



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26th MAY 2021

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS - MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021 - 2022

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval of the Calendar of Meetings for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the contents of the report; and in doing so note the responses to the Elected Members' Survey in respect of the Timing of Meetings, as outlined in paragraph 4.
- 2.2 That with the exception of the Planning and Development Committee, meetings will not be convened during School holidays, subject to urgent business needs;
- 2.3 To agree the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2021 - 2022, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 2.4 Note that this draft calendar is subject to change, based upon the demands of business over the coming municipal year. Any changes or additions will be undertaken in consultation with the appropriate committee chairs.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution, Council Procedure Rule 1 (1.1 (xiv)), the Council must present a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year at the Annual Council Meeting.

4. SURVEY OF TIMING OF MEETINGS

- 4.1 In accordance with Section 6(2) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, a survey was recently carried out to assess Members' preferences regarding the future timing of committee meetings.

- 4.2 Overall 42 Members completed the questionnaire. As surveyed, Members were advised of the current start times of various committee meetings and asked to identify their preferred meeting start time if their preference differed to the current. In total over 80% of the respondents cited 5.00pm as their preferred starting time for Council (83%) and other committees currently commencing at 5pm. In respect of Planning and Development Committee Members preference indicated the continuation of the 3pm Committee meeting start time (58%).
- 4.3 In that survey Members were advised of the future hybrid meetings arrangement, as provided for by the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 meaning Members could 'remotely' attend a meeting whilst others physically attend the meeting at the Council Chamber. It is hoped this flexibility in approach to attendance will continue to assist Members in balancing their Council duties with their other roles and commitments, as has been witnessed with the current virtual meeting setting. 88% of members indicated that a hybrid approach would be their preferred choice. 83% of Members agreed that some of the Council's smaller Committees should continue as standalone virtual meetings.
- 4.4 94% of the respondents were happy with the current arrangements in place for meetings that are held on an ad hoc basis e.g. LEA Governors, Appointments Committee, VER Panel and others.
- 4.5 As agreed at the Council AGM on the 23rd May 2018 (Minute No.15(3) Refers) Committee meetings were to be convened outside of the School holiday periods, save for exceptional circumstances (urgent business requirements). This scheduling has proved successful for Members and it is proposed that this continues for the 2021-22 Municipal Year. The draft calendar also highlights the potential pre-election period in the run up to the Local Government Elections 2022. Meetings of the Council (save for Planning & Development Committee) have not been scheduled during this period and will only be taken forward if business needs require.
- 4.6 The response from Members indicated that 91% of Members felt there was a need for a Member's etiquette policy to be developed in respect of Members conduct at Committee meetings. The development of such a policy will be taken forward by the Democratic Services Committee in consultation with the Council's Group Leaders.
- 4.7 The Survey also sought Members' views on the support provided by the Council Business Unit, the development of the Members' Portal, the completion of Members PDRs and the facilities available to Members within the Council Headquarters. A report will be presented to a future meeting of the Democratic Services Committee to consider the outcome of the responses received, with 90% of respondents advising they are content with the level of training provided.

5. PROPOSED CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

- 5.1 Attached is the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2021 - 2022 Municipal Year which includes, amongst others, the proposed dates for the Cabinet, Council, Licensing Committee, Governance & Audit Committee and the Planning & Development Committee. Scrutiny Meeting dates have also been included for Members' information.

6. FORMAL DIARY MEETINGS

Council

- 6.1 Within the proposed Calendar, Council meetings are, in the main, scheduled on a monthly cycle. In accordance with the Council Constitution, "Open Government" sessions will be scheduled at each meeting.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Council Constitution the Leader has agreed for the 'Leaders Debate' to be scheduled for the February Council meeting.
- 6.3 Two meetings of Council have been scheduled during the March cycle in respect of the Budget strategy. Only one of these meetings will go forward and notification will be advised upon nearer the date once Officers have received information regarding the timetable for the local government settlement.

Regulatory Committees

- 6.4 The Licensing Committee will meet approximately every six weeks. The Licensing Committee will also meet on a quarterly basis as indicated in the Calendar, to deal specifically with issues arising from the Licensing Act 2003. Licensing Sub-Committees, convened under the Licensing Act 2003, will be convened as and when required.
- 6.5 Dates have been allocated to the Planning and Development Committee throughout the calendar year to allow for, where possible, two meetings per month to take place.

Scrutiny Committees

- 6.6 A schedule of meetings for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the four thematic scrutiny Committees have been included within the calendar. In addition, reference is also made to the Council's Joint Scrutiny Committees – Cwm Taf PSB Joint Overview & Scrutiny (Cwm Taf PSB JOSOC), Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CCRCDC JOSOC).
- 6.7 Members will note that flexibility has been provided within the Calendar to allow for meetings to be arranged adhoc with the permission of the Chair, to allow for the role of scrutiny to be undertaken. This should strengthen the robustness of the calendar and prevent any meeting

cancellations as seen previously. This timetabling is in no way limiting the opportunities for scrutiny but instead allowing a more flexible calendar approach to recognise the needs of emerging priorities. Such scheduling also provides opportunity for Scrutiny Working Groups to be taken forward and training provision where requested. This will include considering matters which have been deferred as a consequence of focus on business critical matters.

