



City of Westminster

Full Council

Date:	11 November 2020
Classification:	For General Release
Title:	Programme of Meetings 2021/2022 and Future Budget Setting
Wards Affected:	N/A
Financial Summary:	There are no financial implications
Report of:	Director of Law

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The programme of meetings for 2021/22 has been drafted broadly in accordance with the pattern previously agreed.
- 1.2 The report also sets out proposals to amend when full council in future years receives a speech by the Leader of the Council on council priorities and financial aims and considers annual estimates together with corresponding changes required to the relevant council meeting procedures

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council be recommended to approve the dates of full Council Meetings, as follows: 12 May 2021 (Annual), 23 June 2021, 22 September 2021, 10 November 2021, 19 January 2022, 2 March 2022 (Budget Setting), 18 May 2022 (Annual).
- 2.2 That Full Council agree to revert to considering the budget proposals for each forthcoming fiscal year at an extraordinary meeting in March and agree the associated changes to the council meeting procedure rules as set out in Appendix B.
- 2.3 That the Programme of other formal Meetings set out in Appendix A be approved.

3. Background Information

Programme of Meetings 2021/22

- 3.1 The General Purposes Urgency Sub-Committee has previously agreed that the programme of meetings be prepared having regard to the following basic principles:

Mondays: Cabinet

Tuesdays: Planning

Wednesdays: Council Meetings/Group Meetings/other Committee meetings

Thursdays: Licensing meetings daytime. Where other meetings cannot be programmed to avoid a clash these have been placed on Thursdays. The Member Development Programmes have generally been placed on Thursdays.

This strategy allows for a more consistent approach and has in recent years seemed to work well.

- 3.2 The programme reflects 5 meetings for each of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees. Normally 6 of these meetings are programmed, however it is recommended it be reduced for this municipal year to 5 due to the Local Elections scheduled for 5 May 2022. The Committees are empowered by Standing Orders to arrange further meetings or to otherwise amend the programme if required by the needs of their work programme. Three meetings of the Licensing Committee and two meetings of Planning and City Development Committee have been programmed.
- 3.3 The programme includes provision for the Discretionary Housing Panel and the Rating Advisory Panel to meet on a programme basis. The programmes have been developed having regard to the expected weight of business in each case.
- 3.4 Dates for the Member Development Programme cover 8 sessions per annum to enable Members to allocate diary space for these.

Future Budget Setting

- 3.5 Cabinet has considered two update reports (13 July and 28 October) on the council's medium-term financial position in order to inform the business and financial planning round for 2021/22. The reports outlined that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the council and the City of Westminster. The papers assessed the current financial impact result of Covid-19 and reviewed other key financial assumptions together with national and local policy issues that the Council need to consider in making its plans for the period.

The reports also set out an approach for the budget process that takes account of these and the requirement to identify savings options that fit within the overall policy and financial framework aligning resources to the Council's key policy objectives set out in the City for All. It was recognised that the current financial and economic conditions are continually changing as well as the government response to this.

- 3.6 Cabinet agreed the budget process approach set out in the reports whereby the budget proposals for 2021/22 and the medium-term financial plan would be developed and scrutinised over the autumn and winter before being presented to full council for determination in March next year.
- 3.7 To facilitate this it was agreed to change the programme of council meetings for 2020/21 so that the extraordinary budget meeting scheduled for the 11 November reverted to an ordinary meeting and that the meeting scheduled for the 3 March 2021 was amended to receive the Leader's Speech and consider budget proposals for the following fiscal year.
- 3.8 The Executive Director for Finance and Resources recommends that full council revert to considering the budget proposals for each forthcoming fiscal year at an extraordinary meeting in March.
- 3.9 If this recommendation is adopted it will be necessary to make minor adjustments to the council meeting procedures, which currently provide for the Leader's Speech, which set out the Council's aims and objectives for the following year, and consideration of budget proposals to be held at an extraordinary meeting in November each year. The proposed changes to the relevant Standing Order are shown as track changes in Appendix B.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Programme of Council Meetings allows the council to take decisions in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 4.2 The programme of Cabinet meetings is included in the programme for illustrative purposes. The Leader of the Council is responsible for approving the programme for these meetings.
- 4.3 The function of calculating the City Council's budget requirement and the City Council's element of the Council Tax, and the function of setting the Council Tax, are the responsibility of the full Council. The formal Council Tax resolution may only be adopted once the relevant information from the precepting authorities has been received. Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that the council has to set its budget before 11 March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set

5. Financial Implications

5.1 No financial implications.

6. Consultation

6.1 The Programme of Meetings has been circulated to the Party Whips and adjustments made where requested. No outstanding issues remain as a result of this consultation.

