



City of Westminster

# General Purposes Committee

**Date:** 11 September 2019

**Classification:** For General Release

**Title:** Change to Programme of Council Meetings 2019-20

**Wards Affected:** Not Applicable

**Financial Summary:** There are no financial implications

**Report of:** Reuben Segal, Head of Committee and Governance Services  
Tel: 020 7641 3160; [rsegal@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:rsegal@westminster.gov.uk)

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to vary the business at the Council meetings on Wednesday 13 November and Wednesday 4 March 2020. It sets out a recommendation to change the Council meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> November from an Extraordinary to an Ordinary meeting and vice versa for the 4<sup>th</sup> March meeting.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That full Council be recommended to:
1. Change the Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November from an Extraordinary meeting to an Ordinary meeting.
  2. Change the Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March from an Ordinary meeting to an Extraordinary meeting in order to receive a report including recommendations in respect of the reception of a speech by the Leader of the Council on council priorities and financial aims and estimates of income and expenditure for 2020 - 2021 as set out in Council Procedure Rules, Section 9.4 (1)(c) and 9.21 (1-3).

## 3. Background Information

- 3.1 Following successful trials in 2017 and 2018, full Council agreed to move the receipt of the Leader's speech on council priorities and financial aims and consideration of budget proposals for the year ahead from March to November. The change, which was supported by the City Treasurer, was intended to allow departments to better plan on the full year basis for the following fiscal year. Full

Council also approved revised procedures including the associated changes to Standing Orders.

- 3.2 In February 2016 the government announced a 4 year settlement for local government, up to 2019/20. This meant that the Council had a reasonably stable view of its funding up to this financial year. However, the Council's funding in 2020/21 is extremely uncertain due to the spending review and fair funding review. Both of these areas are likely to have a significant impact on the funding the Council receives and we will not know the impact of this until December – when the local government settlement is announced.
- 3.3 Therefore it is proposed that Full Council's approval of the budget is moved from November 2019 to March 2020. This will ensure officers have the time to analyse the impact of the settlement on the Council's finances and produce a budget that reflects the 2020/21 settlement.
- 3.4 The Chief Whips of both the Majority Group and the Minority Group have been consulted on the proposals set out in this report. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party is supportive of the proposals. Any comments provided by the Chief Whip of the Minority Party will be reported verbally at the meeting. The business to be conducted will, save for the date, be in accordance with Standing Order 9.21 which is the Standing Order which conducts the business at the Budget Making Council meeting. Consideration by the Council of the Cabinet's recommendation on the amount of the Council Tax charge remains unchanged.
- 3.5 Therefore it is proposed that the November meeting be held as an Ordinary Council meeting, including all of the business usually conducted at an Ordinary Council meeting.
4. **Financial Implications:** None.
5. **Legal Implications**
  - 5.1 The Council may determine the programme of its meetings. It must formally adopt a Budget and Council Tax resolution prior to 11 March each year.
6. **Other Implications:** None.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Reuben Segal, Head of Committee and Governance Services: 7641 3160**

**Email: [rsegal@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:rsegal@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None