

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor L Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	24 May 2021

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2021/2022

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 The Council will be asked to consider a programme of meetings for 2021/2022 and to note provisional meeting dates from May to December 2022.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the calendar of meetings for 2021/2022 as attached at Appendix 9(a).
- 2.2 To agree that meetings commence at 6pm as usual (set out at the end of the calendar of meetings at Appendix 9(a))
- 2.3 To agree that a Council meeting be scheduled for 14 July, but this be reviewed by the Group Leaders and be subject to the successful stage 4 release of restrictions of the Prime Minister's Road Map proposed for 21 June 2021.
- 2.4 To approve a dispensation in relation to any non-attendance of councillors at formal meetings up until 30 September 2021 on the basis that there will be fewer formal meetings to attend as a result of the current social distancing restrictions and subsequent measures to restrict attendance to allow 'in person' meetings. Any future six month period to commence from 1 October 2021.
- 2.5 To agree that the meetings of the Scrutiny Leadership Board, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee being held in June and July 2021 will be informal meetings held virtually and should there be any formal decisions required these will be taken by the Chief Executive under delegated emergency powers on recommendation from the committee.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To have in place scheduled meeting dates to enable the Council's committees to transact their business during the municipal year. With regard to the non-attendance at meetings in a six-month period, a decision is required at this Council meeting, as retrospective approval cannot be given when the six-month period has expired.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

To not schedule meeting dates, although this will not allow Council and its committees to plan their business and meeting dates for the municipal year ahead. To not grant a dispensation from the 6 month rule for members. However, due to the restricted opportunities to attend meetings and other implications of the pandemic, there is a possibility that members could not fulfil this obligation and their non-attendance would inadvertently create a causal vacancy.

4.0 Council priority:

4.1 The programming of formal Council, committee and Executive meetings will help the Council achieve all its priorities.

5.0 Background information

5.1 A proposed programme of meetings is set out at Appendix 9(a) with the start times for all committees are listed at the end of the Appendix. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 allowed meetings to be held virtually during the pandemic. These regulations came into force on 4 April 2020 and applied to meetings held before 7 May 2021. The Government has though decided not to extend that legislation. All meetings requiring formal decisions must now be held 'in person' with relevant social distancing requirements in place.

5.2 Arrangements are being made in this regard in particular with regulatory committee meetings. However, following consultation with the Lead Scrutiny Member meetings of the Scrutiny Leadership Board, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee being held in June and July 2021 it is recommended be informal meetings held virtually (and broadcast) and should there be any formal decisions required these will be taken by the Chief Executive under delegated emergency powers on recommendation from the committee.

5.3 The law states that where a Council member fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance at a Council related meeting then subject to certain provisions, he/ she ceases to be a member, unless the failure was due to some reason approved before the expiry of that period. Due to

the reduced number of meetings which have already been in place and the likely reduced number going forward then a dispensation is recommended to be considered at this Council meeting, as retrospective approval cannot be given when the six-month period has expired.

- 5.4 A Council meeting is being proposed for 14 July, but it is recommended that whether this meeting takes place be for consideration by the Group Leaders and be subject to the stage 4 release of restrictions of the Prime Minister's Road Map proposed for 21 June 2021.
- 5.5 It is for the Leader of the Council to schedule Executive meetings, but proposed dates have been listed in the programme for completeness.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 9(a) - Calendar of Meetings 2021/2022

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 The Council's Constitution provides for the Annual meeting to formulate a schedule of Council and Committee meetings for the forthcoming municipal year.

7.0 Equalities considerations:

- 7.1 There are no equalities considerations.

8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 There are no additional financial considerations.

9.0 Risk management considerations:

- 9.1 Failure to put in place a schedule of meetings will put at risk the ability for the Council to transact its business efficiently.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

- 10.1 None.

11.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

11.1 The Group Leaders have been consulted on the proposed schedule of meetings and the Scrutiny Lead Member.

12.0 Background papers:

12.1 There are no additional background papers to this report.