

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Corporate Performance Panel		
DATE:	13 April 2022		
TITLE:	Council Meeting Arrangements - Informal Working Group		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Operational		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Leader – Councillor Dark		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

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

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:**

At the full Council meeting on 23 February 2022 the following Motion was proposed:

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day- to-day business of public authorities.

By continuing to hold Council meeting during “normal working hours”, this Council is preventing prospective and current Members with occupations, child or other caring obligations, that need to be fulfilled within these hours, from participating effectively in the decision-making process.

To avoid discrimination against those whose daily lives embrace such characteristics and to ensure Part2 Article 2 Paragraph 2.04 “Roles and Functions of Councillors” can be met, this Council agrees that all future Council Meetings will be held no earlier than 6.30pm and will not start beyond 7.00pm.

For the avoidance of doubt the word “Council” in this Motion embraces all types of Council Meetings as in Part 2 of the Constitution Article 4, Para.4.02 and all Scrutiny and Overview Committees (Article 6).

Council resolved that the Motion should be referred to Cabinet and relevant Panels for consideration and recommendations back to Council. To inform the content of the report to Cabinet, it is proposed to establish an Informal Working Group to consider the above Motion and arrangements for council meetings as covid restrictions are removed. This report sets out the arrangements for the Informal Working Group.

#### **KEY ISSUES:**

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 in a living with covid world it is proposed to establish an Informal Working Group for evidence gathering and preliminary analysis.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the informal working group terms of reference to be to evidence gather and provide preliminary analysis of:

- the issues identified in the notice of motion
- the views of the various council panels and committees
- the staffing resource implications
- continuation of the arrangements for live streaming
- continuation of the arrangements for hybrid meeting arrangements

- capturing the environmental benefits of hybrid meetings
- continuation of the interim member enquiries email arrangements

2. The Informal Working Group to comprise of five Members and be supported by the Chief Executive.

3. The Informal Working Group to hold their first meeting as soon as possible, elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, agree the required actions to fulfil the group's Terms of Reference and decide on the ongoing regularity of future meetings of the group.

4. Once the Terms of Reference are complete, decide on final conclusions and findings to be included within the report back to the Corporate Performance Panel, Cabinet and Council meetings.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To respond to the Motion to Council and the arrangements for council meetings as covid restrictions are removed.