



## 2021 CHAPTER 8

### PART 1

#### Meetings and performance

##### *Conduct of meetings*

##### **Meetings: effect of regulations under the Coronavirus Act**

1.—(1) In section 78 (local authority meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020, subsection (3) is repealed.

(2) The Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 have effect on and after the day on which this Act comes into operation as if never (and are to be treated as having been made as if not) subject to the provision repealed by this section.

##### **Meetings: power to make provision about remote meetings**

2.—(1) The Department for Communities may by regulations make provision for the purpose of or in connection with ensuring that district council meetings may be held remotely.

(2) Regulations under this section may include provision as to—

- (a) how district council meetings held remotely may be facilitated,
- (b) how persons may attend, speak at, vote in or otherwise participate in such meetings when held remotely.

(3) Regulations under this section may include provision for standing orders of district councils to—

- (a) specify the basis or process for considering whether (including who is to assess or decide whether) district council meetings should or are to be held remotely,
- (b) govern the arrangements for and conduct of such meetings whenever such meetings are to be held remotely,
- (c) regulate—
  - (i) the public’s access to such meetings,
  - (ii) the availability to the public of documents pertaining to such meetings,whenever such meetings are to be held remotely.
- (4) Regulations under this section may—
  - (a) disapply or modify statutory provisions (as construed in accordance with section 1(f) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954),
  - (b) contain supplementary, incidental, consequential, transitional, transitory or saving provision.
- (5) Regulations under this section may not be made unless a draft of them has been laid before and approved by a resolution of the Assembly.
- (6) For the purpose of this section, meetings are held remotely if they are held without all of the persons attending them, or without any of those persons, being together in the same place.
- (7) In this section, the references to district council meetings are to meetings of—
  - (a) district councils,
  - (b) executives of such councils (as provided for in Part 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014),
  - (c) joint committees of two or more such councils,
  - (d) committees or sub-committees of such councils, executives or joint committees.
- (8) This section is without prejudice to section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (but see sections 88 to 90 of that Act).