

Timetable of Meetings for 2023/24

Strategy & Resources Committee Tuesday, 31 January 2023

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For recommendation

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to recommend a timetable of Committee and Council meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year. The proposed timetable reflects the 2022/23 timetable. The report also explains the key purpose of certain meetings.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council.

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Recommendation to Committee:

That, notwithstanding the scope for additional meetings to be convened in consultation with relevant committee chairs, the 2023/24 timetable of meetings, attached at appendix A, be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Reason for recommendation:

The Authority needs to have the dates of its Council and Committee meetings in place for the next municipal year. The rationale for the suggested meeting dates is explained within the report.

Introduction and background

- 1 The proposed timetable at appendix A has been prepared in light of the following assumptions and conventions:
 - a) the 2022/23 timetable of meetings allowed for the discharge of Committee and Council decisions at appropriate times
 - b) the current committee structure will be retained for 2023/24
 - c) monthly Planning Committees are scheduled, where possible, with a maximum gap of 6 weeks between meetings to avoid the potential for non-determination of applications
 - d) the Investment Sub-Committee will continue to meet on Friday mornings
 - e) August is to be kept free of meetings
 - f) no Policy Committees have been scheduled to meet in the week before Full Council so that the 'Council Book' can be published with the relevant committee minutes included. However, some Planning and Audit & Scrutiny dates fall in 'pre-Council' weeks and, in such cases, the minutes of the relevant meetings will be circulated as a supplement to the Council Book in advance of the imminent Council meeting or stand deferred until the next Council meeting
 - g) as far as practicable, the principle of having only one policy or planning committee in a week, held on a Thursday, has been applied.
- 2 It has not been possible to apply principle 'g' above, on the following occasions:
 - a. The first Planning Policy Committee meeting (20 June 2023) will be on a Tuesday, two days before Housing Committee. This is because the appointment of committees and election of Chairs won't take place until Annual Council on 25 May. The first available 'Thursday slot' following that is 8 June. Planning Committees have been prioritised for 8 June and 6 July in line with convention 'c' above. There are not enough Thursdays in between to accommodate all four Policy Committees.
 - b. The September meeting of the Planning Policy Committee will be on Tuesday 19 September. Housing Committee will meet on Thursday 21 September. There are not enough Thursdays following the August break (convention 'e') and the October Full Council meeting.

- c. Given the expectation that Full Council will set the 2024/25 budget on 8 February 2024 following engagement with policy committees:
 - i. The Community Services and Planning Policy Committees are proposed to meet in the same week (16 January 2024 and 18 January 2024 respectively)
 - ii. The Housing and Strategy & Resources Committees are proposed to meet on the subsequent Tuesdays (23 January 2024 and 30 January 2024) to allow sufficient time for a report to be prepared for 8 February 2024 Full Council.

Consultation

- 3 Consultation on the proposed timetable was undertaken with the Council's Management Team and the four Political Group Leaders prior to consideration by the committee.
- 4 As a result of the consultation, Planning Policy Committees are proposed to meet on Thursdays throughout the year to ensure attendance by senior Officers.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

For Finance there are two separate processes: Statutory Accounts reporting and Budget Setting and Monitoring.

Statutory Accounts – Audit & Scrutiny Committee approves the Council's annual statements of accounts. Due to delays in the external audit process, the timetable for this is uncertain, however the proposed schedule of A&S meetings provides adequate scope to present the accounts.

Budget Setting and Monitoring – The planned budget setting process would enable officers to engage with Members on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Autumn Statement and the Member engagement feedback would be incorporated into the draft budget presented in November. The Provisional Settlement information and further refinement on the committee budgets would be presented to policy committees in January 2024. The consolidated final budget report with the Council Tax Precept and balanced revenue budget to Strategy & Resources will be supported by the S151 Officer section 25 Local Government Act 2003 report on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserve. The budget monitoring reporting is currently circulated informally to Members through Group Leaders. Quarterly financial reports are presented to each Policy committee.

This process and proposed committee timetable meets the two key statutory deadlines:

- Approving the Council Tax – tax base deadline is 31st January. This is achieved by taking the tax base as part of the draft budget in November.

- Approving the Council Tax precept – issuing the council tax bills deadline is 1st March. To meet this deadline, the Revenues and Benefits team require the whole precept (Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, Tandridge Parishes and Tandridge’s) to be approved at least 10 working days before. This is achieved by having Council on the 8th February.

Therefore, the proposed committee timetable fits the finance processes.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. The determination of the calendar of Council and Committee Meetings for the ensuing municipal year will need to be approved by Full Council.

Equality

There are no significant equality implications associated with this report.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed timetable of meetings for 2023/24

Background papers

None.

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