

Committee: **Council**
Date of Meeting: **23rd July, 2020**
Report Subject: **Annual Cycle of Meetings 2020/21**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Gemma Wasley, Service Manager Performance
and Democratic**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	16.07.20						23.07.20	

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Annual Cycle of Committee meetings for 2020/21 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 2020/21 for Members' consideration. As part of the cycle a proposed recess is included which would cover the period 1st - 31st August 2020 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 required.
 - 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 Reflecting the cycle of meetings in 2019/20, efforts to align specific committees to specific days have been made. There will be no more than two committee meetings held in any one day.
 - 2.5 Scrutiny Committee meetings are held on a six weekly basis, as in the previous year.
 - 2.7 The Public Services Board (PSB) Scrutiny Committee is to be scheduled into the cycle of meetings in line with the Public Services Board, which will reflect the requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
 - 2.8 Flexibility is to be expected in the implementation of the cycle, including the relevant Chair considering the business to be undertaken and responding accordingly.

- 2.9 Owing to the nature of the current global pandemic, COVID 19, and social distancing measures it is important to note that the intention is to continue with virtual democratic meetings for the time being.
- 2.10 As further Welsh Government guidance is received regarding the potential lifting of restrictions around of COVID 19 we will look in future to move to offering the option of holding both virtual and physical meetings, supporting the Local Government Bill requirement for remote attendance.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option One**

That Council:

- (i) Approve the proposed annual cycle of meetings attached at Appendix 1; and
- (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 Executive Members and Officers deal with any urgent items from 1st - 31st August 2020 (i.e. a Special Meeting of the Executive would be convened at short notice recognising that the matter was urgent and the call-in procedure would apply). The Managing Director / 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 make 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 does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The report supports the Corporate Plan's priority 'Efficient Council'. It also supports the requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 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 meeting.

- 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, being aware of the scheduled 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 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
There are no negative impacts on the protected characteristics associated with 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 2019/20*