

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) ACT 2021

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### **Part 3: Promoting Access to Local Government**

#### *Chapter 4: Access to Meetings of Local Authorities*

#### *Section 47 - Attendance at local authority meetings*

247. [Section 47](#) requires local authorities to make arrangements that ensure their meetings can take place in a manner which enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meeting. The authority must publish these arrangements, if the arrangements are revised or replaced the new arrangements must also be published.
248. Under the arrangements meetings will have to be capable of being held virtually. Section 47 does not however require meetings to be held in a certain format. Whether they are held fully virtually, partially virtually – whereby some participants are in the same physical location whilst others join the meeting virtually – or as physical meetings will be a matter for those responsible for arranging the meetings.
249. Authorities must, in making these arrangements, have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers.
250. The type of equipment or other facility to be used to facilitate virtual meetings is not specified but must, under subsection (2), enable all participants in the meeting to speak to each other and be heard by each other.
251. Section (2) further specifies that where the meeting is required to be broadcast under section 46 of the Act, all participants in the meeting must be able to see, and be seen, by each other in addition to being able to speak to each other and be heard by each other.
252. Subsection (6) specifies the bodies that, for the purpose of this section, fall within the definition of a “local authority” and also defines “local authority meetings”, which are the meetings to which the duty set out in subsection (1) applies.
253. Subsection (7) provides that where an enactment refers to the attendance, presence or appearance of a person at a local authority meeting (as defined in subsection (6)), it includes their participation via the arrangements put in place to satisfy the requirements of this section. This subsection also provides that a reference to “the place at which a local authority meeting is held” is not limited to a physical location.
254. Subsection (8) enables the Welsh Ministers, by regulations to make changes to the conditions set out in subsection (2), for example, to accommodate technological advances in how meetings can be held virtually and to add a joint board to the definition of local authority in subsection (6).