

19 December 2023

Report of	Head of Governance	Author	Richard Clifford ☎ 507832
Title	Calendar of meetings 2024-25		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report invites Cabinet to approve a calendar of meetings for the 2024-2025. municipal year.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the draft Calendar of Meetings for the next municipal year, from May 2024 to April 2025.

2.2 To delegate authority to cancel meetings to the Chair of the relevant Committee/Panel in conjunction with the Head of Governance.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 The Calendar of Meetings needs to be determined so that decisions for the year can be timetabled into the respective work programmes and the Forward Plan.

3.2 Advance notice of the Calendar of Meetings needs to be made available to Councillors and to external organisations, parish councils and other bodies with which the Council works in partnership, and to those members of the public who may wish to attend meetings of the Council and make representations.

3.3 Rooms will also need to be reserved as soon as possible so that room bookings can be made for private functions by private individuals, external organisations and internal Council groups.

3.4 A formal arrangement needs to be in place for the cancellation of meetings that no longer need to be held.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 This proposal has been largely devised based on the current meeting structure and frequency. It would be possible to devise alternative proposals using different criteria.

5. Background Information

5.1 A draft calendar of meetings for 2024-25 is attached at Appendix A. This is largely based on the current meeting structure, frequency and pattern of meetings, with a some exceptions, which are set out below:-

- The Cabinet meetings in October and November have been moved back so that there is a better spread of Cabinet meetings through the autumn.
- An additional Cabinet meeting is suggested for April 2025, to allow for continuation of Council business up until the election in May 2025.
- An additional Governance and Audit meeting has been scheduled, in view of the workload of the Committee in recent years which has led to the scheduling of additional meetings.
- Crime and Disorder Committee has been scheduled later, in March rather than September so that the results of the Safer Community Partnership Strategic Assessment are available before the meeting.
- An additional Loyal Plan Committee meeting is also scheduled but depending on the flow of business it is anticipated it may be possible to cancel the meeting in February 2025.

5.2 The following criteria have been used in preparing the draft calendar:-

- The Municipal Year to begin with the Annual Meeting on 22 May 2024, following the city council elections on 2 May 2024.
- Full Council meetings not to be held during school holidays, apart from the Annual Meeting.
- Political group meetings have been scheduled to occur in advance of meetings of Council and Cabinet
- No meetings of Council, Cabinet or Scrutiny Panel during the party-political conference season in late September/early October.

5.2 The Calendar of Meetings 2024-25 comprises:-

- Council – the Annual Meeting plus five Council meetings. Council meetings are scheduled for Wednesdays, except for the December meeting, which is scheduled for a Thursday to avoid the difficulties caused by the clash with late night shopping that would ensue if the meeting were held on Wednesday. This includes a Special Council meeting in early September in case there is the need to appoint Honorary Alderman in the wake of the elections in May 2024.
- Cabinet – eight meetings on a Wednesday.
- Environment and Sustainability Panel - six meetings, mainly on a Thursday
- Governance and Audit Committee – eight meetings on a Tuesday.
- Local Plan Committee – seven meetings, on a Monday.
- Licensing Committee – six meetings on a Wednesday.

- Planning Committee – 17 meetings on a Thursday.
- Policy Panel – six meetings on a Wednesday.
- Scrutiny Panel – eight meetings on a Tuesday.
- Ten member training sessions between June 2024 and March 2025.
- Occasionally it proves necessary to schedule additional meetings of Committee and Panels at short notice. Six “reserve” dates have been included in the Calendar where meeting rooms will be booked. This will facilitate the scheduling of additional/urgent meetings. These meeting dates will not be used unless needed.
- The following Civic events have also been included for completeness:

Opening of the Oyster Fisheries: 6 September 2024
Oyster Feast: 25 October 2024

6. Financial implications

6.1 In general terms the costs are those associated with the meetings process.

7. Consultation

7.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Executive Management Team and Assistant Directors.

8. Publicity Implications

8.1 The dates of Council meetings will be published on the Council’s website. They are also advertised at the Library and Community Hub and distributed to parish council.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment covering the Council’s decision making and meetings processes has been completed and can be found by on the Council’s website www.colchester.gov.uk following the route: Home/Council and Democracy/Polices, Strategies and Performance/Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessments/Decision Making and Meetings or by clicking on the link below:-

[Decision Making and Meetings EQIA](#)

10. Standard References

10.1 It is considered that there are no direct Strategic Plan references, human rights, health, wellbeing and community safety, health and safety, environmental and sustainability and risk management implications raised by this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft calendar of meetings 2024-2025

Background Papers

None