

Council Report

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report of Director of Resources

Author: John Armstrong, Democratic Services and Elections Manager

Tel: 07970 516859

Email: john.armstrong@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Joss Bigmore

Tel: 07974 979369

Email: joss.bigmore@guildford.gov.uk

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## Draft Timetable of Council and Committee Meetings for 2021-22

### Recommendation to Council:

That the Council approves the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

### Reason for Recommendation:

To assist with the preparation of individual committee work programmes.

**Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication? No**

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To adopt a timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year.

### 2. Strategic Framework

- 2.1 Adoption of a timetable of meetings will enable key decisions to be programmed that will assist in working towards the delivery of the Council's vision and mission as set out in the revised Corporate Plan.

### 3. Main considerations

- 3.1 A draft timetable of meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year is attached as **Appendix 1** for the Council's consideration. This was also considered and recommended for approval by the Executive at its meeting on 24 November 2020.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Council is required to give public notice of meetings of the Council and its committees. Approval of our timetable of meetings for the next municipal year will enable us to publish the dates of these meetings on the website well in advance.

##### Continuation of meetings held remotely

5.2 Following the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic and the first national lockdown, this Council has been operating remote (or “virtual”) meetings since April 2020 using Microsoft Teams. We have been empowered to do this by virtue of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020<sup>1</sup>.

5.3 Whilst there have been a number of teething difficulties with holding meetings remotely, it is obvious that as well as ensuring that the Council’s business can be discharged lawfully, remote meetings have brought huge benefits in terms of

- greater attendance at meetings by committee members (and non-members) thereby helping councillors to participate and keep up to date with Council business
- Saving of member (and officer) time by obviating the need to make journeys to the Council offices for meetings, thereby reducing congestion and achieving savings on travel expenses

5.4 We anticipate that holding meetings remotely will continue into the New Year and beyond. However, these arrangements are temporary and are due to expire in May 2021. Organisations representing Lawyers in Local Government and Democratic Services Officers have made representations to the Government to seek a permanent change in the law in this regard to give councils maximum flexibility and choice to hold meetings:

- entirely ‘face to face’,
- entirely remotely, or
- in a “hybrid” environment with some councillors attending in the Council Chamber with others attending remotely

5.5 The technology to deliver a hybrid solution is being developed so officers are hopeful that, subject to the change in the law, we can hold “hybrid meetings” as the norm.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 5

**6. Human Resource Implications**

6.1 There are no significant human resource implications arising from this report.

**7. Equality and Diversity Implications**

7.1 There are no significant equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

**8. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

8.1 There are no significant climate change or sustainability implications arising from this report.

**9. Background Papers**

None

**10. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Draft timetable of Council and committee meetings for 2021-22