

Non-Executive Report of the: Council Wednesday, 17 March 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Divisional Director Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Committee Calendar 2021-22	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Summary

This report proposes a calendar of Council, committee and other meetings for the forthcoming municipal year 2021/22. A period of consultation has taken place with Members and officers and Council are now asked to confirm the proposed meeting dates. The calendar of meetings is presented in Appendix 1 to this report.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To delegate to the Interim Monitoring Officer the authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Approval of the annual calendar of meetings is a Council function. Therefore, each year Elected Members are asked to consider and approve a schedule of meetings that will enable them to deliver the business of the Council.
- 1.2 To enable the Council to be flexible and reactive to new situations and new demands, the Councils' procedure rules provide that the Interim Monitoring Officer may call additional meetings or cancel scheduled meetings. The Interim Monitoring Officer is also able to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 None are presented although it would be within the powers of Council to vary the proposed Committee meeting dates, times and frequencies as well as to change the overarching Committee structure.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The draft calendar is presented at Appendix 1 to the report. In general it follows the same pattern of meetings set in previous years in terms of frequency of meetings with the Annual Meeting in May 2021 and all meetings following on from that.
- 3.2 Cabinet and other Executive meetings will continue to take place on Wednesdays. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) will therefore meet on the Monday of the same week as Cabinet. This supports the role of OSC in providing Pre-Scrutiny of Executive decisions by giving OSC Members time to review the Cabinet papers before their own meeting takes place.
- 3.3 Mirroring the arrangements in recent years, an additional Cabinet meeting is scheduled for the beginning of January 2022 to consider the draft budget proposals before submission to the special budget OSC meeting later that month.
- 3.4 The next Local Elections are scheduled for 5 May 2022. The meeting cycle for most committees has therefore been arranged to conclude a few weeks before that date to ensure all necessary work can be concluded in time. This may mean that some meetings are brought forward to the earlier part of the year, for example, the Scrutiny Sub-Committee's are scheduled with three meetings in the autumn and one after Christmas.
- 3.5 As in previous years, efforts have been made to avoid holding meetings during school holidays, with particular reference to August. However, it may be necessary for some meetings to be held especially in relation to regulatory

matters. Wherever possible we have also sought to minimise the impact of meetings on Members where these clash with certain religious holidays and party conferences. In most cases, Committee meetings are listed at 5.30pm during Ramadan to allow the meetings to conclude before the breaking of the fast.

- 3.6 Major sporting events have also been noted but at this stage there is uncertainty as to whether any of the planned international events (such as the Men's European Football Championships) will be taking place.

Virtual Meetings

- 3.7 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 which made provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to, council meetings, are currently set to expire on 6 May 2021. After this time, all meetings will have to revert to physical attendance.
- 3.8 The Committee Calendar has been prepared on the basis that all meetings will revert to physical attendance and also to the previous start times. However, Committee Chairs may discuss with the Monitoring Officer appropriate changes to dates and times should that be useful, especially if the ability to hold virtual meetings is extended.
- 3.9 It is currently expected that social distancing regulations will be relaxed on or around 21 June. From the date of full relaxation, attendance at physical meetings by all Members, officers and the public will be possible. Any meetings taking place before that date may need to operate on reduced or minimum physical attendance (including only partial member attendance) depending on the pandemic situation at the time. This would also apply to the Annual Meeting of Council which may have to take place with only a quorum of Members present.

Learning and Development and other details

- 3.10 The Member Learning and Development dates have also been listed in the Calendar and have been listed, where possible, when no Committee meetings are planned in order to encourage attendance.
- 3.11 As Members will be aware, any subsequent requests to change dates of meetings of Committees following approval of the Committee Calendar by Council, or to set up Special Meetings of the Committees, are subject to consultation with the Chair(s) of the Committees, relevant members and the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer.
- 3.12 Each year changes to the Committee structure may be necessary to enable the Council to discharge its responsibilities. Should it be necessary to revise the meeting structure further, the Calendar of Meetings will be adjusted and a new Calendar will be presented at the AGM (if required). It is also proposed to

provide delegated authority to the Interim Monitoring Officer to agree any new meeting dates in such circumstances.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The calendar has taken into account religious observances and provided earlier start times for meetings during Ramadan.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There are no other statutory implications.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The timely consideration of statutory financial reporting to members is critical to ensuring sound financial management and stewardship of public funds. However, there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Calendar of Meeting dates

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A