

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 11 June 2020

Council Meetings

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To agree the principles laid out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- 1.2 To delegate power to the Chief Executive to make any changes necessary to the Interim Standing Orders as a result of the implementation of this report, including reinstating verbal deputations once the technology allows.
- 1.3 To consult with elected members on the dates of the Council meetings in July and August and delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lord Provost, to set the most appropriate dates.
- 1.4 To note that meeting procedures were being developed, in consultation with the Lord Provost, and would be issued to all elected members prior to the meeting.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

Contact: Gavin King, Democracy, Governance and Resilience Senior Manager

E-mail: gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 4239

Report

Council Meetings

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report proposes how the Council can hold a remote Council meeting in June 2020 including potential dates for the meeting and a test meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Policy and Sustainability Committee considered a report on 28 May 2020 that highlighted the work undertaken to deliver a remote Council meeting in June 2020. It was agreed that a report would provide further detail on 11 June 2020. It was also agreed that consultation would take place with Group Leaders on any suitable dates for Council meetings, including the test date and any restrictions proposed.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Since the report was considered on 28 May 2020 further testing has been carried out by officers from Strategy and Communications and Digital Services. This testing has confirmed that a Council meeting will be able to be carried out remotely and has also identified the following:
- 4.1.1 The Council has started its transition from use of Skype for Business (Skype) to Microsoft Teams (Teams), with the intention that the former will be phased out. Future technical updates and ICT support will be focused on Teams and for this reason it is preferable that the software is used instead of alternatives.
 - 4.1.2 Microsoft Teams is a reliable platform that has been used successfully by the Council for meetings of this size and has enhanced functionality (such as multiple facilitators, greater number of people on screen) compared to Skype for Business to support more effective management of a large complex meeting;
 - 4.1.3 Meetings will be webcast;

- 4.1.4 Headsets provide a more consistent and reliable sound quality - Headsets have been sourced for all elected members and these will be delivered to them directly. Elected members though are free to use their own headsets;
- 4.1.5 Council laptops should be used – This ensures that the enhanced functionality of Microsoft Teams is available;
- 4.1.6 Training will be provided to elected members on using Microsoft Teams;
- 4.1.7 Procedures on how the Council meeting will work (based on the guidance provided to Policy and Sustainability Committee) and guidance on Microsoft Teams will be issued to participants;
- 4.1.8 A full test involving all elected members would be carried out before the meeting – with a proposed date of 16 June 2020. This test is essential to check individual connection and technology;
- 4.1.9 The date proposed for the Council meeting is 30 June 2020 due to the original date falling on the same day as the rescheduled Policy and Sustainability Committee;
- 4.1.10 Meeting dates in July and August are to be confirmed;
- 4.1.11 The Council meeting will largely be able to operate as normal with except for deputations which will continue as written format only. However, Digital Services and CGI are developing a process to facilitate the participation of external speakers which it is hoped could be operational from July.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If these principles are agreed, then the meetings outlined in this report will be scheduled in the Council diary and training will be rolled out to elected members.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Council meetings can be held remotely within existing budgets.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Council is permitted to hold remote meetings and is committed to doing so while maintaining as much access as possible for the wider public.
- 7.2 Allowing participation from external bodies and community groups in a secure and accessible manner is a key aim of the development of remote meetings.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Policy and Sustainability Committee 28 May 2020 - [Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Arrangements and Remote Council Meetings](#)
- 8.2 [Interim Standing Orders](#)

9. Appendices

None.