

**To:** Council  
**Date:** 26 November 2018  
**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance  
**Title of Report:** Council and committee programme May 2019 to May 2020

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	This report sets out a programme of Council, committee and other meetings for the 2019/20 council year (May 2019 to May 2020 inclusive)
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Executive Board Member with responsibility</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	None
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None
<b>Recommendations: That Council resolves to:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> the programme of Council, committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 1 for the council year 2019/20;</li> <li>2. <b>Delegate</b> authority to the Committee and Member Services Manager, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme, in the event that there is a decision at Annual Council to change the committee structure or remit which impacts on the programme of meetings; and</li> <li>3. <b>Delegate</b> authority to the Committee and Members Services Manager to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for members, for meetings of the Shareholder of the Council's companies, and for the Companies Scrutiny Panel, and, in consultation with the Head of Business Improvement, to set meetings of the Appointments Committee and Investigations and Disciplinary Committee (should they be required).</li> </ol>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Programme of Council and committee meetings for the council year 2019/20 in calendar format

## Introduction and background

1. This report and appendices set out the proposed schedule of Council and committee meetings for the next municipal year, from 1 May 2019 to the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2020.
2. Setting the programme for all main Council and committee meetings in advance allows for good governance, open and efficient decision making and helps councillors and officers to plan their workloads.
3. The programme may require alteration as the year progresses because of changing constraints and requirements for decision making. The Constitution contains provisions for cancelling meetings where there is no business and scheduling special meetings if required. Committees have the authority to set or amend their meeting schedules.
4. The programme of meetings is very busy so there is limited scope for meetings to be moved or added without creating diary clashes for members and officers.
5. Council has previously asked officers to as far as possible avoid scheduling meetings:
  - During school holidays; and
  - During certain religious festivals
6. The main Christian festivals coincide with public holidays. There are no significant clashes with major Sikh or Buddhist festivals.

Major festivals for those of Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faiths taken into account are

Eid-al-Fitr	4-5 June 2019 and 23-24 May 2020 (following Ramadan 6 May-4 June 2019 and 24 April-23 May 2020)
Eid-al-Adha	11-15 August
Rosh Hashanah	29 September-1 October
Yom Kippur	9 October
Diwali	27-31 October

7. The principle used in timetabling is that Council business must happen in a timely manner but the broader needs of members should be taken into account.
8. No meetings involving all councillors are scheduled on these dates (apart from Annual Council in 2020 which falls in Ramadan) and as far as practicable public committee meetings are avoided where this does not adversely affect the overall schedule. However some committee meetings need to be scheduled in school holidays or on festival days.
9. Members of most committees are able to appoint substitutes if they cannot attend themselves.
10. Meetings of Full Council and briefing sessions are scheduled to fall outside Oxfordshire state school holidays and to avoid the political party conferences in 2019 as far as possible.

## **The Programme**

11. Appendix 1 sets out in calendar format the programme for Council, all main committee meetings, standing Scrutiny Panels and members' training/ briefing sessions.
12. The timetable replicates as far as practicable that agreed for 2018/19.
13. The default start time for all meetings is 6.00pm with the exception of Council and City Executive Board meetings which currently start at 5.00pm. The Leader has asked that City Executive Board meetings start at 6.00pm. The start times for all other meetings have been set at 6.00pm, subject to confirmation at each committee's first meeting. Committees are able to vary this time and some committees have previously done so.
14. Any committees wishing to vary the start time to later than 6.00pm must first consult the Committee and Member Services Manager to ensure that these meetings can be suitably resourced and supported by officers.
15. If Council decides at its annual meeting in 2019 to make changes to the committee structure, a revised programme will need to be prepared and circulated. It is recommended that authority is delegated to the Committee and Member Services Manager, in consultation with group leaders, to make changes to the meeting programme as required following such a decision.

## **Council**

16. The Council's budget meeting is set in the week before half-term (17-21 February 2020), on 13 February 2020, but this requires the City Executive Board and Council to meet on consecutive days. The County Council budget setting meeting is on 11 February 2020.
17. A date for a second Budget Council meeting has also been scheduled for 24 February 2020 in case Council is unable to agree a budget on 13 February 2020 but in recent years the reserve date has not been needed
18. The normal meeting in April has been brought forward to 30 March 2020 to avoid the pre-election period.
19. Following all-out elections in May 2020, the Annual Council meeting must be held between the 8<sup>th</sup> day and the 21<sup>st</sup> day after the day of retirement of councillors. The date chosen (20 May) allows sufficient time for political groups to meet, decide if they wish to propose any changes to the committees, and nominate their committee members before the Annual Council meeting.
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21. It is not practicable to avoid scheduling Annual Council in Ramadan as this ends on 23 May, immediately before half term week. Holding Annual Council on 1 June (the last possible date) delays the election of the Lord Mayor and the Leader and the start of the decision making cycle until then, effectively creating a gap of nearly two months which will have implications for the Council's business such as dealing with planning applications in a timely manner.