6.2 The Chairmen of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees and other committees have also been consulted and again no issues are outstanding.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Reuben Segal: 7641 3160

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

APPENDIX A

Council – 12 May 2021, 23 June 2021, 22 September 2021, 10 November 2021, 19 January 2022, 2 March 2022, 18 May 2022

Cabinet – 10 May 2021, 12 July 2021, 20 September 2021, 11 October 2021, 13 December 2021, 31 January 2022, 28 March 2022

Licensing Committee – 7 July 2021, 24 November 2021, 23 March 2022

Planning & City Development Committee – 27 October 2021, 30 March 2022

General Purposes – 15 June 2021, 2 November 2021, 22 February 2022

Scrutiny Commission – 21 June 2021, 22 November 2021, 9 February, 23 March 2022

Adults and Children's Services P&S – 14 June 2021, 27 September 2021, 8 November 2021, 24 January 2022, 21 March 2022

Environment, Highways and Public Protection P&S – 9 June 2021, 6 October 2021, 17 November 2021, 26 January 2022, 17 March 2022,

Housing, Finance and Regeneration P&S – 2 June 2021, 30 September 2021, 24 November 2021, 20 January 2022, 29 March 2022,

Community Services, Business and Planning P&S – 19 July 2020, 7 October 2021, 29 November 2021, 2 February 2022, 31 March 2022

Health & Wellbeing Board – 27 May 2021, 15 July 2021, 7 October 2021, 25 November 2021, 27 January 2022, 31 March 2022

Standards Committee – 1 July 2021, 4 November 2021, 7 April 2022

Audit and Performance – 17 June 2021, 14 July 2021, 29 September 2021, 1 December 2021, 16 February 2022, 13 April 2022

Pension Fund Committee – 24 June 2021, 28 October 2021, 9 December 2021, 10 March 2022

Discretionary Housing Payments Panel – 1 June 2021, 6 July 2021, 14 September 2021, 12 October 2021, 16 November 2021, 11 January 2022, 8 February 2022, 22 March 2022, 26 April 2022

Ratings Panel – 8 June 2021, 13 July 2021, 21 September 2021, 26 October 2021, 7 December 2021, 25 January 2022, 8 March 2022, 19 April 2022

Cabinet CIL Committee – 5 July 2021, 4 October 2021, 7 February 2022, 4 April 2022

Member Development – 3 June 2021, 9 September 2021, 14 October, 18 November 2021, 13 January 2022, 10 February 2022, 24 March 2022, 21 April 2022

9.21. Annual Estimates and the Making of the Council Tax

- (1) The Chief Executive and the City Treasurer shall prepare draft Annual Estimates in consultation with the respective Chief Officers in a form and to a timetable approved by the Leader. The draft estimates and the Chief Officers' reports thereon shall be submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet. The estimates of Cabinet Members and Committees shall be based upon limits of expenditure to be set by the Cabinet after considering the Chief Executive and the City Treasurer's forecasts of Cabinet Members and Committees' requirements.
- (2) The Cabinet shall submit to an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council in ~~November~~ March of each year a report including recommendations in respect of the reception of a Speech by the Leader of the Council on Council priorities and financial aims; estimates of income and expenditure. Other business shall be included on the agenda if in the opinion of the Chief Executive a decision of the Council is required before the next ordinary meeting of the Council. A report shall also be submitted by the Cabinet to Council in March each year setting out for consideration by the Council the Cabinet's recommendation on the amount of the Council Tax charge.
- (3) At the ~~November~~ March meeting of the Council at which the report and recommendations of the Cabinet as to the items in (2) above are being considered, Standing Order 11 (consideration of reports to Council), Standing Order 12(1)(m) (motion to extend sitting), Standing Order 14 (conduct of debate), and Standing Order 19 (termination of meeting) shall be varied so that:
 - (a) the debate on recommendations in respect of the Leader's Speech, and the Budget Proposals be terminated at 9.45pm and the recommendations then immediately put to the vote.
 - (b) the Leader of the Council (or their nominee) in introducing the report of the Cabinet on the Budget Proposals to make a Leader's Speech for up to 20 minutes and then the Leader of the Opposition (or their nominee), in responding to the Leader of the Council's Speech to speak for up to 20 minutes; the Cabinet Member for Finance will then speak for up to 10 minutes with a Member nominated by the Minority Party responding for up to 10 minutes.
 - (c) there be one general debate on the Leader's Speech, and the Budget;
 - (d) at 9.35pm the Leader of the Council to reply to the debate for up to 10 minutes.