

Non-Executive Report of the: Council 16 March 2022	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Committee Calendar 2022-23	

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 2022/23. 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 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To delegate to the 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.
3. To note that the Annual Meeting of Council on 25 May 2022 may be moved to another venue depending on Covid safety requirements at that time and that should new Covid restrictions be introduced this may also apply to other future meetings.

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 Monitoring Officer may call additional meetings or cancel scheduled meetings. The 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 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 2022 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 2023 to consider the draft budget proposals before submission to the special budget OSC meeting later that month.
- 3.4 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. During Ramadan, officers will work with Committee Chair's to identify a suitable start time for the meeting taking into account the breaking of the fast. It may be necessary in some cases to organise adjournments during meetings to accommodate this.
- 3.5 The men's football world cup dates have been noted, however as it is taking place at a busy time in the calendar (November/December 2022) only limited re-arrangement of meetings has been possible.
- 3.6 With the local elections taking place in May 2022, after this report is agreed but before the calendar comes into effect, it may be that a new administration will wish to review the committee arrangements and calendar of meetings. This report will be represented at the Annual Meeting in May to allow for such changes should they be desired.

Physical, virtual and hybrid meetings and Covid restrictions.

- 3.7 At the moment legislation requires that all formal Council meetings take place at a physical location and to be counted as in attendance and to vote Members must also be in that location. The Council is allowing other participants to participate virtually as that is seen as helping increase accessibility to our meetings. Almost all meetings are also now webcast.
- 3.8 No change to the legislation is expected and so the above arrangements will continue.
- 3.9 At present Covid restrictions have eased sufficiently to allow the Council Chamber to host all but the biggest meetings/events without impact. Officers will continue to liaise with the Chairs of meetings regarding meeting arrangements and action will be taken should restrictions increase again.
- 3.10 Annual Council – under present restrictions, it would not be possible to run the full Annual Meeting and Speaker’s reception in the Council Chamber/Town Hall on 25 May with full attendance. Restrictions may have eased further by then, but should it prove necessary the Council will explore alternative locations for that meeting.
- 3.11 Should new Covid restrictions be introduced in the future the Council will also explore whether other meetings should also be held with reduced attendance or at alternative venues. It should be noted that there are costs associated with holding meetings outside of the Town Hall including venue hire and webcasting arrangements.

Member Induction Programme

- 3.12 The committee calendar has been developed in conjunction with the Member Induction Programme to try and minimise any clashes between committee meetings and induction seminars.

New Town Hall

- 3.13 At some point during the municipal year, Council and Committee meetings will start operating from the new Town Hall. Dates for the transition will be announced nearer the time. For the purposes of this calendar the location of meetings should be considered to be the ‘Town Hall’ whether that be Mulberry Place or Whitechapel.

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 of the specific proposed committee calendar, although a failure to agree a committee calendar at all would impact on the Council's ability to meet all the above implications.

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 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 2022-23

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