

TITLE OF REPORT: **Calendar of Meetings 2024/25**

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 2024/25.

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 2024/25 and this is attached at Appendix 2.
4. In addition to the meetings set out in the draft calendar, it may be necessary to arrange further meetings on an ad hoc basis, for instance to deal with urgent matters within prescribed timeframes.

Proposal

5. It is proposed that the Cabinet agree the calendar of meetings 2024/25 (attached at appendix 2) and that it be forwarded to Council for approval.
6. Any proposed changes to the calendar of meetings will be agreed with the appropriate Chairs.

Recommendations

7. The Cabinet is requested to recommend Council to:
 - (i) approve the calendar of meetings 2024/25
 - (ii) agree that, so far as possible, meetings should not be held during school holidays or on dates where the holding of religious festivals may preclude attendance and involvement at meetings; and
 - (iii) authorise the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

For the following reason:

To assist in the preparation of the Cabinet's schedule of decisions and to allow councillors, officers and partner organisations 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; and supports delivery of the Thrive Agenda and the Corporate Plan.

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 or on dates where the holding of religious festivals may preclude attendance and involvement at meetings. The Council's multi-faith calendar may be found here - [5645-SS-Multi Faith Calendar 2024.pdf \(gateshead.gov.uk\)](#). It should be noted however that due to the frequency of meetings, it is necessary for meetings of the Planning & Development and Regulatory Committees to be arranged during the summer holiday period.
 - 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 & Development Committee to be held every four weeks. There will be a longer gap over the Christmas holiday period.
 - 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 prior to meetings of the Regulatory Committee. Meetings of the Licensing Sub Committee will be held on a monthly basis with breaks during school holiday periods, with additional meetings arranged on an ad hoc basis where this is necessary to comply with statutory timescales (for instance in relation to Temporary Event Notices).
 - Three meetings of the Rights of Way Committee per annum.
 - Seven meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee per annum.
 - One meeting of the Accounts Committee per annum.
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committees to be held every six weeks.
 - Meetings of the Personnel Appeals Committee to be held on a monthly basis with breaks during school holiday periods.
 - Meetings of the Pensions and Pay Discretions Sub Committee on a quarterly basis.

- Gateshead Health & Wellbeing Board to be held every six weeks.
 - Four meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board per annum.
3. The Councillor Support & Development Group has previously agreed that there should be a guiding principle that most of 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.
 4. Planning & Development Committee will continue to have some 6.00pm starts, the Audit and Standards Committee will meet at 4.00pm and the Rights of Way Committee will meet at 4.30pm.
 5. Seminars and meetings of the Corporate Advisory Group will be held at either 2.00pm or 5.30pm.
 6. 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.
 7. It is proposed that the Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance should be authorised, following consultation with the appropriate Chairs, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar of meetings.

Consultation

8. The Leader of the Council has been consulted on the calendar of meetings.

Alternative Options

9. The options available are –
 - a) To approve the calendar of meetings as proposed
 - b) To approve the calendar of meetings with amendments; or
 - c) Not to approve the calendar of meetings.

Option (a) is recommended, as it will support the existing decision-making cycle and enable councillors, officers and partner organisations to plan commitments in their diaries.

Option (b) is not recommended, as changes to the dates of meetings can create diary clashes and so impact on the ability of councillors and partner organisations to be able to attend and participate in decision-making.

Option (c) is also not recommended, as it would adversely impact on the advance planning of meetings which will impact on the efficient use of time and resources for councillors, officers and partner organisations.

Implications of Recommended Option

10. Resources

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Resources & Digital 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.

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

12. Equality and Diversity Implications - There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the recommended option; however if changes to the proposed calendar were made such that meetings were held on religious festival dates this may have the effect of precluding attendance and involvement in decision-making.

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

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

15. Climate Emergency & Sustainability Implications – The recommended option supports the Council’s climate emergency and sustainability ambitions through the efficient use of resources and by minimising the need for ad hoc meetings to take place.

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

17. Ward Implications - There are no ward implications arising from the recommended option.

18. Background Information - The calendar of meetings approved for the current municipal year.