

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 11 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**COUNCIL – 17 OCTOBER 2023**

**PART I – NOT DELEGATED**

**CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025/26  
(ADL&D)**

**1. Description**

- 1.1 The calendar of meetings for 2025/2026 is being considered by the Committee for recommendation to Council on 17 October 2023 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 Comments have been received from Members on the current year's calendar of meetings (2023/24) with regard to the Budget Setting Council meeting on 20 February 2024 and changing the date to the following week as officers understand the date now falls within half term. In addition, Members have asked if the July Planning Committee meeting date (on the 2024/25 calendar of meetings) could be moved to a week later (17 July 2024) instead of 11 July and that this continues for future years (i.e. the planning meeting being held in the third week of July).
- 1.3 In addition, it is proposed that the Audit Committee at the beginning of July now be rescheduled for 2024 to the end of May and that this continues for future years. The background to this is the deadline for the publication of draft accounts is 31 May which allows for a 30 day period of public inspection to commence no later than 1 June 2023.
- 1.4 The Committee are asked to consider the draft calendar of meetings for 2025/26 and the proposed amendments and make their recommendation to Council.

**2. Summary of Main Points**

- 2.1 Following requests by Members the calendar of meetings is now organised two years in advance to enable members to schedule the meetings in their diary.
- 2.2 The proposed calendar of meetings for 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 1. It is proposed that the meetings would follow a similar format this year and for 2024/25 but with the amendments proposed under Paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3.
- 2.3 Decision making meetings (Council/Committees) are required by law to be held in person with all the Members making the decisions having to be present.
- 2.4 It has, though, been possible to hold non-decision-making meetings virtually (Forum meetings and sub-committee meetings). It was agreed at Annual Council in May 2023 that virtual/remote sub-committee meetings would be livestreamed and is included in the Council's livestreaming protocol agreed by P&R Committee in June 2023. Since May 2023 all public meetings held at the Council offices have been livestreamed.
- 2.5 Licensing sub-committee hearings could be held as virtual, hybrid or face to face meetings as the Licensing Act allows for this.
- 2.6 The 2025/26 calendar proposes to include the following meetings:
  - Full Council and Annual Council – in 2025/26 Full Council meetings to be scheduled for July, October, December and February. Annual Council meeting

in May 2026 to be scheduled for 19 May 2026 (the 2025 meeting is already scheduled for 20 May).

- Policy and Resources Committee – to schedule seven meetings with the meetings organised in advance of the two Service Committee meetings. This will ensure that all policy and budget decisions are agreed first allowing the Service Committees to then agree detail and implementation. Details of the Policy and Resources and Audit Committee meetings to be sent to Watford BC to ensure they don't clash with their Finance/Audit meetings.
- Two Service Committees – General Public Services and Economic Development and Climate Change, Leisure and Community Committees – to schedule four meetings to be held in July, October, January and March.
- Planning Committee – 12 meetings to be scheduled (one each month). All Councillors appointed to the Committee, newly appointed Councillors and named substitute Councillors are required to undertake mandatory training (as set out in the Terms of Reference of the Committee) before the first meeting in the Local Government Year.
- Licensing and Regulatory Services Committees – propose that the meetings continue to be held on the same evening and have the same Chair of each Committee and the same membership. All Councillors appointed to the Committees, newly appointed Councillors and any Member who acts as a substitute on the Regulatory Services Committee will be required to undertake mandatory training before the first meeting in the Local Government Year. No substitutes can be appointed to the Licensing Committee or onto a sub-committee hearing under the Licensing Act 2003.
- Local Area Forums and Environmental Forum – these meetings to be held virtually, as they are non-decision-making bodies.
- Audit Committee – the sign-off of the draft Statement of Accounts has reverted back to the end of May therefore the scheduling of the meetings to be the end of May, end of July, end of September, beginning of December and end of March.
- Council Tax Setting Committee – to schedule a meeting after the Full Council meeting (February 2026) but with previous meetings the Council Tax has been set by Full Council without the need for the meeting. The setting of the Council Tax is dependent on the HCC/Police Authority setting precepts by that date.
- Local Strategic Partnership Board – the LSP Board meets co-jointly with the Community Safety Board. The LSP Board meeting dates will be included in the calendar of meetings following consultation with the Chair of the Boards and the Head of Community Partnerships. The LSP Board meetings are public meetings and consideration is being given as to whether these meetings are to be livestreamed.
- Seniors' Forum – currently looking at scheduling three meetings in the calendar although the Champion is organising/holding around 6 events/meetings a year. The meetings are held as face-to-face at a local school in the District and the events are held in various places around the District.
- Licensing/Regulatory Services Sub-Committees – are organised if an objection is received to an application for a new or variation of a premises licence or club

licence, objection to a Temporary Event notice or a taxi licence. In addition, a request can be received to ask the Council to review a licence.

