

TITLE OF REPORT: **Calendar of Meetings 2019/20 and Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements**

REPORT OF: **Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the proposed calendar of meetings for 2019/20. It also proposes some changes to the Council's overview and scrutiny and advisory group arrangements.

Background

2. Every year a calendar of meetings is drawn up for the Council's main decision making bodies and overview and scrutiny committees for the following municipal year. The calendar of meetings assists in the effective planning of the consideration of Council business and with the preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions.
3. A draft calendar of meetings has been prepared for 2019/20 and this is attached at Appendix 2. It has been prepared on a similar basis as last year.
4. The Council has previously agreed to pilot a number of changes to the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements. Some elements of the pilot have been reviewed and these are set out in paragraphs 11-16 of Appendix 1.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that the Cabinet recommends Council to:
 - agree the calendar of meetings 2019/20 (attached at appendix 2); and
 - the proposed changes to the Council's overview and scrutiny and advisory group arrangements outlined in paragraphs 11-16 of Appendix 1.

Recommendations

6. The Cabinet is requested to recommend Council to:
 - (i) approve the calendar of meetings 2019/20;
 - (ii) agree that, as far as possible, meetings should not be held during school holidays;

- (iii) authorise the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings; and
- (iv) agree the proposed changes to the Council's overview and scrutiny and advisory group arrangements set out in Appendix 1 and that the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

For the following reason:

To assist in the preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions and to allow councillors and officers to plan commitments in their diaries.

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Policy Context

1. Preparing a calendar of meetings for the municipal year enables effective planning of Council business and preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions.

Background

2. The calendar of meetings has been prepared on the following basis:
 - As far as possible, meetings will not be held during school holidays.
 - Eight Council meetings, including the annual meeting and special meeting to consider the budget.
 - Meetings of the Cabinet to take place once a month with breaks during school holiday periods. Additional meetings of the Cabinet to be arranged, if required.
 - Meetings of the Planning and Development Committee to be held every three weeks. There will be a four week gap over the summer and Christmas holiday periods.
 - Meetings of the Regulatory Committee to be held on a monthly basis.
 - Two meetings of the Licensing Committee per annum. These will be held immediately after meetings of the Regulatory Committee. Meetings of the Licensing Sub Committee will be arranged on an ad hoc basis.
 - Three meetings of the Rights of Way Committee per annum.
 - Six meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee per annum.
 - One meeting of the Accounts Committee per annum.
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be held every six weeks. Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committees to be held quarterly.
 - Meetings of the Personnel Appeals Committee to be held on a monthly basis with breaks during school holiday periods. The Pensions and Pay Discretions Sub Committee will meet on a quarterly basis.
 - Health and Wellbeing Board to be held every six weeks.
3. The Council previously agreed to realign meetings of the Cabinet and Council so they would be held in the same week to make the Council's decision making process more effective and efficient. This meant that Cabinet meetings would continue to meet monthly but the frequency of Council meetings would be changed from every six weeks to bi-monthly. In addition to these changes, the dates of some Group meetings needed to be re-aligned. It is considered that this arrangement has worked well and that it should be continued. This is reflected in the attached calendar of meetings.

4. The Councillor Support and Development Group has previously agreed that there should be a guiding principle that the Council's committees and OSCs should have at least one evening meeting per year starting at 5.30pm and those meetings should have a suggested maximum duration of no more than two hours.
5. The calendar of meetings for 2019/20 has been prepared on a similar basis as last year.
6. Planning and Development Committee will continue to have some 6.00pm starts and the Rights of Way Committee will meet at 4.30pm.
7. Seminars and meetings of the Corporate Advisory Group will be held at either 2.00pm or 5.30pm.
8. If Chairs wish to change the date of the meetings starting at the later time to another date then this will be accommodated where possible.
9. The Council has previously agreed that meetings should not be held in school holidays, as far as possible. There are exceptions to this principle, such as Planning and Development, Regulatory, Audit and Standards and Accounts Committees. It is proposed that this principle should continue to be adopted, except for urgent meetings. The Corporate Parenting OSC will hold two meetings after school hours at 4.30pm to allow children the opportunity to attend its meetings.
10. It is proposed that the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance should be authorised, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

Overview and Scrutiny

11. The Council has previously agreed to pilot a number of changes to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements. As a result of feedback from councillors some elements have been reviewed.
12. As part of the pilot changes it was agreed that policy issues previously considered by Policy Advisory Groups (eg policy consultations etc) would fall within the remits of specific OSCs and be subsumed into the work programmes for all OSCs. As a result of this change the Policy Advisory Group was disbanded. Following feedback from councillors it is considered that this change has not had the desired impact or led to the anticipated level of enhanced engagement in influencing ad hoc policy development for the following reasons:
 - limited engagement in these meetings from non OSC members due to a perception that this is now OSC business; and
 - discussions on policy issues being constrained by time limits due to other core business on OSC agendas.
13. Therefore, it is proposed that consideration of ad hoc policy issues be removed from the OSC work programmes and the Policy Advisory Group be reinstated. All members will be invited to meetings of the Advisory Group and it will meet as and when necessary.

14. An OSC work programme event was trialled last year. However, following feedback from councillors this event will no longer be held. Councillors' views will now be sought on potential work programme issues via scheduled meetings of the respective OSCs.
15. An aim of the pilot was to strengthen engagement between the Executive and OSCs and as a result a protocol was developed to facilitate Cabinet member attendance at OSCs where performance and policy issues relevant to specific Portfolio areas were being considered. Feedback has indicated that this arrangement has been positively received.
16. The Community Safety OSC was established in 2014 as a sub-committee of the Communities and Place OSC when the current OSC structure was introduced. The sub-committee meets on a quarterly basis. It is considered that the Communities and Place OSC can accommodate the current work programme of the sub-committee without affecting the effective scrutiny and challenge of community safety issues, including performance. This would streamline the OSC structure and help to reduce the demands placed on councillors' time. Therefore, it, is proposed that the Community Safety OSC should be disbanded with effect from the Annual Council Meeting in May and its terms of reference be included into those for the Communities and Place OSC.

Consultation

17. The Leader of the Council has been consulted on the contents of this report, all members' views were sought on the OSC pilot and the Chair and Vice Chair of Community Safety OSC have been consulted on the future of that committee.

Alternative Options

18. No other options have been considered.

Implications of Recommended Option

19. Resources

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications arising from this report.
- c) **Property Implications** – There are no property implications arising from this report.

20. Risk Management Implication - There are no risk management implications arising from the recommended option.

21. Equality and Diversity Implications - There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the recommended option.

22. Crime and Disorder Implications - There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the recommended option.

23. Health Implications – There are no health implications arising from the recommended option.

24. Sustainability Implications - There are no sustainability implications arising from the recommended option.

25. Human Rights Implications - There are no human rights implications arising from the recommended option.

26. Area and Ward Implications - There are no area and ward implications arising from the recommended option.

27. Background Information - The calendar of meetings approved for the current municipal year and Council minutes CL123 - 2013/14 and CL14 & CL34 - 2017/18.