audit Report, Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Statements, an analysis of variances and the bank reconciliation plus the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 including the period for the exercise of public rights still need to be fully completed and, along with a copy of this certificate, published on the authority website/webpage* before 1 July 2021.
By signing this certificate you are also confirming that you are aware of this requirement.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer	Date	I confirm that this Certificate of Exemption was approved by this authority on this date:	
SIGNATURE REQUIRED	10/04/2021		DD/MM/YYYY
Signed by Chairman	Date	as recorded in minute reference:	
SIGNATURE REQUIRED	DD/MM/YYYY	MINUTE REFERENCE	

Generic email address of Authority	Telephone number
clerk@lowerwithington.com WNED GENERIC EMAIL ADDRESS	01477 571444 E NUMBER

*Published web address

www.lowerwithington.com ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

ONLY this Certificate of Exemption should be returned EITHER by email OR by post (not both) as soon as possible after certification to your external auditor, but no later than 30 June 2021. Reminder letters incur a charge of £40 +VAT

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APPENDIX J

LOWER WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT - 2021/22

Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Business continuity	Risk of Council not being able to continue its business due to an unexpected or tragic circumstance.	L	In the event of the Clerk being indisposed the Chairman (or other nominated Member) may perform the necessary duties.	Existing procedure adequate. Review when necessary.
	Loss of paper/electronic records.	M	Archive material currently held by Members. Current files and records kept at the Clerk's home. Regular backup of electronic files is made. Paper documents stored in metal filing cabinets.	Existing procedure adequate.
Precept	Adequacy of precept for Council to carry out its Statutory duties.	H	Budgetary Control statement presented to Council at each meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Requirements not submitted to CEC.	L	Full Minute - RFO to follow up.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Amount not received from CEC.	L	RFO to confirm receipt and Minute at next Meeting of Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Financial records	Inadequate records.	L	Financial Regulations specify requirements of Council.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations 2021/22.
	Financial irregularities.	L	Internal Audit of accounts by competent, independent person. Regular financial reports are presented to Council. Cheque signatories are separate from person raising the cheque.	Existing procedure adequate. Review bank signatories when change of Councillors/circumstances.
Bank and banking	Inadequate checks.	L	Bank reconciliation produced at each meeting.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations 2021/22.
	Bank mistakes.	L	RFO check all bank statements against Council records and query errors immediately.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Loss.	L	RFO check all bank statements against Council records and query inconsistencies immediately.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Charges.	L	RFO check adequate funds prior to issuing cheques. RFO challenge charges where errors made by bank.	Existing procedure adequate.
Cash	Loss through theft or dishonesty.	L	Cash handling is not encouraged but where cash received - banked within 7 days.	Existing procedure adequate.
Reserves - General	Adequacy.	L	Consider at Budget setting.	Existing procedure adequate.
Reserves - Earmarked	Adequacy.	L	Consider at Budget and review of final accounts.	Existing procedure adequate.

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Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Reporting and auditing	Information communication.	L	A monitoring statement is produced regularly before each Council meeting and approved at the meeting. This statement includes bank reconciliation and budget update.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Compliance.	L	An independent internal auditor has been appointed. Annual reports detailing compliance with audit regulations are presented to Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Direct costs & overhead expenses	Goods not supplied but billed.	L	Procurement undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance. RFO to follow up on all orders.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Financial Regulations 2021/22.
	Invoice incorrectly calculated or recorded.	L	RFO to check arithmetic on all invoices and perform bank reconciliations on regular basis.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Cheque payable incorrect (excessive or to wrong party).	L	Signatories initial Stub and Voucher to confirm accuracy.	Existing procedure adequate.
Salaries and associated costs.	Salary paid incorrectly.	M	Check salary to Minute, check hours and rate to contract. Salary analysis is detailed on the payment vouchers issued.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Wrong deduction of NI and Tax.	M	NI and Tax deductions are calculated using the HMRC PAYE RTI System which is regularly updated. Check PAYE calculations.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Unpaid Tax and NI contributions to Inland Revenue.	L	Payments are made to HMRC by cheque and detailed in the financial statements presented to Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
Employees.	Loss of clerk.	L	Hours, health, stress, training, long term sick, early departure - risk monitored and managed as appropriate.	Existing procedure adequate. Review annually.
	Fraud by employee.	L	Fidelity Guarantee value reviewed annually and insurance cover arranged.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Actions taken by staff.	L	Relevant training, resources and access to professional advice made available to Clerk.	Existing procedure adequate.
VAT	VAT analysis.	L	All items analysed in cash book. Analysis presented to Council at each meeting.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Claimed within time limits.	L	VAT reclaim submitted annually at year end.	Existing procedure adequate.
Legal powers	Illegal activity or payments.	M	All activity and payments within the powers of the Parish Council to be resolved and minuted at Parish Council Meetings. Relevant procedures set out in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.	Existing procedure adequate. Review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations 201/22.

