

Impact on COVID-19 on scrutiny and democratic process

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<p>Darlington</p>	<p>Meetings restarted on 25 June 2020 with the Annual Meeting of the Council. Subsequently, the calendar of meetings agreed by Cabinet in February has been adhered to (with one change to a meeting of the Planning Applications Committee).</p> <p>We held an Ordinary Meeting of the Council in July, with another scheduled for 24 September 2020. We have also held meetings of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet • General Licensing Committee, and General Licensing Sub-Committee; • Planning Applications Committee; • Health and Well Being Board; <p>We have also had a full cycle of Scrutiny Committee meetings (albeit with a reduced Agenda), followed by a Special Meeting of each Scrutiny Committee to examine the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and</p>	<p>Democratic/Scrutiny Officers all have lap-tops to enable remote working/meeting production. Officers received training on Microsoft Teams throughout June.</p> <p>Members have all been offered equipment to enable them to participate in virtual meetings. Training for Members on Microsoft Teams was arranged through Democratic Services and provided by Trustmarque.</p>	<p>Scrutiny Meetings reinstated from 25 June 2020 onwards:</p> <p>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 29 June 2020; 13 July 2020;</p> <p>Adults Scrutiny Committee – 30 June 2020; 14 July 2020; 25 August 2020</p> <p>Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee – 2 July 2020; 15 July 2020; 2 September 2020</p> <p>Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee – 9 July 2020; 16 July 2020;</p> <p>Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee – 9 July 2020; 16 July 2020; 27 August 2020</p>	<p>Initial meeting reduced to Appointment of Chair / Vice Chair; Timings of Meetings; Approval of Minutes; and Work Programme.</p> <p>Subsequent Special Meetings focused on the Council's COVID-19 response, and then subsequent meeting picking back up on the Work Programme.</p> <p>Task and Finish Groups due to restart.</p>

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	we are now mid-way through the second cycle of Ordinary Meetings.			
Durham	<p>Meetings restarted on 11 June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensions Committee • Area Planning and County Planning Committees • General Licensing & Registration Committee • Statutory Licensing Committee • Highways Committee • Audit Committee • Appeals and Complaints <p>No council meeting held yet.</p> <p>Committee Diary: Initially reset for June to July only. Meetings Sept – Dec reset in August. No committee meeting dates set yet for 2021.</p>	<p>Officers all have laptops and Teams was rolled out in January.</p> <p>Members had iPads and meetings have been paperless for some time.</p> <p>Laptops were subsequently circulated to members.</p> <p>Democratic Services have led on training members with support from IT and Scrutiny.</p>	<p>Scrutiny meetings reinstated from 16 June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Management Board • Children & Young People's OSC • Adults Wellbeing & Health OSC • Economy & Enterprise OSC • Environment & Sustainable Communities OSC • Safer & Stronger OSC <p>Six scrutiny committees held since 23 March (out of 30 scheduled).</p>	<p>Work programmes reprioritised by members due to fewer committees held.</p> <p>Slimmed down agendas.</p> <p>Briefings circulated to members by email rather than reports to OSC, where possible.</p> <p>No working groups held.</p>
Gateshead	<p>Meetings started as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Development Committee – 6 May • Regulatory Committee -12 May • Appeals Committee – 10 June 	<p>Officers and Members have iPads. Laptops are being rolled out to officers and those members who have requested them.</p>	<p>Scrutiny meetings held from 7 September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Resources OSC • Care, Health and Wellbeing OSC • Families OSC • Communities and Place OSC 	<p>Slimmed down agendas for OSC meetings in Sept - focused on response to COVID-19 and end of year performance.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet 23 June • Health and Wellbeing Board - 26 June • Licensing Sub Committee – 14 July • Council - 16 July • Audit and Standards Committee - 20 July • Overview and Scrutiny Committees from 7 September <p>Calendar of Meetings – This was agreed by Council in July for the period up to the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021. It was acknowledged that this may be subject to amendment depending on the COVID-19 situation.</p>	<p>Meetings have been paperless for a number of years but paper copies of agendas have been sent to members during the pandemic for ease of reference.</p> <p>Democratic Services have led on training members with regard to the use of Teams with support from IT.</p>	<p>Four scrutiny committees held since 23 March (out of 14 scheduled to be held up to Sept 2020)</p>	<p>Currently reviewing work of OSCs / potential number of meetings going forwards.</p>
Hartlepool	<p>Meetings restarted June 2020.</p> <p>EO Council meeting held on 10 June and programme of Council meetings subsequently agreed by Council for remainder of municipal year to May 2021 (including additional meetings).</p> <p>Full Diary of meetings drafted and agreed in August, for</p>	<p>No previous experience of using Teams.</p> <p>During four week period laptops rolled out to Elected Members and CMT and training of all Elected Members undertaken ready for an EO Council meeting on 10 June.</p> <p>Democratic Services continue to work closely with colleagues in CICT team.</p>	<p>Audit and Governance Committee reinstated from 10 September. Programme of future meetings being developed.</p> <p>Prior to this, last A&G Cttee held on 12 March.</p>	<p>Work Programme to be considered by the Committee on 1 October. Suggested focus on scrutiny of Hartlepool's Covid-19 response and recovery planning.</p>

