

Meeting: ANNUAL COUNCIL
Date: 24 MAY 2023



CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Author – Ian Gourlay Ext No.2703
Lead Officer – Matt Partridge Ext No. 2456
Contact Officers – Luke Fattorusso / Simon Pugh Ext Nos. 2174 / 2331

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 (9 Labour Group, 3 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 (7 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Planning & Development Committee* (Appendix D) – 14 Members (9 Labour Group, 3 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 in the document tabled at the meeting, be noted.
- 2.3 That the various Executive bodies appointed by the Leader, detailed in Paragraph 4.3 of the report and the relevant Terms of Reference for each body set out in Appendix L to the report, be noted.
- 2.4 That Council approves the dates for Council meetings for the Municipal Year 2023/24, as shown at Paragraph 4.6 of the report, and notes the calendar of formal meetings shown at Appendix M to the report.
- 2.5 That the recommended amendment to Standing Order 10(a) – Council Tax and Budget Setting Debate, as set out in Paragraph 4.10 of the report, be approved.

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 will be appointing Members to the Executive (with Portfolios). This information will be tabled at the Annual Council meeting.

Appointment of Executive Bodies

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

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

- 4.4 The terms of reference for these Committees / Working Groups 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:
- Wednesday, 19 July 2023
 - Wednesday, 18 October 2023
 - Wednesday, 20 December 2023
 - Wednesday, 24 January 2024 (Regular meeting, to include HRA and Rent Setting)
 - Wednesday, 21 February 2024 (Special Meeting – Budget only)
 - Wednesday, 22 May 2024 (Annual Council)

* Please note that the 24 January 2024 meeting will now be a regular Council Meeting, replacing the one that would have previously been held in March.

- 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 **Standing Order 10 – Budget and Council Tax Setting Debate** – the following revision to Standing Order 10(a), concerning the budget speech, to make it explicit that the combined speaking time for the Leader and/or his/her nominee (most likely the Portfolio Holder for Resources) will not be time-limited:

“The Mayor will call upon the Leader of the Council (or her/his nominee) to move the formal motion setting the Council Tax and setting the budget. ~~in a speech that~~
The combined speaking time for the Leader’s (and/or his/her nominee’s) speech is not time-limited.”

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council’s Constitution – December 2022.

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 2023/24 (Appendix M)