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Subject	Risk(s) Identified	H/M/L	Management/Control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Supplier (procurement) fraud	Loss through supplier fraud	L	Training for staff to alert them to potential risks of providing sensitive company information, by telephone or other means, especially contract and account information. All supplier detail changes to be verified using contact details held by Parish Council. Periodic review of supplier accounts to remove any dormant accounts. Periodic review of supplier address and financial health details with Companies House. Review insurance provision.	Review training needs 2021/22. Existing procedure adequate. Existing procedure adequate. Existing procedure adequate. Review 2021/22.

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APPENDIX K

Outstanding planning applications & recent planning decisions

18/3395M - Four Oaks, Farm Lane, Lower Withington. SK11 9DU
Change of use to include use of the site for the holding of auctions (retrospective).
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

19/2936W - Dingle Bank Quarry, Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington. SK11 9DR
Variation of Condition 4 on application 16/3064W - Variation of Condition 2, 4 & 5 of permission 10/3080W.
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

20/4973M - Bridge Farm, Hodgehill Lane, Marton. SK11 9LU
Proposed equine building comprising stabling, grooming, tack room and feed/bedding storage.
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

21/0340M - Holly Tree Farm, Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington. SK11 9DT
Erection of an organic free range egg unit to replace 3No. existing barn egg laying units.
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

21/0765M - Old Hall Cottage, Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington.
Replacement dwelling and associated development (resubmission of 20/3455M - Scheme B comprising re-modelled building to provide a garage, the demolition of the existing garage, with the new build house on the existing footprint).
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

21/0769M - Old Hall Cottage, Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington.
Replacement dwelling and associated development (resubmission of 20/3455M).
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

21/0902M - The Home Farm, Holmes Chapel Road, Lower Withington.
Construction of a detached garage and storage building.
DECISION STATUS - Undecided

APPENDIX L

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLANS

The recent Flooding events in January, caused by Storm Christoph, has again highlighted the importance and need for Community Resilience. We at the Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team (JCEPT) would like to assist you in the creation of Community Emergency Plans. These plans would form your initial response during any number of potential emergencies that could happen within your towns and parishes. The document would be produced, maintained and owned by yourselves. We at JCEPT would assist you on your journey and provide you with direction and guidance in producing this document.

Local emergency responders will always have to prioritise those in greatest needs during an emergency, especially where life is in danger. There will be times when you may be affected by an emergency but your life is not in immediate danger. During this time, individuals and communities may need to rely on their own resources to ensure they are able to cope with the

consequences of the emergency. Many communities already spontaneously help each other in times of need, but previous experience has shown that those who have spent time planning and preparing for emergencies are better able to cope, and recover more quickly reducing the overall impact on people's lives. Having a Community Emergency Plan would help you to assist your communities whenever an emergency strikes. It would also assist the Blue Lights Services by having an organised community response in place for when they arrive. The plan would be activated by yourselves and where possible during the making, you would involve the community and advertise the existence of such a plan.

We will be able to provide you all with a template of a plan to use, guidance on what should/should not be included in the plan and provide advice on a range of issues.

APPENDIX M

MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LOCAL AUTHORITY REMOTE MEETINGS: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Scope of the consultation

Topic of this consultation: This call for evidence seeks views on the use of the current arrangements which have provided express provision for local authorities to hold meetings remotely or in a hybrid format during the coronavirus pandemic.

Scope of this consultation: This call for evidence seeks to understand the experience of local authorities in the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings. This includes authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Duration: This call for evidence will last for 12 weeks from 25 March 2021.

Purpose of this call for evidence

The government would like to gather evidence about the use of the current arrangements for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid format, as set out in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (and the equivalent regulations for Wales and Northern Ireland) under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

These regulations came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to meetings taking place before 7 May 2021. Local authorities in Scotland had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, and we are also interested to understand their experience of remote meetings since their arrangements came into force.

The powers in section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 were brought in specifically to make express provision for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to deal with the challenges of holding physical meetings during the coronavirus pandemic. They have helped local authorities to redeploy resources to deal with the pandemic and ensure that essential business continues whilst protecting the health and safety of their members, officers and the public.