## **Scrutiny and Executive Board**

22. The time between the Scrutiny Committee and the City Executive Board meetings is set to allow efficient executive decision making while continuing to allow sufficient time for effective scrutiny of those decisions. Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to meet on a Tuesday and the City Executive Board on the following Wednesday.
23. Additional dates for the City Executive Board and Scrutiny Committee are scheduled in August but are reserved only for decisions which must be taken then, and any pre-scrutiny of those decisions. If there are no such decisions these meetings may be cancelled.
24. Dates for scrutiny standing panels (Finance and Housing) have been included in the programme but are subject to any changes made by the Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting after Annual Council. Scrutiny standing panels will each meet approximately five times a year and, once established, may amend their own meeting schedules.
25. At its first meeting after Annual Council the Scrutiny Committee will agree any review groups for 2019/20 and these groups will set their own meeting dates.

## **Planning Committees**

26. The two area planning committees have scheduled monthly meetings.
27. The Planning Review Committee is also scheduled to meet monthly to allow for the call in of decisions taken by area planning committees. Recent experience is that Planning Review Committee meetings typically take place 3-6 times per year. The same date may be used as an adjournment date if the business for either area planning committee cannot be completed at its scheduled meeting. If not required for this or their original purpose, Planning Review Committee dates may be used for other committee meetings or briefings, or cancelled altogether.
28. A change has been made to the previous programme published in January 2018. In May the area planning committee meetings are now earlier in the month and before Annual Council, making these the last meetings of the 2018/19 year rather than the first of the 2019/20 year.

## **Licensing Committees**

29. The Licensing & Gambling Acts Casework Sub-Committee has to meet within set timescales and provisional dates for this sub-committee have been scheduled. Meetings of the General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub-Committee have been scheduled regularly throughout the year. These sub-committees currently meet at 5.30pm.

Officers can cancel or convene sub-committee meetings on these dates or arrange alternative dates with the chairs as required by the caseload.

## **Audit and Governance Committee**

30. The Audit and Governance Committee is scheduled to meet four times in the year.

## **Standards Committee**

31. The Standards Committee has scheduled quarterly meetings for 2019-20. Previously these meetings have been scheduled on an ad hoc basis. It is proposed that the remit of the Standards Committee is broadened to include advising on all aspects of member training, not just training on ethical issues. The Committee is

also expected to consider revised complaint handling arrangements and a new social media policy for councillors.

### **Appointments Committee**

32. The Appointments Committee would only meet to recommend to Council appointments to the position of Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer or to make appointments to the position of executive director or assistant chief executive or posts of similar seniority. It is recommended that authority is delegated to the Committee and Member Services Manager, in consultation with the Head of Business Improvement, to schedule meetings of the Appointments Committee, should they be required.

### **Investigations and Disciplinary Committee**

35. This Committee, proposed in the Constitution review report elsewhere on this agenda, would only meet to decide on disciplinary hearings involving a statutory officer, executive director or assistant chief executive. It is recommended that authority is delegated to the Committee and Member Services Manager, in consultation with the Head of Business Improvement, to schedule meetings of the Disciplinary Committee, should they be required.

### **Shareholder meetings**

33. Shareholder meetings will be scheduled roughly quarterly according to the needs of the companies and the Shareholder for the Council's wholly owned Housing Group and Oxford Direct Services companies, and as required for Oxford West End Development (OxWED). Prior to these a meeting of the Companies Scrutiny Panel may be arranged to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny of matters before the Shareholder. It is recommended that the Committee and Members Services Manager is authorised to arrange these.

### **Training and briefings**

34. These sessions are to assist with councillors' learning and development and are not open to the public. Dates for training and for briefing sessions are included to allow councillors to plan ahead. Councillors are advised to note these dates in their diaries now.

35. A programme of training sessions and briefings on topical issues will be circulated separately by the Committee Services Team. This will cover planning and licensing training and take into account any changes agreed by the Standards Committee and Council.

36. It is recommended that the Committee and Member Services Manager is authorised to arrange additional training and briefing sessions to cover matters as requested by officers or councillors.

### **Publicising meeting dates**

37. Meeting dates will be available online via the Council's website on the internet and intranet once these are finalised. This on-line diary is the most effective way to view accurate and up to date public meeting dates. In addition the meeting details can be downloaded into individual members' calendars but will not automatically update. Committee and Member Services staff will send instructions to councillors on the downloading of calendars.

### **Legal issues**

38. Meetings which the Council is required by legislation to hold have been included in the programme. There are no other issues arising from this report.

### **Financial Issues**

39. There are no financial issues arising from this report.

<b>Report author</b>	Jennifer Thompson
Job title	Committee and Members Services Officer
Service area or department	Law and Governance
Telephone	01865 252275
e-mail	<a href="mailto:jthompson@oxford.gov.uk">jthompson@oxford.gov.uk</a>
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