

Committee: **Annual Council**
 Date of Meeting: **25th May, 2023**
 Report Subject: **Annual Cycle of Meetings 2023/24**
 Portfolio Holder: **Councillor S. Thomas, Leader of the Council/Cabinet Member Corporate Overview & Performance**
 Report Submitted by: **Elizabeth Thomas, Scrutiny and Democratic Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
							25.05.23	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Annual Cycle of Committee meetings for 2023/24 and a decision-making process which, if required, would take place during the proposed August recess.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The report presents the Annual Cycle of Committee meetings for 2023/24 for Members' consideration. As part of the cycle a proposed recess is included which would cover the period 1st - 31st August 2023 inclusive, and the report details a process for decision-making to ensure that urgent matters can be dealt with during the proposed recess period should it be adopted.
 - 2.2 The agreement of the Annual Cycle of formal meetings forms part of the overall governance arrangements for the Council and supports the democratic process.
 - 2.3 The proposed cycle of meetings is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.
 - 2.4 The Annual Cycle of Meeting includes a four-weekly cycle for the Governance and Audit Committee, increased from a six weekly cycle last year.
 - 2.5 Reflecting previous cycle of meetings, efforts to align specific committees to specific days have been made. Also, as in previous years, meetings have not been included within the school holidays.
 - 2.6 Flexibility is to be expected in the implementation of the cycle, including the relevant Chair considering the business to be undertaken and responding accordingly.

3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option One**
That Council:

- (i) Approve the proposed annual cycle of meetings attached at Appendix 1;
- (ii) Approve the following decision-making process to deal with any urgent business during the August recess:
 - a. the Leader and Deputy Leader in conjunction with appropriate Cabinet Members and Officers deal with any urgent items from 1st - 31st August 2023 (i.e. a Special Meeting of the Cabinet would be convened at short notice recognising that the matter was urgent and the call-in procedure would apply). The Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service in conjunction with the Leadership would determine if a matter was urgent; and
 - b. decisions should be limited to urgent matters and recorded on a decision schedule presented to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council. No controversial or sensitive matters should be dealt with during this period.

Option Two

That Council:

- (i) Consider and suggest amendments to the proposed annual cycle of meetings attached at Appendix 1, prior to approval; and
- (ii) Approve the decision-making process for urgent business in the August recess as set out in option one.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

The report supports the Corporate Plan's priority 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place'. It also supports the requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)*

There are no costs related to the establishment of the cycle of meetings.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

There is a risk to organisational reputation and the decision-making process should the cycle of meetings not be approved.

5.3 *Legal*

Guidance is sought and provided by the Monitoring Officer when developing the Annual Cycle of meetings, as necessary.

5.4 *Human Resources*

There are no staffing implications associated with the proposals in the report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

Monitoring of each committee is undertaken by the Performance and Democratic Team and is used as an evidence base for making suggested amendments to future committee cycles.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The Cycle of Meetings, when published, will enable the members of public to be aware of the schedule of meetings, to become involved in the democratic process.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The proposed Annual Cycle of Meetings has been developed in consultation with Elected Members and officers.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Annual Cycle of Meetings supports the decision-making process of the Council to deliver its business.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Cycle of Meetings has been drafted to reflect organisational business with an aim to reduce the need to arrange ad hoc special meetings, unless this is required for urgent business.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The range of meetings in the cycle covers the spectrum of Council business various elements of which are done in collaboration both internally and externally.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The range of meetings in the cycle covers the spectrum of Council business.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

The modernisation of the democratic arrangements enables Members and officers to attend meetings without the need for travelling.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

An IIA is not required for this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The cycle of meetings is regularly monitored by the Performance and Democratic Team.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Annual Cycle of Meetings 2023/24*
- *Appendix 2 – Recess Decision Making Process*