We are aware that experience of remote meetings has been varied, and that while the experience of managing and participating in remote meetings has grown considerably during the period since the remote meetings regulations came into force, there have been examples of the difficulties this format has posed for some authorities.

We have received representations from individual local authorities and sector representative organisations making the case for permanent express provision for remote meetings. The government would like to hear from interested parties about the pros and cons of making such arrangements permanent in England and the use of the arrangements to date.

We are particularly interested to receive any quantitative data that can be included to substantiate the responses you make.

Terminology

Throughout this call for evidence the phrases ‘remote meetings’ and ‘remote meetings arrangements’ will be used interchangeably to refer to the express provisions for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid format, as set out in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (and the equivalent regulations for Wales and Northern Ireland) under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

As Scottish authorities had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, ‘remote meetings’ and ‘remote meetings arrangements’ refers to the equivalent Scottish legislation.

The regulations make express provisions for local authorities to hold meetings remotely, for example through typical digital conference software (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Teams) or telephone conference calls. However, they do not require them to be held remotely or even in a single format. This means, for example, that local authorities can hold ‘hybrid’ meetings (where some members attend virtually and other members attend in person) and they are also still able to hold fully ‘in-person’ physical meetings.

You can therefore assume that any reference to ‘remote meetings’ or ‘remote meetings arrangements’ also refers to hybrid meetings.

The term ‘member’ will be used to refer to any elected local authority members covered by the regulations above (and the equivalent legislation for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland). This includes councillors, directly elected mayors, and police and crime commissioners, and any other relevant local authority members as defined by the legislation.

Background

While local authorities in Scotland had express provision to meet remotely prior to the coronavirus pandemic, there was no express provision for remote meetings for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In 2017, the government consulted on proposals to allow joint committees and combined authorities to hold meetings by video conference, given the long distances that individual councillors often need to travel in order to attend these meetings.

The government concluded that, with appropriate safeguards to maintain town hall transparency, there are clear benefits to giving local authorities operating joint committees and combined authorities the ability to hold formal meetings by video conference.

These safeguards included not extending the provisions to cover other types of councils, and that remote access should only be permissible from sites suitable for holding a meeting with

public access (i.e. from a town hall, not from private dwellings), as there was a risk of undermining visible democratic scrutiny and public debate. However, the government also noted views that remote meetings would also benefit other councils, particularly large rural authorities, and committed to further engage with the sector to understand these views.

Since regulations came into force following the introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020, express provision was made for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to hold meetings before 7 May 2021 remotely (such as through digital conferencing software or telephone conference) so that they can protect their members and comply with public health guidance.

As local authorities have now had extensive experience of conducting remote meetings over the past year, this call for evidence is an opportunity to understand these experiences and inform a decision about whether to make these arrangements permanent. Any permanent change would require primary legislation, and such passage would depend on agreement of Parliament and the timetabling and pressures of Parliamentary business.

Questions

The government would like to gather evidence about the use of the arrangements that make express provision for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid format during the coronavirus pandemic, including the arrangements that existed for Scottish Authorities prior to the pandemic.

Q1. Generally speaking, how well do you feel the current remote meetings arrangements work?
- Very Well
- Well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Poorly
- Very Poorly
- Unsure

While the powers in section 78 of the Coronavirus Act were brought in specifically to help local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland deal with the challenges of holding meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, the government would also like to hear from interested parties about the pros and cons of making permanent express provision, in whole or in part, for local authorities in England.

Q2. Generally speaking, do you think local authorities in England should have the express ability to hold at least some meetings remotely on a permanent basis?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Beyond having express provision to avoid face-to-face meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, we are aware of feedback from local authorities about additional benefits of being able to hold remote meetings including, but not limited to, the environmental and cost benefits of reduced travel, increased participation from local residents, and the potential to attract more diverse local authority members. We are keen to obtain representative views on the benefits of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support these

views.

Q3. What do you think are some of the benefits of the remote meetings arrangements? Please select all that apply.

- More accessible for local authority members
- Reduction in travel time for councillors
- Meetings more easily accessed by local residents
- Greater transparency for local authority meetings
- Documents (e.g. minutes, agendas, supporting papers) are more accessible to local residents and others online
- Easier to chair meetings in an orderly fashion
- A virtual format promotes greater equality in speaking time during meetings
- I do not think there are any benefits to remote meetings
- Other (please specify)

In their representations to us, many local authorities have referenced the cost savings they have achieved through implementing remote meetings, particularly regarding a reduction in travel expenses and accommodation costs.

For example, one upper tier authority has reported that running meetings remotely has enabled them to save in the order of £6,000 per month through reduced travel expenses. We would be interested to receive more quantitative data about the cost savings that have been achieved, including any estimates of the comparative cost of running a remote meeting versus a face-to-face meeting.

