

**ANNUAL COUNCIL
26 MAY 2022**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: APPROVE A PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS FOR THE COUNCIL FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2022/23

REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

COUNCIL PRIORITY: PEOPLE FIRST / SUSTAINABILITY / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the Civic Year 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the following programme of ordinary meetings of the Council be approved for the Civic Year 2022/23:

Thursday, 7 July 2022 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 22 September 2022 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 10 November 2022 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 19 January 2023 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 23 February 2023 – 7.30pm
Wednesday, 30 March 2023 - 7.30 pm

2.2 That the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23, as attached as Appendix A, be approved.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To enable Members to agree a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for 2022/23.

3.2 To enable Members to agree the Calendar of meetings for 2022/23.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 A number of alternative dates were considered during consultation.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the political Group Leaders.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Standing Order 4.8.1(a)(xi) requires the Council, at its Annual meeting, to approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the ensuing Civic Year.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Following consultation with the political Group Leaders, the following dates are recommended for ordinary meetings of the Council during the Civic Year 2022/23:

Thursday, 7 July 2022 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 22 September 2022 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 10 November 2022 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 19 January 2023 – 7.30pm
Thursday, 23 February 2023 – 7.30pm
Wednesday, 30 March 2023 - 7.30 pm

- 8.2 Should circumstances dictate that any extraordinary meetings of the Council are required to deal with time critical issues in addition to the above programme of meetings then these will be arranged as necessary.

- 8.3 Following consultation with the political Group Leaders, the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23, as attached as Appendix A, is recommended for the Civic Year.

- 8.4 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392 ('the Regulations'), which allowed Council and Committee meetings to be held virtually, expired as of 7 May 2021. Despite attempts for this to be changed (Lawyers in Local Government (LLG), the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Hertfordshire County Council asked the High Court to declare that the Local Government Act 1972 empowers local authorities to hold meetings remotely, including whether press and public could also be permitted to attend remotely under the Act. As well as the recent petition by ADSO and LLG calling for the UK Government and Parliament to allow Councils in England to have the choice to meet remotely.

Council and Committee meetings are still not able to meeting virtually and must be held in person.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Paragraph 4.8.1(a) (xi) of the constitution provides in the terms of reference for the Annual Council meeting to include amongst other things "approving a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year".

9.2 Provisions for calling meetings, enabling the public to be present and making documents available are contained in two principal pieces of legislation: the Local Government Act 1972, ss 100A to 100K for meetings of the full council and for non-executive committees and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 for executive meetings, in particular cabinet.

9.3 The Local Government Act 1972 requires members to be physically present in order for a meeting to take place.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No financial implications arise directly from this report. A schedule of meetings forms part of the Council's usual business arrangements.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct risk implications arising from this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 There are no equalities implications in this report.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no human resource implications.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – Calendar of Meetings 2022/23

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 None.