**Good Practice Points**

**Before** the virtual event:

* Read all of the information in the invitation to/notification of the event that you have been sent.
* Make sure that you have the joining instructions to hand and know how to dial in.  Join the Microsoft Teams lobby at least 15 minutes before the event is scheduled to start.
* If you are using video, de-personalise your background as far as possible.
* If you will be represented at the event by an agent or lawyer, consider how you will communicate confidentially with them during the course of the event.
* Make sure the device you are using to access the event is fully charged/ plugged in, so that you do not get cut off from the event.
* Let the Case Officer know in advance if you intend to refer to a document on the Council’s website.
* If you do not understand something or need assistance in preparing to be involved in a virtual event, contact the Case Officer in reasonable advance of the event taking place.  You should note however, that the Planning Inspectorate cannot provide technological support.

**During**the virtual event:

* Be in a quiet, private place and let everyone in your location know that you must not be interrupted
* If you are using video, set your screen at 90 degrees so you face can be seen properly, making sure that the view behind you is blank or neutral, ensuring, if possible, that you are not back-lit.  You might consider using the ‘blur background’ function on Microsoft Teams.
* Dress code - please dress as you would if attending an actual event, being respectful of the process.
* Don’t have your speakers too loud – it can cause feedback.
* Turn off audio notifications and put phones etc onto silent to avoid distracting noises.
* When you join, give you name to the Case Officer and then mute your microphone and turn off camera if using.
* During the event, unless you are speaking, it is helpful if you keep your microphone muted and camera off, to minimise background noise and maximise bandwidth.
* Listen carefully to the Inspector who will lead the event.  The Inspector will introduce participants and guide the proceedings, inviting particular persons to speak at particular times.  You should not speak unless invited to.  Each time you speak, state your name and, if applicable, who you are representing.
* You are expected to observe the usual rules and formalities associated with the respective event.  If the Inspector considers that the behaviour of a party is not appropriate for some reason, they will be warned, with the Inspector having the ability to mute that person’s contributions at the event, with the ultimate sanction of ejected them from the event in extremis.  Any such action would only be considered by the Inspector if previous warnings are not adhered to.
* If you cannot connect to the event for some reason, or lose connection to the virtual event, contact the Case Officer by email or telephone who will assist if they can.