

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

### **PART I – PART DELEGATED**

#### **5. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023/24 (CED)**

##### **1 Summary**

1.1 To consider the draft Calendar of Meetings for the Local Government Year 2023/24.

##### **2 Details**

2.1 Officers were asked by Members to extend the calendar of meetings so that dates are available up to two years in advance. The meetings for 2022/23 were agreed by Full Council in October 2020.

2.2 Council/Committee/Sub-committee meetings were held virtually from 5 April 2020 to until 6 May 2021 under the Covid 19 Regulations. With these regulations ending on 6 May 2021 we now legally have to hold Council/Committee meetings as face to face meetings with all the Members making the decisions having to be present. This may of course change before May 2023 and the Government could decide to bring in legislation which could allow the Council to hold meetings virtually, as hybrid meetings or a combination of the two. In addition, the Council are also looking at installing the required technology to livestream our meetings and to be able to hold hybrid meetings (a separate report is provided on the agenda for this meeting).

2.3 In 2021/22 we continue to hold Forum meetings virtually as they are not decision making bodies following advice received from Counsel. Officers recommend this continues.

2.4 Some of the points/recommendations raised in the report would be implemented with immediate effect whilst the calendar would not come into effect until May 2023. The recommendations include agreement to holding non-decision making meetings virtually and only meetings where decisions can be made as physical meetings.

2.5 The draft calendar includes the following meetings:

2.5.1 Full Council and Annual Council – in 2023/24 meetings have been scheduled for July, October, December and February. The Annual Council meeting for May 2023 is scheduled for 16 May and the Planning meeting for 18 May which leaves a very short period between the election, getting the papers published for the meetings and organising mandatory training for the Planning Committee.

Following the postponement of these meetings this year (2021), CMT are asked to consider changing these meeting dates for both 2022 and 2023 to:

24 and 26 May 2022 (currently – 17 and 19 May)

23 and 25 May 2023 (currently – 16 and 18 May)

This pattern would then continue for future years and the dates for May 2024 accord with this proposal.

2.5.2 Policy and Resources Committee – seven meetings have been organised to meet before the two Service Committees. This will ensure that all policy and budget decisions are agreed first allowing the Service Committees to then agree the detail and implementation. Details of the Policy and Resources and Audit Committee

meetings will be sent to Watford BC to ensure they don't clash with their Finance/Audit meetings.

- 2.5.3 Two Service Committees – Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development and Leisure, Environment and Community – six meetings of each of the Service Committees are scheduled in the calendar. Officers monitor the level of items on the agenda for the meetings and the cancellation of the meetings. In 2020/21 no meetings were cancelled but in 2021/22 one meeting of each Service Committee has been cancelled so far.
- 2.5.4 Planning Committee – 12 meetings of the Committee have been included in the calendar of meetings. All Councillors appointed to the Committee, newly appointed Councillors and named substitute Councillors are required to undertake mandatory training before the first meeting in the Local Government Year.
- 2.5.5 Licensing and Regulatory Services Committees – the meetings will continue to be held on the same evening and have the same Chair of each Committee and membership. All Councillors appointed to the Committees, newly appointed Councillors and any Member who acts as a substitute on the Regulatory Services Committee will be required to undertake mandatory training before the first meeting in the Local Government Year. No substitutes can be appointed to the Licensing Committee.
- 2.5.6 Local Area Forums and Environmental Forum – these meetings to be held virtually following Counsel's advice as they are not decision making bodies. The budget used for the hire of the venues is now used towards the zoom licenses for the Chairs of the Forums.
- 2.5.7 Audit Committee – the sign-off of the draft Statement of Accounts has reverted back to the end of July therefore the meetings schedule has been amended to hold two meetings in July the second meeting to sign off the draft statement of accounts, with further meetings at the end of September, November and one in March.
- 2.5.8 Council Tax Setting Committee – a meeting has been scheduled following the conclusion of the Full Council meeting (February 2024) but as with previous meetings the Council Tax has been set by Full Council without the need for the meeting. The setting of the Council Tax is though dependent on the HCC/Police Authority setting precepts by that date.
- 2.5.9 Local Strategic Partnership Board – the LSP Board meets co-jointly with the Community Safety Board. The LSP Board meeting dates have been included in the calendar as they are public meetings.
- 2.5.10 Pensioner Forum – three meetings have been included in the calendar. Over the last year the meetings have been held virtually but there is a request by the Champion to revert to holding physical meetings in the Penn Chamber.
- 2.5.11 Licensing/Regulatory Services Sub-Committees – are organised only if an objection is received to an application for a new or variation of a premises licence or club licence, objection to a Temporary Event notice or a taxi licence. In addition a request can be received to ask the Council to review a licence.
- 2.5.12 Sub-committee meetings have not been included in the calendar as the dates are set up ad-hoc as and when there is a requirement for them to meet. We recommend that these meetings (when organised) are held virtually as they are also not decision

making bodies. We are looking to hold the Equalities Sub-Committee on 28 September 2021 virtually.

- 2.5.13 Community Safety Co-ordinating meetings and Aquadrome Forum meetings are not public meetings therefore are not included on the calendar of meeting.

### **3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 The Committee are asked to recommend to Council:

3.1.1 That the attached draft Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 be agreed with Members able to comment on the dates before ratification by Council on 19 October.

3.1.2 That the proposed changes in the scheduling of the Annual Council and Planning meeting in May as detailed in Paragraph 2.4.1 be agreed for ratification by Full Council on 19 October.

3.2 That the Committee be asked to agree that:

3.2.1 All Local Forum meetings be held virtually.

3.2.2 That all Sub-Committee meetings when organised, as non decision making bodies, be held virtually.

3.2.3 Whether Equalities Sub-Committee meetings and Local Plan Sub-Committee meetings are livestreamed for people to watch live due to high public interest in the meetings.

### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. The relevant policy forms part of the change of Council's Governance to Committee arrangements agreed by Full Council on 24 April 2014. Minute CL81/13 and the Council Constitution refers.

### **5 Financial Implications**

5.1 We have a budget of £750 for booking venues for Local Area Forum meetings. This budget will be used towards the purchase of the Zoom licences for the Local Area Forum Chairs to run the meetings and the Committee Team zoom licence. The total cost is currently £1,600.

5.2 In 2020/21, with the meetings held virtually, we made a saving of £3,674 to the Members travel budget.

5.3 If it was agreed that Sub-Committee meetings were to be livestreamed then there could be additional costs to do this. Officers are looking the livestreaming being undertaken in house or whether we use an external company. There is no legal requirement to livestream the meetings as they do not have any decision making powers.

### **6 Legal Implications**

6.1 To accord with the requirements of the Council's Constitution (Council Procedure Rule 30 refers).

6.2 There is no requirement to livestream non decision making meetings as long as the public can attend the virtual meeting. This has been the case for all Environmental Forum, Pensioner Forum and Local Area Forum meetings.

6.3 Members have asked if the Sub-Committee meetings of P&R Committee are also held virtually as they have no decision making powers. It has been advised by the Monitoring Officer that this would be possible.

## **7 Environmental Implications**

7.1 Holding more virtual meetings not only increases attendance at the meetings and enables more people to take part in the democratic process but it contributes to achieving the objectives in our Climate Change Strategy by reducing travel to meetings and not having the costs associated with holding a physical meeting (staff resources, heating, lighting etc.).

## **8 Community Safety, Public Health**

8.1 Non specific.

## **9 Staffing Implications**

9.1 The meetings can be managed within the staffing resources available to the Committee team.

## **10 Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website**

10.1 All the meetings are included on the Council website in various formats but will include monthly meetings, yearly calendar of meetings and meeting pages for each of the meetings.

10.2 Once the Calendar is agreed it will be communicated to all Councillors, Managers and the Customer Services Centre and published on the Council website.

## **11 Equal Opportunities Implications**

11.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No – having more virtual meetings provides greater access to our meetings

## **12 Risk and Health & Safety Implications**

12.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

12.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Committee service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

<b>Nature of Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	<b>Risk Rating</b> <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Members not available to attend the meetings	The meeting would not be quorate	Provide sufficient notice of the meeting dates	Treat	1
Members and members of the public not able to access the virtual meeting	The meeting would not be quorate and Members and the public would be unable to participate in the meeting	Provide the required technology and support to enable Members to participate remotely in meetings and provide sufficient information and details to members of the public	Treat	2

12.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

<b>Very Likely</b> -> Remote Likelihood -----	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12
	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8



<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	*

**Background Papers - none**

**APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**  
Draft calendar of meetings 2023/24