

Dorset Council

10 February 2026

Calendar of Meetings 2026 to 2027

For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council, Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

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Statutory Authority: Local Government Act 1972

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Executive summary

1. This report seeks approval for the proposed Calendar of Meetings for Dorset Council for the municipal year 2026 to 2027.
- 1.1 The calendar has been developed to ensure effective governance, compliance with statutory requirements, and the alignment with the Council's decision-making framework.

Recommendation(s)

2. That the calendar of meetings for the period May 2026 to May 2027 be approved.
- 2.1 That, to ensure effective political management, authority be delegated to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make any necessary changes to the calendar, in consultation with the appropriate Chair and Vice-Chair

Reason for the recommendation(s)

3. Dorset Council procedure rules must have in place a programme of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decision-making arrangements.

4. Report

- 4.1 Councillors are asked to consider the calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2026-2027 for formal adoption as attached at appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.2 The calendar has been shared with the Leader of the Council, group leaders and the senior leadership team as part of the consultation process.
- 4.3 As is the normal practice, where possible the calendar follows the pattern set in the previous year in terms of frequency of meetings.
- 4.4 The dates for the 2027-28 budget setting process have been scheduled following consultation with the Interim Section 151 Officer. The scrutiny committees will meet on consecutive days, and this timetable ensures officers have the maximum possible time to prepare the scrutiny papers following receipt of the budget settlement and allows any comments from the scrutiny committees to be fully considered and reported to Cabinet ahead of the budget's adoption by Full Council in February.
- 4.5 During the year, unforeseen diary conflicts, adjustments to the committee structure or the need for additional meetings to consider single-item decisions may occur. It is therefore recommended that Councillors delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Democratic to make necessary changes to the calendar, in consultation with the relevant Chair/Vice-Chair. This approach avoids the need to bring further reports to Full Council and ensures the calendar is still fit for purpose, with effective political oversight and meeting management.
- 4.6 Members are asked to approve the calendar of meetings for 2026-2027 as set out in the appendix.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 No other options have been considered because the adoption of a calendar is essential for the effective operation of the Council's governance framework.

6. Legal considerations

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Dorset Council will apply its Members Allowances Scheme to cover travel expenses incurred when attending meetings.
- 7.2 There may also be incidental costs because of venue bookings, outside of the organisation, which are chargeable. Where other venues have been used the cost of using these venues has been minimised as far as is possible.

8. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

- 8.1 Careful scheduling of the meetings calendar helps to avoid unnecessary meetings and reduces avoidable travel for councillors.
- 8.2 The use of webcasting and remote participation options offers an accessible alternative, enabling individuals to follow proceedings and engage with the Council without the need to travel.

9. **Well-being and health implications**

- 9.1 There are no identified negative health and wellbeing implications arising from the adoption of the calendar of meetings.
- 9.2 The proposed frequency and timing of meetings have been designed to meet operational need whilst avoiding placing undue pressure on members or officers, supporting a healthy work-life balance.
- 9.3 Where possible hybrid attendance options are offered for non-committee participants to reduce travel demands and enhance accessibility.

10. **Other implications**

- 10.1 None

11. **Risk implications**

- 11.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

12. **Equalities**

- 12.1 This report does not have a new strategy, policy or function and therefore does not require an impact equality assessment.
- 12.2 Having a published calendar of meetings ensures that members and other stakeholders are informed well in advance, enabling them to plan effectively and take part fully in the democratic process.

13. **Appendices**

- 13.1 Appendix 1 Calendar of Meetings 2026 - 2027

14. **Background papers**

- 14.1 There are no background papers.

15. **Report sign-off**

- 15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer),

the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member(s).