

Non-Executive Report of the: Council Wednesday, 19 May 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2021-22	

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

Executive Summary

This report proposes a calendar of Council, committee and other meetings for the forthcoming municipal year 2021/22.

The Calendar of Meetings was agreed at the Council meeting held on 17 March 2021. However, as is traditional, the report also presented at the Annual Council. Two specific changes are noted from the calendar presented at the March meeting. Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting in March 2022 has been changed to 7 March to fit with the amended Cabinet date, whilst General Purposes Committee in June 2021 has changed to 24 June to avoid a meeting clash on its original date.

It is important to note that in the current pandemic situation, meeting dates and times may change and so Members should check the website for the latest information.

The calendar of meetings is presented at Appendix A 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 A.
2. To delegate to the Interim Monitoring Officer 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.
3. To note that the Constitution provides for the Monitoring Officer to agree to cancel, amend a meeting or arrange new meetings where required, subject to the requirements of the Council Procedure Rules.

4. To note that the Council procedure rules agreed in relation to the operation of 'virtual' or 'remote' committee meetings (Section 26A of the Constitution) expired on 6 May 2021 and that the Council is now operating under its original Council Meeting Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council is required to give public notice of its meetings in order to fulfil its legal obligations under the Access to Information Rules set out in the Constitution and to meet its obligations under the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.2 The calendar will assist the Council to meet its legal requirements by setting out in a schedule, the meetings it intends to hold which all may easily refer to. It also aids transparent governance by enabling the work at meetings to be planned in advance. Hence the practice of presenting this report has evolved and is maintained.
- 1.3 Council is also asked 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 to ensure that there supporting arrangements to allow the Council to continue to be able to deliver its meetings efficiently.

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 THE 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 international sporting events have also been noted.
- 3.7 As Members will be aware, any subsequent requests to change dates, or add/remove 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.
- 3.8 Each year changes to the Committee structure may be necessary to enable the Council to discharge its responsibilities. It is proposed to provide delegated authority to the Interim Monitoring Officer to agree any new meeting dates in such circumstances.

Virtual Meetings

- 3.9 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, expired on 6 May 2021. After this time, all meetings will have to revert to physical attendance for decision makers and other key participants. The Council is developing new hybrid solutions to allow non-decision makers to continue to attend meetings virtually where this is appropriate.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.

Learning and Development and other details

- 3.12 Potential 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.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In collating this schedule of meetings, consideration has been given where possible to avoiding school holidays, known religious holidays and other dates which could inhibit attendance or participation by one or more section(s) of the borough's community. Certain meetings, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board will also take place at external venues where this is useful to encourage attendance and improve accessibility.

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 None specific to this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 The Recommendations of the Report seek Council's approval of the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A, and the delegation to the Interim Monitoring Officer to agree forthcoming dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council.

7.2 Additionally, Council is also requested to note the requirements in the Constitution that enable the Monitoring Officer to agree to cancel, amend a

meeting or arrange new meetings where required, subject to the requirements of the Council Procedure Rules.

7.3 As advised at paragraph 1.1 of the Report the Council is required to give public notice of its meetings in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in the Access to Information Rules set out in the Constitution and the Local Government Act 1972.

7.4 As indicated in paragraph 3.9, 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, expired on 6 May 2021. After this time, all meetings have to revert to physical attendance for decision makers and the Interim Monitoring Officer is providing advice on the extent to which hybrid solutions may be implemented under current legislation, to allow non-decision makers to continue to attend meetings remotely.

7.5 Council will further note paragraph 4.1 of the Report, which sets out the Council's consideration of the equalities impact of the Recommendations in satisfaction of its Public Equality Duty.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix A – 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