

COUNCIL:

25 JUNE 2020

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES
AND MONITORING OFFICER**

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF REMOTE MEETINGS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

Reason for this report

1. To agree the programme of remote Council meetings to 30 September 2020, and note the proposed programme of Cabinet and Committees for that period with further consultation to be undertaken to finalise the details of some committees.

Background

2. The Annual Council meeting is required to approve a programme of ordinary meetings of Council, and a provisional programme of meetings for Council Committees (Council Meeting Procedure Rules, Rule 2(b)(xvii) and (xviii)).
3. At the last Council meeting (on 21st May 2020), the Council received a report on Governance Arrangements During the COVID-19 Response Period. This report noted that the Local Authorities (Coronavirus)(Meetings)(Wales) Regulations 2020 had removed the requirement for the 2020 Annual Meeting of a principal council to be held in March, April or May 2020, and allowed the Annual Meeting to be held on any date in 2020 decided by the Proper Officer. (The date for the 2020 Annual Meeting to be kept under review and set, in consultation with the Lord Mayor and political group leaders, in due course).
4. The Governance report to the last Council meeting also noted that arrangements were being made to develop a programme of remote meetings in order to progress essential, time critical and or Covid-19 related Council business.

Issues

5. Attached at Appendix A is the Proposed Programme of Remote Meetings until 30 September 2020.
6. These meetings will be scheduled in electronic calendars as provisional. If there is no essential business to undertake, and following consultation with the Chairperson, the meeting may be cancelled.
7. Further meetings may be added should unplanned essential matters arise which require a formal decision to be taken by a Committee/Sub-Committee or Panel. Consultation with the Chairperson of the relevant committee will be undertaken to confirm the specific dates and timings of any additional essential meetings.

8. It should be noted that setting up and running remote formal decision making meetings has a significant resource implication for Democratic and IT services. This is because of the time taken to develop and test the processes and procedures essential to enhance the effectiveness of remote meetings, co-ordinate and maintain attendance, ensuring all participants are able to engage in the decision making process in a remote meeting and recording meetings for public transmission.

Legal Implications

9. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, section 6, requires the Council to have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers on the timing of Council and Committee meetings. In summary, the guidance states that:
- Work and other commitments make setting a programme of meetings that suits all Members difficult;
 - Welsh Government does not wish to prescribe the number/timings of meetings;
 - It is important that Authorities proactively review their meeting arrangements; and
 - the Council must survey its Members in respect of times and intervals in which meetings of the local authority are held at least once a term and preferably shortly after the new council is elected. (Members will recall that a survey of Members was undertaken in May 2017).
10. As noted in the body of the report, the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 make temporary changes to the rules governing local authority meetings during the COVID-19 response period. The Regulations allow the Annual Council meeting to be deferred and held on any date in 2020 set by the Proper Officer of the Council. The Regulations also relax the timescale for any other local authority meetings which would ordinarily need to be held by a certain date before 1st May 2021, and allow such meetings to be held on any day and time before 1st May 2021, as determined by the Council.
11. Other relevant legal provisions are set out in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

12. Whilst, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the statutory deadline for approving the final statement of accounts has been extended to 30 November 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The Council is recommended to:
- (1) Approve the Proposed Programme of Remote Meetings until 30 September 2020 at Appendix A:
 - (2) Note the dates of the scheduled Cabinet meetings

- (3) Delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Legal Services, in consultation with Chairs of Committees and relevant officers, to make any minor alterations to the Programme of Remote Meetings to address any essential decisions required to be made during this period; and

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

11 June 2020

The following Appendices are attached:

Appendix A Proposed Programme of Remote Meetings until 30 September 2020

Background papers

Council report 'Governance Arrangements During COVID-19 Response Period', 21st May 2020

[Welsh Government Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011, June 2012, Chapter 1:](#)