Governance & Audit Committee

- 6.8 Meetings of the Governance & Audit Committee are scheduled in the calendar mostly on a 6-week cycle.

Democratic Services Committee

- 6.9 It is proposed that the Democratic Services Committee will meet on an ad-hoc basis as, in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requirements (Section 15(2)) - it has to meet at least once a year.
- 6.10 However to assist Members diaries, two meetings have been scheduled in the Calendar. The Chair of the Committee can determine nearer the dates whether the scheduled meetings are required. The Chair will still be able to call additional meetings of the Committee as necessary.

Standards Committee

- 6.11 The Standards Committee will meet as and when necessary in order to deliver its work programme. Provisional dates have been included within the draft Calendar.

Cabinet

- 6.12 In accordance with the Council's Constitution the Cabinet is required to meet at least 12 times during the Municipal Year.

Cabinet Sub-Committees

- 6.13 Cabinet Committees will be convened as and when there is sufficient business.

Other Committees

- 6.14 Meetings of the Appointments Committee, the Appeals/Employee Appeals/Chief Officer Appeals Committee, Pension Fund Committee will meet as and when required.
- 6.15 A meeting of the Constitution Committee has been scheduled for the March to allow for any potential consideration of items prior to the AGM and prior to the pre-election period, however due to the changes required within the constitution resulting from the Local Government &

Elections (Wales) Act 2021, additional meetings of this Committee may need to be convened throughout the year.

7. SPECIAL MEETINGS

- 7.1 Special/Extraordinary meetings of Council or Committees may be called, should this be deemed necessary by the Presiding Officer or the relevant Chair.

8. HYBRID MEETINGS

- 8.1 As previously advised, the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, provides the opportunity for Members to attend a meeting in a remote location, while others attend physically in the Council Chamber.
- 8.2 Guidance on the facilitating of hybrid meetings has yet to be provided by Welsh Government in respect of hybrid meetings.
- 8.3 Interim changes to the Council Constitution have been considered by the Constitution Committee to allow for hybrid meetings to be held and are detailed within agenda item 5. Further amendments to the Council Constitution may need to be taken forward in light of the guidance received.
- 8.4 It is suggested that a multi meetings policy is developed by the Democratic Services Committee to assist in this area.
- 8.5 Going forward, it will be the intention to provide hybrid meetings arrangements to Members to further assist them in undertaking their role, as we appreciate the benefits such arrangements provide. Currently, finalised work and training needs to be provided to officers and rolled out to Members on the new equipment provided within the Council Chamber to help facilitate such meetings and measures need to be put in place to ensure those wishing to attend a meeting 'physically' are able to adhere to the social distancing guidelines imposed, due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

9 TRAINING.

- 9.1 Following the recent PDR process (Personal Development Review) it has been recognised that Members would welcome refresher training on the different roles of a Committee including its terms of reference, especially when changes to Membership are taken forward following Council AGMs. In light of these requests and to equip Members in undertaking their new roles refresher training will be taken forward during the month of June, prior to normal Committee business commencing.
- 9.2 Details of the training sessions are also included in the calendar of meetings attached at appendix 1. The sessions will take place virtually.

- 9.3 Members will be aware of the 'Pre-Council' training that has been taken forward over the last number of years. At the Democratic Services Committee on the 1st March, Members considered the importance of the training provided and the opportunities and benefits this 'pre-council' training provided but also noted that due to the length of a Council meeting following a training session, training in advance was not ideal for Members and Officers wellbeing.
- 9.4 Due to the flexibility within the calendar it is proposed that standalone training sessions may now be accommodated within the calendar to allow for training in respect of the following areas which have already been identified by various Committees: Mental Health & Well Being, Unconscious Bias, Safeguarding, Diversity and Inclusion, Menopause, Pension / Retirement investment training and Emergency Planning. Alongside this, training where necessary will also be accommodated within Committee meeting settings.
- 9.5 Work is still ongoing to take forward e-learning modules for Members to complete through the Members Portal which is currently being developed.

10 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The production of a calendar of meetings is aimed at assisting and supporting the role of all Members, to provide them with sufficient notice of meeting dates and times. The aspect of hybrid and virtual meetings also promotes the democracy agenda, allowing the undertaking of Council business by Members to be more accessible and manageable.

11. CONSULTATION

A Members annual survey was undertaken to establish the preferred commencement times for Committee meetings.

12 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications aligned to this report,

13 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- Council's Constitution
- The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021

14 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

The Calendar of meetings provides the framework and timeline for decisions of the Council to be taken forward and therefore seeks to ensure all of the Council priorities are taken forward. It also embraces the Future Generations Acts as all future decisions taken by Council

seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

15. CONCLUSION

- 15.1 The Calendar of meetings for the 2021 - 2022 Municipal Year is attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Members are asked to note the dates and times of the meeting to assist in their diary management.
- 15.2 Where possible, electronic / outlook diary markers will also be circulated to Members in advance of a meeting to assist with diary commitments.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26 MAY 2021

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REPORT

Calendar of Meetings for Municipal Year 2021 - 2022

Freestanding matter