- Sub-committee meetings (Equalities, Local Plan and Constitution) are non-decision-making meetings. Meeting dates will not be included in the calendar as the dates are set up on an ad-hoc basis.
- Community Safety Co-ordinating meetings and Aquadrome Forum meetings are not public meetings therefore will not be included on the calendar of meeting.

2.7 Members have requested that Officers look to provide the mandatory training dates for Planning, Licensing and Regulatory Services as part of the calendar of meetings. This year dates were provided to Members in February/March. At this time, it is not possible to schedule these dates without knowing how the training is to be delivered. For 2023 external consultants provided the planning and code of conduct training and the licensing and regulatory services training was provided by Counsel.

### **3. Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

3.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy. The relevant policy forms part of the change of Council's Governance to Committee arrangements agreed by Full Council on 24 April 2014. Minute CL81/13 and the Council Constitution refers.

### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 We have a budget of £750 for booking venues for Local Area Forum meetings.

4.2 There is currently an additional cost to livestream the Sub-Committee meetings of around £400 per meeting. Officers are working on having systems in place so that this can be undertaken by the Committee Team although it would require two officers attending any virtual livestreaming meetings.

### **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 To accord with the requirements of the Council's Constitution (Council Procedure Rule 30 refers).

5.2 There is no legal requirement to livestream meetings as long as public access is provided.

### **6. Environmental Implications**

6.1 Holding more virtual meetings not only increases attendance at the meetings and enables more people to take part in the democratic process but it contributes to achieving the objectives in our Climate Change Strategy by reducing travel to meetings and not having the costs associated with holding a physical meeting (staff resources, heating, lighting etc.).

### **7. Community Safety, Public Health**

7.1 None specific.

### **8. Staffing Implications**

8.1 All the meetings are being managed by the Committee team.

## 9. Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website

9.1 All the meetings are included on the Council website.

9.2 Once the Calendar is agreed it will be communicated to all Councillors, Managers and the Customer Services Centre and published on the Council website.

## 10. Equal Opportunities Implications

### 10.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No – having more virtual meetings provides greater access to our meetings

## 11. Risk and Health & Safety Implications

11.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Committee service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Members not available to attend the meetings	The meeting would not be quorate	Provide sufficient notice of the meeting dates	Treat	1
Members and members of the public not able to access the virtual meeting	The meeting would not be quorate and Members and the public would be unable to participate in	Provide the technology and support to enable Members to participate remotely in meetings and provide	Treat	2

	the meeting	information and details to members of the public to be able to participate		
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11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

<b>Very Likely</b> ----- <b>Likelihood</b> ----- ▶ <b>Remote</b>	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12
	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8
	<b>Low</b> 1	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Low</b> 4
	<b>Impact</b>			
	<b>Low</b> -----▶ <b>Unacceptable</b>			

**Impact Score**

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

**Likelihood Score**

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

11.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

**12. Recommendation**

12.1 The Committee are asked to recommend to Council:

- 12.1.1 That the attached draft Calendar of Meetings for 2025/26 be agreed with Members able to comment on the dates before ratification by Council on 17 October.
- 12.1.2 That the proposed changes in the scheduling of the meetings as detailed in Paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 be agreed.

Report prepared by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

**Data Quality**

Data sources: P&R Committee report September 2021

Data checked by: Stephen Rix, Associate Director Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)

Data rating: Tick

<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	*

**Background Papers - none**

**APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Calendar of meetings 2025/26 – to be circulated after meeting to CMT to comment on before circulation to Cabinet members
- Appendix 2 – Amended calendar of meetings 2023/24
- Appendix 3 – Amended calendar of meetings 2024/25