

Item: 13

Special General Meeting of the Council: 30 June 2020.

Governance Arrangements.

Report by Chief Executive.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the continued governance arrangements to support decision making of the Council.

2. Recommendations

The Council is invited to note:

2.1.

That, at the General Meeting held on 23 March 2020, the Council agreed temporary amendments to the Standing Orders in order to facilitate efficient and timely decision making in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

2.2.

That, as a result of the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic, most of the Council's formal service committee and sub-committee meetings have not been held since these special governance arrangements were agreed.

2.3.

That important and routine items, which are not urgent, have therefore been referred for consideration by Council.

2.4.

The proposal that the normal committee cycle of meetings resume after the summer recess, with the continuation of remote/virtual attendance at least for the first cycle.

2.5.

That a Special General Meeting of the Council has been scheduled for 13 August 2020 to consider any urgent items of business.

It is recommended:

2.6.

That the Chief Executive develops a protocol for remote attendance at Council meetings as part of the review of the emergency governance arrangements to be considered at the General Meeting of the Council on 6 October 2020.

3. Background

3.1.

At the General Meeting held on 23 March 2020, the Council agreed temporary amendments to the Standing Orders in order to facilitate efficient and timely decision making in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic emergency.

3.2.

It was agreed that these temporary amendments would be reviewed at the General Meeting of the Council to be held on 6 October 2020.

3.3.

As a result of the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic, most of the Council's formal service committee and sub-committee meetings have not been held since the special governance arrangements were agreed.

3.4.

Whilst the temporary arrangements have enabled the Council to consider urgent business, on some cases at very short notice, it is necessary to ensure that important and routine items, which are not urgent, are considered by the Council in a timely manner.

3.5.

It is therefore timely to consider the resumption of the cycle of council meetings, which will enable these items to be considered by the relevant committees and/or sub-committees as set out in the Scheme of Administration.

4. Proposed Governance Arrangements

4.1.

It is proposed that the cycle of Council meetings, as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report, should resume after the summer recess.

4.2.

Council meetings will, however, continue to be held virtually using Microsoft Teams, and this will be reviewed in line with the Scottish Government's phased easing of lockdown restrictions. The review of these arrangements will be considered, as planned, on 6 October 2020.

4.3.

In order to facilitate the smooth running of the virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams, a protocol for remote attendance is being developed and will be considered as an addition to the Council's Standing Orders when the emergency governance arrangements are reviewed on 6 October 2020. Consideration will also be given to an alternative timetable for the future operation of Committees and briefings etc.

4.4.

In addition, the review will consider longer term solutions and options for remote attendance of some Council meetings which can then be developed further for future consideration.

4.5.

The Chief Executive has agreed the dates for the summer recess to be from 6 July to 7 August 2020 inclusive, and no formal Council meetings will be held during this time. For any urgent items over the summer recess, the Chief Executive holds emergency powers as contained within the current scheme of Delegation to Officers.

4.6.

Following the end of the recess period, the next scheduled General Meeting of the Council is on 6 October 2020. However, notwithstanding there may be urgent business for Council to consider when resuming after recess. Therefore, the Chief Executive has scheduled a Special General Meeting of the Council on 13 August 2020 for the consideration of urgent items and for the homologation of any emergency decisions taken during the recess period.

4.7.

The Chief Executive considers that this additional post-recess Special General Meeting of the Council may be scheduled every year in order to facilitate efficient and timely decision making of the Council.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

There are not anticipated to be any direct financial implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

7. Legal Aspects

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, makes provision for the regulation of meetings of local authorities.

8. Contact Officers

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9. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Diary of Council Meetings – August to December 2020.

Diary of Meetings for August to December 2020

August 2020

Thursday	13	10:30	Special General Meeting of the Council
Wednesday	19	10:30	Planning Committee
Thursday	20	TBC	Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board
Thursday	20	TBC	Licensing Committee
Tuesday	25	10:30	Harbour Authority Sub-committee
Tuesday	25	14:00	Police and Fire Sub-committee
Wednesday	26	11:30	Integration Joint Board Audit Committee (Final Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2020)
Thursday	27	10:00	Pension Fund Sub-committee with Pension Board (Draft Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2020)
Thursday	27	11:00	Monitoring and Audit Committee (Draft Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2020)
Monday	31	13:30	College Management Council Sub-committee

September 2020

Tuesday	1	10:30	Asset Management Sub-committee
Tuesday	1	14:15	Human Resources Sub-committee
Thursday	3	10:30	Investments Sub-committee
Tuesday	8	10:30	Development and Infrastructure Committee
Wednesday	9	10:30	Education, Leisure and Housing Committee
Thursday	10	10:30	Orkney Health and Care Committee
Wednesday	16	10:30	Pension Fund Sub-committee with Pension Board (Final Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2020)
Tuesday	22	10:30	Policy and Resources Committee
Thursday	24	10:30	Monitoring and Audit Committee (Final Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2020)
Wednesday	30	09:30	Integration Joint Board

October 2020

Tuesday	6	10:30	General Meeting of the Council
Wednesday	7	10:30	Planning Committee
Thursday	8	TBC	Licensing Committee
Thursday	8	TBC	Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board
Tuesday	27	10:30	Harbour Authority Sub-committee

November 2020

Monday	2	13:30	College Management Council Sub-committee
Tuesday	3	10:30	Asset Management Sub-committee
Tuesday	3	14:15	Human Resources Sub-committee
Tuesday	10	10:30	Development and Infrastructure Committee
Wednesday	11	10:30	Education, Leisure and Housing Committee
Thursday	12	10:30	Monitoring and Audit Committee
Thursday	12	14:15	Orkney Health and Care Committee
Tuesday	17	14:00	Police and Fire Sub-committee
Wednesday	18	11:30	Integration Joint Board Audit Committee
Tuesday	24	10:30	Policy and Resources Committee
Wednesday	25	10:30	Pension Fund Sub-committee with Pension Board
Thursday	26	10:30	Investments Sub-committee

December 2020

Wednesday	2	10:30	Planning Committee
Thursday	3	TBC	Licensing Committee
Thursday	3	TBC	Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board
Tuesday	8	10:30	General Meeting of the Council
Wednesday	9	09:30	Integration Joint Board