
Agenda Item: Committee Calendar 2026-27

Meeting Date: Monday, 2 February 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

Background

It is the Council's established practice to agree a draft calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year at this meeting, enabling publication in advance and supporting continuity in the democratic process.

The most recent substantive review of the Committee meeting calendar took place in July 2019, when consideration was given to reducing the number of Committee cycles from six to four (Minute No. 373, 29 July 2019 refers). At that time, Members concluded that such a reduction could hinder the democratic process, particularly in relation to urgent matters, due to the extended intervals between meetings but agreed it could be explored further in the future.

Current Situation

In 2025/26, the Council agreed to establish an additional Council Committee to support the advancement of its climate and carbon-neutrality objectives taking the number of standing Committees to six (this Committee meets quarterly).

The administration of these meetings, within statutory timescales and governance requirements, alongside Full Council, Working Parties, Advisory Committees, and task and finish groups, is placing increasing pressure on capacity. This is impacting the progression of work arising from these Committees in addition to daily operations and is resulting in a time commitment for Councillors who give their time voluntarily. This pressure is particularly evident during the first two meeting cycles held annually between May and July where there is no gap between meetings for two months.

The attached draft calendar for 2026/27 proposes reducing the number of annual Council Committee cycles from six to five. A special Council meeting would be required before the end of June to complete Annual Governance statements. These changes would help to alleviate these pressures while maintaining Full Council meetings at approximately two-monthly intervals, except for August, when meetings have not historically been held. The Council also reviewed and re-adopted a Scheme of Delegation for all Committees in 2025-26 which will hopefully expedite Council business.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – the reduction in the number of council meetings is not anticipated to have a significant adverse equality impact providing it is published in advance and delegations or options to hold urgent meetings are in place.
- b) Biodiversity – there are no foreseen impacts.
- c) Crime & Disorder – there are no foreseen impacts.
- d) Environment – there are no foreseen impacts.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Potential risks include delays to urgent decision-making, reduced democratic oversight, increased agenda length, and perceived impacts on transparency or compliance with statutory timescales. These risks can be effectively mitigated through delegated authority arrangements, the ability to convene additional meetings where necessary, forward planning of business, and maintaining transparent communication with Members and the public.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Reducing the number of council meetings can deliver positive social value by supporting Member and staff wellbeing, improving work-life balance, and making participation more accessible for those with other commitments. More streamlined meetings can also improve efficiency and free up time to focus on community engagement and service delivery, while maintaining transparency and public participation.

Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications although a reduced number of meetings will lower additional staff resource time.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider the proposal to reduce the number of annual Council Committee cycles from six to five.