

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REPORT TO AND DECISION OF FULL COUNCIL ON 9 MARCH 2022

**SUBJECT:** Calendar of Meetings for 2022/2023

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Solomon Agutu – Interim Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
**DATE:** February 2022  
**EXTN:** 37610  
**SERVICE AREA:** Law & Governance

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.1, the Council needs to agree a programme of dates for Council Meetings prior to the commencement of the new Municipal Year.

This report therefore proposes the arrangements for the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 and has been prepared in consultation with relevant Lead Officers.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

- (1) The Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 be approved; and
- (2) It be noted that the dates proposed can be subject to change by the Council or the Chair of the Council or relevant Committee Chair if there is an exceptional need for the date to be changed.

### **1. BACKGROUND:**

Each year a Calendar of Meetings for the new Municipal Year is prepared in advance for approval and so that meetings can be published well in advance of the commencement of that Municipal Year.

### **2. FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

1.1 The proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 is attached at Appendix A and has been prepared having regard to the key statutory requirements set out in Section 6 below and on the following basis:

- In accordance with Full Council resolutions in adopting the new Committee structure, this is based on the Committee structure and on the cycle of meetings agreed at that time.
- At the request of Group Leaders, minimising meetings as much as possible in the Party Conference weeks of September and October 2022.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoiding Full Council meetings in <i>major</i> school holidays and noting that the date earmarked for the Special Council Meeting in March 2023 to consider the Budget may be still be subject to change based on the yet to be agreed Budget meetings of the Sussex Police &amp; Crime Commissioner and West Sussex County Council.</li> <li>• The desire to try to avoid holding meetings as much as possible in August and avoiding meetings over the Christmas period.</li> <li>• The Start times for meetings will be 6.00pm, except in exceptional circumstances.</li> </ul> <p>1.2 To comply with the Constitution in setting Committee meetings and Full Council meeting dates with the approval of Full Council. Approving a calendar of meetings at this time allows these dates to be published, and other arrangements to be put in hand well in advance.</p> <p>1.3 If the Calendar is agreed, the dates proposed can be subject to change by the Council or the relevant Committee Chair if the need arises. Special meetings can also be arranged where required.</p>		
<p><b>3. OPTIONS:</b></p> <p>To not approve the Calendar of Committee Meetings for 2022/23.</p>		
<p><b>4. CONSULTATION:</b></p>		
Has consultation been undertaken with:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Relevant Town/Parish Council		<b>X</b>
Relevant District Ward Councillors		<b>X</b>
Other groups/persons (please specify) - Group Leaders and relevant Lead Officers of the Council	<b>X</b>	
<b>5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Financial	<b>X</b>	
Legal	<b>X</b>	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		<b>X</b>
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act	<b>X</b>	
Sustainability		<b>X</b>
Asset Management/Property/Land		<b>X</b>
Technology		<b>X</b>
Other (please explain)		

## **6. IMPLICATIONS:**

The Council Municipal year runs from the date of the Annual Council meeting in May to the next Annual Council meeting in May. Under section 124, of the Local Government Act 2003, the Financial Year is a period of 12 months from any April, i.e. from 1 April to 31 March.

**Council Tax and Budget setting** - Section 30 of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Council, as the billing authority, to set the Council Tax for all property bands. Any amount must be set before 11 March in the financial year preceding that for which it is set but is not invalid merely because it is set on or after that date. Section 30(7) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides in summary that in the absence of a precept formally issued by a major precepting Authority (WSSC, PCC) and notified in accordance with s.40(2), the billing authorities cannot formally agree to set their council tax before 1 March. The timing also needs to take into account the need to give at least 28 days' notice to Council tax payers before the new Council tax bands take effect

**Notice of Rent Increase** - The Council is required, by Section 103 of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to its secure tenancies; Section 111A of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of its introductory tenancies and the Council's agreement with its tenants, to notify tenants of variations of rent and other charges, by service of a notice of variation, at least 28 days before the variation takes effect. Decisions on rent increase therefore need to be taken at least 28 days before the beginning of April [ie in February].

**Housing Revenue Account Statement**– Section 76(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council during the months of January and February immediately preceding the relevant year to prepare a Housing Revenue Account Statement.

**The Localism Act 2011**, Section 38(1) requires that local authorities prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement. This statement must be prepared for each financial year and must be approved by Full Council ready to be published by the beginning of the Financial Year in April of each year.

Under the **Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015** [as amended by the Accounts & Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021], require that Draft Accounts must be completed by the Council for submission for external audit by 31 May (formerly by 30 June) and Final Accounts must be audited and agreed by 31 July (formerly 30 September). Government has now extended the publication date as proposed to 30 September due to Covid-19 for the financial years 20/21 and 21/22. Information on new audit regulations is expected imminently for 2022/23.

**Public Inspection of accounts.** The Council is required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021, to present its Statement of Accounts (and associated documents) for public inspection for a period of 30 days.

The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations require local authorities to determine annual borrowing limits and have regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, and the Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Guidance, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, when considering borrowing and investment strategies, determining or changing borrowing limits or prudential indicators.

Legislation (Crime and Disorder Act) requires that the performance of local community safety partnerships is scrutinised at **least annually**, and that this is led by the relevant local authority via its **Crime and Disorder Committee**. The Council has designated the Housing & Wellbeing Committee to serve as the Crime and Disorder Committee in undertaking this scrutiny function.

Regard has also to be had to key statutory plans and policies which may be expiring during the year and for which each committee has to take into account when deciding its work programme.

Under the **Equality Act 2010** the Council is required to have regard to the Public Sector Equality duty. In this regard it is proposed that meetings will normally not be set during school holidays to allow those with caring responsibilities to discharge those duties. Further while the expectation is that meetings will normally start at 6.00 pm, Committees are given the flexibility to agree different start times to accommodate any equality implications specific to Members of the Committee and consistent with public participation

#### **7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

To put into place a programme of dates for Council Meetings and all key Committees so that these can be published well in advance of the new Council year.

#### **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None