

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

09 April 2024

Report of the Interim Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2024/25 AND 2025/26

The programme of meetings for the municipal year 2024/25 is attached for consideration. Management Team, Senior Officers and Cabinet Members have been consulted on the proposed dates. The draft programme for 2025/26 is also attached for consideration. Subject to any amendments identified by Members the programmes will be presented to Annual Council for endorsement.

1.1 Programme of Meetings 2024/25

1.1.1 A programme for the municipal year 2024/25 has been prepared for approval and is attached as **Annex 1**.

1.1.2 There have been a number of changes to the programme agreed in May 2023 and these are set out below:

- Cabinet of 2 July moved to Thursday 4 July 2024 to avoid the annual meeting of the Local Government Association General Assembly.
- Cabinet of 5 November moved to 12 November 2024 so that any recommendations from the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 6 November can be considered in a timely manner;
- Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee of 12 November moved to 19 November 2024 to accommodate the move of Cabinet;
- An additional meeting of Cabinet scheduled for 10 December 2024 so that any recommendations from the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee of 19 November can be considered in a timely manner. This also provides Cabinet with an opportunity to address any other business before the end of the year. It is also worth noting that for the last 2

years there has been a need for an Extraordinary meeting of Cabinet in December so there is a demonstrable requirement for an additional meeting;

- Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee moved from 10 December to 3 December 2024 to accommodate a scheduled additional meeting of Cabinet.

1.1.3 The programme of meetings is set out in a table format and colour coded for easier reference. Dates for Bank Holidays, Elections and other events are also included.

1.1.4 The colour coding highlights significant meetings, such as Annual and Budget Council, when a meeting is to be held in Tonbridge and when a meeting is to be held on a different day than usual.

1.2 Programme of Meetings 2025/26

1.2.1 A draft programme for the municipal year 2025/26 has been prepared for consideration and is attached as **Annex 2**. Members are invited to comment on whether there should be any changes.

1.2.2 For awareness, further consideration is required on the following points and these will be progressed by Democratic Services in liaison with Services and relevant Members:

- Clarification on the budget setting cycle, subject to confirmation of dates for the Kent County Council, Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service Budget meetings. **Provisional Borough Council programme allows for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2025; Cabinet on 11 February 2025 and Council on 18 February 2025 and is subject to change.**
- To provide greater flexibility around other precepting authorities setting their budgets it is proposed that in 2026 the meeting of Budget Council be moved to 24 February.
- Clarification to be sought on the school half term holiday in October 2025 and whether there is a need to move the meeting of Council currently scheduled for 21 October.

1.2.3 There are a number of other changes to the programme for 2025 as detailed below:

- Joint Transportation Board moved from 15 September to 8 September 2025 to reduce the number of meetings scheduled in one week and to alleviate pressure on Services and Members;
- Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee moved from 29 September to 30 September 2025 to create a better distribution of meetings; and

- Cabinet moved from 30 September to 7 October 2025 to create a better distribution of meetings.

1.3 Legal Implications

It is the responsibility of the annual meeting of the Council to approve a programme of meetings for the coming year. However, it is considered sensible to present the programmes to this meeting to allow time for any proposed revisions to be made.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The use of external venues and audio/visual equipment incurs some expenditure arising from room and equipment hire.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 There are a number of factors to be taken into account when preparing a programme of meetings. The aim is to allow Annual Council to approve a schedule which is fixed for the upcoming municipal year, whilst recognising the need to respond to specific and changing circumstances. If a programme was not in place the Borough Council's ability to take decisions in a timely manner could be affected.
- 1.5.2 There is a risk that the implementation of decisions and/or outcomes could be delayed if there wasn't a programme in place and a meeting couldn't be scheduled at short notice, either due to a venue or Members being unavailable.
- 1.5.3 It is much more practical for Members in terms of diary management to have a programme in place for the municipal year. This also ensures that all statutory deadlines in respect of publishing notices of meeting and agendas are met.
- 1.5.4 Members should also note that any risk related to the use of venues and equipment is managed when using Kings Hill as the Health and Safety Officer, the Head of Administration and Property and Head of IT ensure that all appropriate safety checks are undertaken.
- 1.5.5 However, there is a potential health and safety risk when using other venues and there is a requirement for appropriate safety checks and forms to be completed.
- 1.5.6 Members should note that there is a risk to the meeting programme being subject to change during 2024/25 as a consequence of a Parliamentary Election being held.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 That the Programme of Meetings for 2024/25 (as set out in Annex 1) be approved and presented to Annual Council for formal endorsement;
- 1.7.2 That the draft Programme of Meetings for 2025/26 (as set out in Annex 2) be agreed, subject to final approval at Annual Council in May 2024.

Background papers:

Nil

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