

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Corporate Performance Panel		
DATE:	4 January 2023		
TITLE:	Council Meeting Arrangements – Findings of the Informal Working Group		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Operational		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Cllr Stuart Dark, Leader		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Lorraine Gore, Chief Executive		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

### **REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE**

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:</b>
To consider the findings of the Council Meeting Arrangements - Informal Working Group
<b>KEY ISSUES:</b>
The arrangements for council meetings have changed during the response to the covid pandemic. The temporary arrangements which allowed wholly virtual meetings during the immediate response to the covid pandemic ended on 7 May 2021. Further covid restrictions were removed by the Government from 24 February 2022 under their plans for living with covid. To ensure Member input into the consideration of council meeting arrangements it was agreed at Corporate Performance Panel on 13 April 2022 to establish an Informal Working Group for evidence gathering and preliminary analysis.
<b>OPTIONS CONSIDERED:</b>
The Informal Working Group met on 6 June 2022 and 4 July 2022. The minutes of these meetings are attached. The Informal Working Group findings are set out in section 2 of the report.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
Corporate Performance Panel to consider the Informal Working Group findings set out in section 2 of the report and make a recommendation to Cabinet.  A report be prepared for Cabinet on 17 January 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to set out the recommendations from Corporate Performance Panel</li> <li>• to set out proposals for additional resources within Democratic Services to ensure the required level of support is available for meetings</li> </ul>
<b>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
To respond to the Motion to Council and the arrangements for council meetings as covid restrictions are removed.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 To ensure Member input into the consideration of council meeting arrangements it was agreed at Corporate Performance Panel on 13 April 2022 to establish an Informal Working Group for evidence gathering and preliminary analysis. The Terms of Reference for the Informal Working Group are attached.

### **2. Findings of the Informal Working Group (IWG)**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings of the IWG held on 6 June and 4 July 2022 are attached.
- 2.2 The IWG considered the timing of the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee and as both these meetings involve the attendance of external bodies, and the volume and complexity of some of the documents under consideration, it was recommended that these meetings should remain during the day as per current arrangements.
- 2.3 The timing of the panel meetings was discussed at length and there were differing views as detailed in the minutes. The IWG asked the Panel Chairs to seek the views of their individual panels and the responses received are also attached. The IWG recommended that the panels should determine their meeting start times. There was no agreement by the IWG on a recommended start time.
- 2.4 Cabinet will continue to determine the start times of their meetings.
- 2.5 The IWG considered the start time for full Council meetings. There was no agreement by the IWG on a recommended start time.
- 2.6 The IWG agreed that the arrangements for live streaming and hybrid meeting arrangements should continue. Officer presentations and audio quality to be kept under review.
- 2.7 The staff resourcing implications of recommendations in respect of timing of meetings to be referred to the Chief Executive to prepare proposals to be included in the report to Cabinet.
- 2.8 As agreed at Cabinet on 3 August 2021 the council's constitution has already been amended to retain the Members Inbox as a permanent measure to respond to general Member enquiries to enable them to carry out their roles within their constituencies.