Q4. (For local authorities only) Have you seen a reduction in costs since implementing remote meetings in your authority?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Some local authorities have also made reference to the difficulty that some members have had with the remote meeting format, particularly in relation to the difficulties in managing misconduct, the challenges of working with unfamiliar software, and technological issues caused by a poor internet connection. We are keen to obtain representative views on the disadvantages of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support these views.

Q5. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of the remote meetings arrangements, and do you have any suggestions for how they could be mitigated/overcome? Please select all that apply.

- It is harder for members to talk to one another informally
- Meetings are less accessible for local authority members or local residents who have a poor-quality internet connection
- Meetings are less accessible for local authority members or local residents who are unfamiliar with video conferencing/technology
- There is less opportunity for local residents to speak or ask questions
- Some find it more difficult to read documents online than in a physical format
- Debate is restricted by the remote format

- It is more difficult to provide effective opposition or scrutiny in a remote format
- It is more difficult to chair meetings in an orderly fashion
- Virtual meetings can be more easily dominated by individual speakers
- It might enable democratically elected members to live and perform their duties outside their local area on a permanent basis, therefore detaching them from the communities they serve
- It may create too substantial a division between the way national democracy (e.g. in the House of Commons) and local democracy is conducted
- I do not think there are any disadvantages to remote meetings
- Other (please specify)

The government considers that there are also many advantages of holding meetings face-to-face. For example, physical meetings provide numerous opportunities for local authority members to speak with one another informally and build alliances, as well as to encounter local residents in the flesh and listen to their concerns in person.

Additionally, some members have referenced the vast improvement in the quality of debate when there is a lively atmosphere and they are able to make full use of their oratory skills to persuade and influence others. Some may consider remote meetings stifling and that physical meetings are essential to effective democracy and scrutiny.

Q6. What do you think are some of the main advantages of holding face-to-face meetings, as opposed to remote meetings?

If express provision for remote meetings were made permanent, it might be preferable for the government to constrain the meetings or circumstances in which remote meetings can be held to ensure that effective democracy and scrutiny can still take place.

There are some occasions, for example, where a remote meeting format may be seen as more appropriate, such as for smaller sub-committees, meetings convened at short notice, or for meetings where attendees are drawn from a large geographical area i.e. for some joint committees, combined authorities and large rural authorities. On the other hand, there are occasions where a remote meeting format may be viewed as less appropriate, for example larger meetings involving Full Council or an authority's Annual Meeting.

Q7. If permanent arrangements were to be made for local authorities in England, for which meetings do you think they should have the option to hold remote meetings?

- For all meetings
- For most meetings with a few exceptions (please specify)
- Only for some meetings (please specify)
- I think local should be able to decide for themselves which meetings they should have the option to meet remotely
- I do not think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings for any meetings
- Unsure

Q8. If permanent arrangements were to be made for local authorities in England, in which circumstances do you think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings?

- In any circumstances
- Only in extenuating circumstances where a meeting cannot be held face-to-face or some

members would be unable to attend (e.g. severe weather events, coronavirus restrictions)
- I think local authorities should be able to decide for themselves which circumstances they should have the option to meet remotely
- I do not think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings under any circumstances
- Other (please specify)
- Unsure

While local authorities have risen magnificently to the challenge of ensuring vital council business continues by conducting meetings remotely during these unprecedented times, there may be concerns that, if the arrangements were to made permanent, a situation could arise where remote meetings arrangements were used by a ruling party to avoid effective scrutiny or abuse the power in some other way.

Q9. Would you have any concerns if local authorities in England were given the power to decide for themselves which meetings, and in what circumstances, they have the option to hold remote meetings?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q10. If yes, do you have any suggestions for how your concerns could be mitigated/overcome?

In deciding whether and how remote meetings arrangements may be made permanent for local authorities in England, the government needs to ensure that it has due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. In particular, the government would need to avoid unlawfully discriminating (either directly or indirectly) against individuals with a protected characteristic, and also consider whether the arrangements advance equality of opportunity or help to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Many local authorities have spoken of the potential benefits that remote meetings could have for members or potential members with disabilities or young families. However, there are also those for whom remote meetings could pose additional difficulties, for example those with hearing or visual impairments or those more likely to struggle with the technology.

We are keen to consider views on these aspects of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support views provided.

Q11. In your view, would making express provision for English local authorities to meet remotely particularly benefit or disadvantage any individuals with protected characteristics e.g. those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure