

COUNCIL

9 May 2022

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2022/23

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr O Hemsley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships, Economy and Infrastructure	
Contact Officer(s):	Marie Rosenthal, Interim Deputy Director for Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer	mrosenthal@rutland.gov.uk
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Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council approves the Programme of Meetings for 2022/23 attached at Appendix A, including dates for May and June 2023 subject to revision by Annual Council in May 2023.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Council at its Annual Council Meeting is required to agree the date and time of ordinary meetings of Council (and its Committees) for the coming Municipal Year.
- 1.2 This report presents the programme of meetings for 2022/23 and sets out the principles that have been applied in compiling it. The programme also sets out meetings dates for May and June 2023 in order to allow Members and officers greater transparency on future meeting dates and assist in agenda-planning, these dates are subject to change by Annual Council in May 2023.
- 1.3 The report also updates Members on the position with regards to livestreaming and hybrid meetings from the Council Chamber.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Schedule of meeting dates is underpinned by a series of principles which are applied to ensure adherence to the Constitution and other Financial and Legislative requirements, needs of the individual Committees concerned as well as, where

possible, affording some consistency from year to year.

- 2.2 As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, all public meetings in 2020-21 took place virtually. The regulations allowing lawful decision-making meetings to take place ceased to apply from 7 May 2021. Although the government has since held a call for evidence on the topic of remote meetings, there is not yet a firm indication of future legislative changes.
- 2.3 For 2021/22 a hybrid approach was undertaken whereby only those meetings required to meet in-person did so, with remaining meetings taking place remotely. The Leader of the Council also varied delegations of Executive decision-making to allow Portfolio Holders to make these decisions via informal consultation with Cabinet at a virtual meeting.
- 2.4 The vast majority of meetings taking place both in-person and remotely have been recorded and recordings uploaded for future viewing on YouTube.

3 VIRTUAL MEETINGS PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The Programme of Meetings for 2022/23 at Appendix A has been drafted on the basis of the following locations for meetings:
- 3.2 Bodies regularly required to make decisions will always meet in-person, these are:
 - Full Council
 - The Cabinet
 - Planning and Licensing Committee
 - Conduct Committee
- 3.3 The proposed new Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee would only be required to make a formal decision when considering a call-in request, however it is recommended that this Committee meet in-person due to the nature of the meeting. Other Scrutiny work, such as Task and Finish Groups or evidence session, would operate flexibly based on the nature of the topic and work required.
- 3.4 Committees of the Council only occasionally required to make a formal decision are marked as discretionary and is expected for these to meet either in-person or remotely, with the Chair of the Committee to agree the location of individual meetings with the relevant officers as part of the agenda-setting process. These are:
 - Audit and Risk Committee
 - Constitution Commission
 - Employment and Appeals Committee
 - Health and Wellbeing Board
- 3.5 The Council's Governance and other teams also administer several consultative bodies that do not make formal decisions, some of these also do not meet in public and have many attendees from outside the County. Under the programme these bodies are also marked as discretionary and are expected to usually meet virtually but could meet in-person if requested by those bodies, these are:
 - Children and Young People's Partnership
 - Corporate Parenting Board
 - Parish Clerk Liaison Group

- Parish Council Forum
 - Rutland Countryside Access Forum
 - Schools Forum
 - Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
- 3.6 Under these principles, assuming several discretionary meetings chose to meet in-person then it is anticipated that approximately 60% of all meetings in 2022-23 would meet in-person, when only considering Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings this rises to over 85%.
- ## 4 HYBRID MEETINGS AND LIVE-STREAMING
- 4.1 Over the course of 2021/22, work has taken place between several Council departments to improve the equipment in the Council Chamber so that both video and audio from desk-mounted microphones can be streamed and recorded for subsequent viewing.
- 4.2 Streaming of these meetings has resulted in reasonable viewership of Committee meetings both at the time the meeting was held and with subsequent views on YouTube. Although there have been certain meetings such as Planning and Licensing Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board which have had higher viewership than most others.
- 4.3 Several recent meetings of the Planning and Licensing Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board have also operated on a hybrid basis, with a small number of non-voting attendees able to participate in meetings taking place in the Council Chamber.
- 4.4 Because of residual sound issues for these attendees and the non-voting status of remote attendance, it is not intended for meetings to be regularly held as hybrid meetings and this option only be utilised where required.
- 4.5 It is intended that any future decisions on investment in dedicated streaming provision or equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings will be made as part of wider decision-making on the future of Catmose.
- ## 5 CONSULTATION
- 5.1 Group Leaders and the Constitution Review Working Group were consulted regarding the approach to virtual meetings, there was not a unanimous view and the programme has been drafted to allow a mixture of meeting locations, albeit with a strong preference in favour of in-person meeting.
- ## 6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS
- 6.1 It is a legislative requirement to publish a notice of ordinary meetings of the Council and its Committees and therefore there is no alternative option.
- 6.2 A programme of meetings consisting only of in-person meetings is not recommended as this would impact the financial and environmental implications set out in the report.
- 6.3 The Chief Executive and Chairs of individual Committees also have the power to vary the dates and times of meetings and call additional meetings should this

become required during the 2022/23 municipal year. This also extends to varying the location of a meeting to be held remotely.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.
- 7.2 However, there are higher costs for meetings held in-person as a result of increased staffing, energy consumption at Catmose and travel expenses for Members, these costs are managed within the relevant service budgets.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 As required by Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, a notice is published on the notice board at the Council Offices informing the public of the meetings of the Council and its Committees. As soon as reasonably practicable following Council, a notice will be published on the noticeboard at the Council Offices.
- 8.2 The Council also publishes all meeting dates on the Council's website: <https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>
- 8.3 If changes are made to the public notice by the Proper Officer during the year, the notice will be updated and information fully publicised on the Council's website.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because no personal data has been processed in the compilation of this report.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed because there are no service, policy or organisational changes being proposed in this report.

11 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no community safety implications arising from the report.

12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no health or wellbeing implications arising from the report.

13 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Environmental implications

- 13.2 There are positive environmental implications from continuing to hold some meetings virtually, as a result of reduced energy consumption and travel time by Members, officers and the public.

14 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Council is recommended to approve the draft Programme of Meetings 2022/23 at Appendix A so that a schedule of the ordinary meetings of the Council and its Committees can be published in line with legislative requirements.

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

16 APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix A – Programme of Meetings 2022/23

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.