

Report to Council

Wednesday, 21 February 2024

By the Chief Executive

DECISION REQUIRED



Not Exempt

Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

Executive Summary

This report proposes a programme of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings for 2024/25. The programme takes into account, where possible, the dates of bank holidays and school holidays.

As in previous years, the calendar for 2024/25 is based on a two-monthly cycle for Council, Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee have been moved earlier in the cycle. The change in timetabling would enable comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be fed into the final Cabinet report.

It is proposed that both the Licensing Committee and the Governance Committee should continue to meet only as required, although there will be an initial meeting of each to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Licensing and Standards sub-committees will also continue to be called as and when necessary. It is also proposed that the meetings of the Standards Committee are reduced to once a year.

Cabinet Member Policy Development Advisory Group (PDAG) meetings will take place in the three weeks before each Cabinet meeting. It is proposed that joint PDAGs are held for 6 of the portfolios, as set out in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

The Council is recommended:

- (i) Approve the calendar of meetings for 2024/25, as submitted
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, to make amendments to the schedule of meetings of the Committee, in consultation with the relevant Chair, or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair

Reasons for Recommendations

To fix a programme of Council meetings and to approve a calendar for Cabinet and Committee meetings, which enables the Council to transact its business in a timely and efficient manner.

Background Papers

None.

Wards affected: None

Contact: Aisha Nottage, Democratic Services and Elections Manager.

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 A draft calendar was prepared for initial consultation with officers to ensure that any statutory requirements/deadlines could be met during the year. Amendments were made in response to comments received. The draft was then circulated to all Members for comment.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution, Part 4a.2, provides that "Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with the notice of meetings decided at the Council's Annual Meeting." However, it has been the Council's practice to agree a calendar for all Council, Cabinet, Committee and PDAG meetings at an earlier Council meeting. This is to ensure the dates are available to Councillors and the public before the next Municipal Year.

3 Details

- 3.1 A draft calendar of meetings for 2024/25 has been prepared for Members' approval and is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The proposed programme takes into account, where possible, the dates of bank holidays and school holidays.
- 3.3 As in previous years, the calendar for 2024/25 is generally based on a two-monthly cycle. Extraordinary Council or additional Cabinet/Committee/sub-committee meetings may also be called during the year as necessary. Standards Committee is to meet once a year, with sub-committees to be called as and when required. Planning Committees continue to meet monthly.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the Licensing Committee should continue to meet only as required. Licensing sub-committees will also continue to be called as and when necessary. It is proposed that meetings of the Governance Committee should continue to be called as and when required.
- 3.5 Following the completion of the recent Peer Governance Review, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to meet on the Wednesday two weeks prior to the Cabinet meeting. The change in timetabling would enable comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be fed into the final Cabinet report.
- 3.6 Members briefings and seminars for training or development purposes will be arranged during the year on an ad-hoc basis as and when required.
- 3.7 The PDAGs will take place in the three weeks before each Cabinet meeting where practical. The meetings will take place prior to the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee within that cycle. It is proposed that, aside from the Finance & Resources portfolio, the remaining PDAGs are held as joint PDAGs. Consideration has been given to the portfolios that would be combined, based on the content of the portfolios. The membership of the PDAGs (11 per PDAG), will remain unchanged. The proposed PDAGs are as follows:

	Portfolios	
Joint PDAG 1	Climate Action & Nature Recovery	Leisure, Culture & Green Spaces
Joint PDAG 2	Environmental Health, Recycling & Waste	Housing, Communities & Wellbeing
Joint PDAG 3	Local Economy & Place	Planning & Infrastructure
PDAG 4	Finance & Resources	

- 3.8 The draft calendar also shows possible dates for the first two months of the 2025/26 Council year, for information only (please note that these may change when the final calendar for that year is prepared).
- 3.9 The first meetings of each committee are scheduled to take place immediately after the close of the Annual Council meeting on 8 May 2024 and this has been reflected in the draft calendar. This ensures that the Chair and Vice-Chair of each committee are appointed from the start of the municipal year, and the time that each committee will take place can be set.
- 3.10 West Sussex County Council are due to set their budget at their meeting on Friday 14 February, and the level of precept they set has an impact on the budget related decisions required to be made by this Council. As such, the Council meeting scheduled to approve the budget and set the levels of Council Tax for 2025/26 is scheduled for Monday 17 February. Whilst meetings are scheduled to avoid school holidays, in this instance it has been determined that this would be the most suitable date.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Once the calendar of meetings has been approved by the Council, the dates for 2024/25 will be published in the calendar of meetings on the Council's website. Councillors will be given instructions for adding these dates to their own Outlook Calendars.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 Members and Officers have been consulted to ensure that the proposed programme meets the requirements for reporting on statutory matters such as the budget and final accounts.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 No other courses of action have been considered, as the Council requires a programme of meetings in order to transact its business in an efficient manner.
- 6.2 The option to hold the February 2025 Council meeting the week after the school holidays was considered, however due to the timescales for annual billing and the requirement to collect money to pass to West Sussex County Council and Sussex police, this option was rejected.
- 6.3 It was considered that the PDAGs could continue to meet separately. This option was rejected because the joint PDAG proposal enables more efficient use of Councillors' time, and to enable the consideration of initiatives that span more than one portfolio.

7 Resource Consequences

7.1 There are no resource consequences.

8 Legal Considerations and Implications

8.1 The Council must approve a calendar of meetings for the Cabinet and other committees and groups in order to ensure that Council business is transacted and done so in an open and transparent manner.

9 Risk Assessment

9.1 If the Calendar were not agreed at this stage there would be a risk to the Council's reputation, as it would not be seen to be operating in an open and timely manner. In addition, the Council may be prevented from transacting business in a timely manner.

10 Procurement implications

10.1 There are no procurement implications.

11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

11.1 The approval of a programme of meetings for the year will enable its publication in advance. This will ensure that this information can be made available to members of the public who may wish to either view meetings virtually or attend and/or address meetings of the Council and its Committees or the Cabinet.

12 Environmental Implications

12.1 There are no environmental implications.

13 Other Considerations

13.1 There are no positive or negative impacts arising from this proposal in relation to crime and disorder.