

Report to Acting Chief Executive

Subject: Schedule of Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings for the Ensuing Year

Date: 12 May 2020

Author: Service Manager Democratic Services

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To enable the Acting Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor, to approve the schedule of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings for the 2020-21 municipal year.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

That the Acting Chief Executive:

- 1) Approves the schedule of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings for the next municipal year noting that the start times and venues for meetings are subject to change.

1 Background

- 1.1 At the Annual General Meeting of the Council, usually held at the end of May, it is normal practice for Council to approve the schedule of meetings for the forthcoming year.

A decision was taken in late March to suspend face-to-face meetings of Council and Committee meetings due to the COVID-19 emergency. Subsequent to this on 4 April the [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) came into force

which gave local authorities the ability to hold meetings in a “virtual space” so long as certain conditions were met. More pertinent to this report, the regulations also gave local authorities the option of not holding an Annual General Meeting for the next municipal year.

- 1.2 In consultation with Group Leaders, it was decided not to hold an AGM for the 2020-21 year. The practical implications of this are that all existing appointments will continue until a new AGM is held. As a result of no AGM being held, it is not possible for a schedule of meetings to be formally agreed.
- 1.3 The constitution permits non-executive decisions to be taken urgently by the relevant Director in consultation with the appropriate committee or meeting chair where necessary. So that Committees can meet beyond May, it is considered appropriate for the Acting Chief Executive to use his delegated authority to set the schedule of meetings to enable Committees to meet to allow operations of the council to carry on. The Mayor has been consulted and is supportive of the proposals.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Acting Chief Executive approves the schedule of meetings to start from 1 June 2020. The decision must be taken before any meetings are held.
- 2.2 It should be noted that the start times and venues for meetings are subject to change. This is due to COVID-19 emergency. Meeting venues cannot be fixed because at the time of writing it is not known when face-to face gatherings can resume once government social distancing guidance is relaxed. Meetings will always take place in either a Civic Centre meeting room or be held virtually.
- 2.3 The start time of meetings held virtually is, at least initially, going to be moved to earlier in the day. Virtual meetings, held over the internet, rely on a reliable, fast network connection for all participants. Moving the start time to earlier in the day when internet traffic is generally quieter, aims to minimise the risk of technical problems due to poor internet speed. An earlier start time will also enable officers, both in Democratic Services and IT, to better support meetings. Committee Chairs have been consulted on committee start times and these will be advised as soon as possible.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 It could be decided not to set a schedule of meetings. However in order for the Council to plan its operational activities, it is considered important to have a schedule of meetings in place.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5 Equality Impact

5.1 The Equality impacts of this decision are considered to be neutral.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Schedule of meetings

6 Background Papers

6.1 No specific background papers have been identified.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 To enable the Council to have a schedule of meetings in place for the next municipal year.