

Meeting: ANNUAL COUNCIL
Date: 26 MAY 2021

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Author - Jackie Cansick Ext No.2216
Lead Officer – Matt Partridge Ext No. 2456
Contact Officer - Jackie Cansick Ext No. 2216

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider various matters relating to the Member level decision making structure of the Council and the Council's Constitution for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Terms of Reference, as detailed in the appendices to this report; and the size and political composition for the following bodies that form the non-Executive Member level decision making structure of the Council be approved subject to the rules of proportionality where appropriate for 100 Committee places where applicable (relevant Committees are identified thus*) -
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee* (Appendix A) – 14 Members (8 Labour Group, 4 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Community Select Committee* (Appendix B) – 10 Members (6 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee* (Appendix C) – 11 Members (6 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Planning & Development Committee* (Appendix D) – 14 Members (8 Labour Group, 4 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Licensing Committee (Appendix E) – 14 Members (8 Labour Group, 4 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - General Purposes Committee* (Appendix F) – 14 Members (8 Labour Group, 4 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Appointments Committee* (Appendix G) - 8 Members (5 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Standards Committee* (Appendix H) – 8 Members (5 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)

- Audit Committee* (Appendix I) – 10 Members (6 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group) + 1 Co-opted non-elected member
- Statement of Accounts Committee* (Appendix J) – 8 Members (5 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
- Joint Consultative Committee* (Appendix K) – 3 Members (2 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group)

* Indicates where those bodies covered by the rules of proportionality for the purposes of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups), Regulations 1990 – total Committee places being 100

- 2.2 That the membership of the Executive and the individual Portfolios, as set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report, be noted.
- 2.3 That the various Executive bodies appointed by the Leader, detailed in paragraph 4.3 of this report, be noted. The relevant Terms of Reference for each body are shown at Appendix L
- 2.4 That Council approves the dates for Council meetings for the Municipal Year, as shown at paragraph 4.6 and notes the calendar of formal meetings shown at Appendix M
- 2.5 That the recommended amendments to Standing Orders concerning the Council Tax and Budget setting Council meeting, as referred to in paragraphs 4.10 – 4.11 of this report, be approved.
- 2.6 That the Constitution be amended to make reference to the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee and the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Scrutiny Committee as approved by Council on 16 December 2020.
- 2.7 That it be noted that the Regulations that allowed for remote meetings have now expired and that all formal meetings are to revert to being 'in person'.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The appointment and the terms of reference of Scrutiny, Regulatory and Advisory Committees that have no Executive functions are matters to be determined by Council.
- 3.2 Additionally it is for the Council to agree the dates of Council meetings and changes to the Constitution.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

Council's Committees and Panels -Terms of Reference and Composition

- 4.1 The proposed Terms of Reference for each of the bodies to be appointed by Council are set out in Appendices A-K. With the exception of the Licensing

Committee the political composition of those Committees is directed by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

The Executive

- 4.2 The Leader has appointed the following Members to the Executive with the Portfolios detailed –

Mrs Joan Lloyd (Deputy Leader) – Resources
Lloyd Briscoe – Economy, Enterprise and Transport
Rob Broom – Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council
John Gardner – Environment and Regeneration
Richard Henry – Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture
Jackie Hollywell – Communities, Community Safety and Equalities
Jeannette Thomas – Housing, Health and Older People

Appointment of Executive Bodies

- 4.3 The Leader of the Council has agreed to the establishment of the following Committees of the Executive –

Appeals, Grievances and Litigation Committee
Commercial and Investment Working Group
Housing Development and Regeneration Working Group
Stevenage, North Herts., East Herts. and Hertsmere Joint CCTV Committee
Stevenage and East Herts. Joint Executive Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Committee.

- 4.4 The terms of reference for these Committees may be found at Appendix L.
- 4.5 Membership of these bodies is limited to only Members of the Executive. Details of the memberships of these Committees will be set out in the schedule circulated with the Supplementary Agenda.

Dates of Council meetings

- 4.6 To comply with Standing Orders the Council should approve its programme of meetings annually. The approval of dates for Council meetings for the year does not preclude extraordinary or special meetings being called by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor; nor for the date, time or place to be altered in accordance with the Regulations or where a material change of circumstances makes it necessary. The dates proposed for Council are as follows:

- 21 July 2021
- 13 October 2021
- 15 December 2021
- 26 January 2022 (Special Meeting – HRA and Rent Setting)
- 24 February 2022 (Special Meeting – Budget)
- 9 March 2022
- 25 May 2022 (Annual Council)

- 4.7 A provisional calendar of formal meetings is also appended to this report at Appendix M. This calendar will be subject to change and any alterations to dates of meetings, additions and cancellations will be notified to Members. Previous draft versions of the calendar should be discarded.
- 4.8 It should be noted that the draft calendar includes some dates for 'Select Committees' details of which specific meetings will be held on those dates will be notified to Members as we go through the year.
- 4.9 The calendar of formal meetings appears on the Council's website and is regularly updated. Furthermore, following Council appointing to each body Members will be sent 'outlook' calendar invitations to the meetings that are relevant to them.

Standing Orders

- 4.10 It is recommended that appropriate changes be made to Standing Orders in order to take the Council Tax and Budget setting items at a 'Special Meeting' of the Council at the end of February where only those matters will be considered. An Ordinary meeting will then be held in early March.
- 4.11 Additionally, concerning the Council Tax and Budget, for clarification it is recommended that Standing Order 10(d) be amended to read –

'Any amendments to the Budget **Motion** recommended by the Executive must be received by the Constitutional Services Manager no later than 12 Noon on the Friday of the week before the date of the Council Tax/Budget Setting **Special** Council Meeting.

Hertfordshire Growth Board

- 4.12 At its meeting on 16 December 2020 Council agreed the establishment of the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee and the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Scrutiny Committee to manage and oversee the work of the Hertfordshire Growth Board. Details of these Joint Committees will now be included in the Council's Constitution.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Council's Constitution <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-the-council/councillors-and-democracy/17074/>

APPENDICES

- Terms of Reference
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Appendix A)
 - Community Select Committee (Appendix B)
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee (Appendix C)
 - Planning and Development Committee (Appendix D)
 - Licensing Committee (Appendix E)
 - General Purposes Committee (Appendix F)
 - Appointments Committee (Appendix G)

- Standards Committee (Appendix H)
- Audit Committee (Appendix I)
- Statement of Accounts Committee (Appendix J)
- Joint Consultative Committee (Appendix K)
- Terms of Reference – Executive Bodies (Appendix L)
- Provisional Calendar of Meetings 2021/22 (Appendix M)