



For several years now, the Information Systems team at Council has been implementing ways to make working easier for staff as well as reducing Council's carbon footprint.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic Council staff were already being encouraged to attend meetings virtually where possible.

This groundwork came in handy when Aotearoa went into lockdown and everyone was required to work from home. Because most employees were already familiar with having to work remotely, the transition was easy.

Manager Information Systems Mark Radcliffe said now we were moving into our “new normal” way of working, which included physical distancing and isolation periods, as well as easier ways of working. There had been a big push to get some of the meeting rooms in the Civic Administration Building kitted out with webcams and Neat Boards to make virtual meetings easier and be as close to having everyone in the same room as possible, he said.

Neat Boards are an interactive, Zoom-based conferencing system that allows collaboration, note taking and file sharing.

“In the past few years, it has become commonplace to jump on a Zoom or Teams call rather than see someone in person, so for us to be able to support flexible working in the organisation is really important.

“It also means people have the option to stay home rather than travelling by vehicle or plane.”

It is also now easier for members of the public to view council meetings by tuning in to the Council livestreams at home instead of travelling to the Council Chambers.

While the shift from in-person to virtual meetings isn't a magic fix, it does significantly reduce carbon emissions.

“We know not every meeting needs to be held in person to be effective. But with the new technology we are bringing in, it means not only Council staff but members of the public can help us lower emissions,” Radcliffe said.