

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25 UPDATE

Executive Summary

The calendar of meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year was agreed at the recent meeting of Council held on 28 March 2024. This report proposes that the dates for the first meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees are changed to enable the Members of each of the Committees to meet in an informal setting to hold an initial discussion to develop the 2024/25 scrutiny work programmes.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the following meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees be cancelled:
 - the Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11 June 2024;
 - the Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on 25 June 2024; and
 - the Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee to be held on 2 July 2024; and
- (ii) the meetings be rescheduled as follows:
 - the Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee be held at 7pm on 9 July 2024;
 - the Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee be held at 7pm on 18 July 2024; and
 - the Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee be held at 7pm on 30 July 2024.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations above.

Supporting Documents: None

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1. Background

- 1.1. Council, at its meeting on 28 March 2024, approved changes to the Council meeting structure which saw the number of Scrutiny Committees increase from one to three, which now complement the Council's directorates.
- 1.2. At the same meeting the annual calendar of meetings was approved aimed at delivering a sustainable level of Committee meetings for both Officers and Members.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. This report proposes changes to the calendar of meetings for 2024/25 in order to provide the Members of the three Scrutiny Committees additional opportunities to consider the programming of scrutiny work for the coming year.
- 2.2. Six changes are proposed to the calendar:
 - i. The Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on the evening of 11 June 2024 be cancelled.
 - ii. The Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on the evening of 25 June 2024 be cancelled.
 - iii. The Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on the evening of 2 July 2024 be cancelled.
 - iv. A new Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee meeting be held on 9 July 2024 to consider any items that may fall before the Executive to be held on 11 July 2024 and to confirm the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
 - v. A new Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee meeting be held on 18 July 2024 to confirm the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
 - vi. A new Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting be held on 30 July 2024 to confirm the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
- 2.3. To enable Members of each of the Scrutiny Committees to have an opportunity to discuss ideas for inclusion in the 2024/25 work programmes, three informal workshops, one for each Scrutiny Committee, will be held. The workshops will not be open to members of public, enabling Members to have an initial informal opportunity to develop the work programmes for the year. There will be further opportunities to discuss the work programmes at the formal meetings of the Committees.
- 2.4. The dates proposed are:
 - i. 11 June 2024 – Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee
 - ii. 17 June 2024 – Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee
 - iii. 19 June 2024 – Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee

3. Purpose & Outcome

- 3.1. It is recognised that the change in the Council meeting structure is significant.
- 3.2. It is also recognised that the position the Council is in requires the Scrutiny Committees to focus on the Council's Improvement and Recovery Programme.

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- 3.3. To be able to achieve the most effective scrutiny, and the ambitions for improving the scrutiny function under the IRP be realised, Members, Commissioners and Officers will need more time than is afforded in the current induction and training programme to cover the role of scrutiny.
- 3.4. It is therefore proposed that a workshop session is held for each Scrutiny Committee that allows for the development of its work programme for the year.
- 3.5. Furthermore, to ensure a clear set of items can be drawn out at Committee, an introductory session to work programming will be held for the Members of the three Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.6. Switching from one overarching Scrutiny Committee to three, directorate-specific, Scrutiny Committees increases the risk of 'siloining' and a loss of focus on cross-cutting, whole-Council affecting issues. To mitigate such risks, the introductory session will promote coordination of intended topics between the Committees.

4. Background & Process

- 4.1. As the Council's Improvement and Recovery programme progresses it is important that informed and targeted public scrutiny is undertaken.
- 4.2. To ensure that Members are able to perform informed scrutiny, it is recognised that significant communication between Senior Officers and the Executive with the scrutiny function needs to occur. This will allow the Scrutiny Committees to ensure the topics focussed on are impactful and relevant to improving the Council and its priorities.

5. Implications

- 5.1. The proposed change in dates will impact the delivery of scrutiny at the Council. There will be a small delay in the commencement of public scrutiny, but the proposals will ensure that any scrutiny conducted is informed and relevant to the priorities of the Council and the Improvement and Recovery Programme.

Legal

- 5.2. There are no legal implications arising from these proposals.

Resources (finance and human)

- 5.3. The proposals have minor implications on the workloads of the Scrutiny and Democratic Services team, the Corporate Leadership Team and the Commissioners. The impact can be managed within existing resources.

Equalities & Diversity

- 5.4. There are no equalities or diversity implications arising from these proposals.

Risk (Corporate Governance)

- 5.5. The increased time for Senior Officers and Members to generate informed work programmes is expected to lead to improvements in the Council's handling of risk and corporate governance.
- 5.6. There are no risks arising from this report.

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- 5.7. There are minor implications on the short-term delivery but anticipated long-term benefits of scrutiny to the Council.

REPORT ENDS