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	remainder of Municipal year to May 2021.	Positive feedback received from both Elected Members and Senior Officers.		
Newcastle	<p>Meetings restarted on 17 April. The following have now held meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee • Cabinet • City Council • City Futures Board • Climate Change Committee • Constitutional Committee • Corporate Parent Advisory Committee • Licensing Sub-Committee • Planning Committee • Planning Delegated Sub-Committee • Regulatory and Appeals Sub-Committee • Safe Newcastle Board • Voluntary Sector Liaison Group <p>City Council has met twice.</p> <p>The committee diary has not been reset,</p>	<p>Officers have been provided with laptops although some were initially using their own devices until work laptops could be provided. Teams had already been in use across the council for some time but has been used a lot more since lockdown began.</p> <p>Meetings have been paperless for a couple of years and members use their own devices.</p> <p>Members have been provided with technical support from IT and procedural guidance from Democratic Services.</p> <p>At live streamed meetings support is provided by 3 staff: DSO (as usual), DSO (to watch for any issues and to cover for the lead DSO if they have connection issues), IT Officer (to manage the live stream and provide support to members if they have any issues. This level</p>	<p>All scrutiny committee meetings have been re-instated from 11 June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and Scrutiny Committee • Health Scrutiny Committee • Finance and Budget Monitoring Scrutiny Sub-Committee <p>Each committee also held an informal briefing session in May before formal meetings resumed.</p> <p>7 scrutiny committee meetings have been held since 23 March (out of 11 scheduled), plus one meeting to consider call-in of a key delegated decision.</p>	<p>Work programmes have been re-prioritised by members to focus on the impact of COVID-19 and COVID-19 recovery plans.</p> <p>Some items have been rescheduled either to make way for COVID-19 discussions or because there has been a delay in production of reports due to officer redeployment or other activity taking priority.</p> <p>Each committee will usually carry out a detailed review of their WP and priorities for the year in June/July, but this has not taken place due to the focus on COVID-19 related items.</p> <p>A call-in request (made very early in the lockdown) did not proceed to a meeting as we were not 'up and running' with remote meetings at that point. Instead, members received written information and an</p>

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		of support is increased significantly for full City Council meetings.		evidence gathering session will be held in autumn.
North of Tyne CA	Cabinet 2 June 2020 Meetings not held: Cabinet on 24 March 2020. Decisions were taken under urgent decision procedure. Audit and Standards Committee 21 April 2020.		Overview and Scrutiny 30 June 2020	Work programme agreed 30 June 2020
North Tyneside	Meetings restarted on 26 May. Since then Cabinet, Planning, Licensing, Regulation and Review and Audit have met. Full Council is to meet on 24 September. The Committee diary has not been reset. We are proceeding or cancelling on a meeting by meeting basis.	Remote meetings are being held using Microsoft Teams software and streamed live on the Council's YouTube channel using OBS software. Officers have laptops and members have tablets with keyboards. 2 DSOs located in the office service each remote meeting to ensure secure connection. Following a significant investment of time and effort in formulating procedures, providing members with support and rehearsing the process meetings have generally been successful.	Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee (5 Aug & 7 Sept) and its Finance Sub-Committee (14 July & 15 Sept) have met. All other sub-committees are in the process of meeting informally to examine aspects of the Council's COVID-19 Recovery Plan and to formulate a work programme for the remainder of the year.	Routine scrutiny activity such as financial monitoring has been maintained but following a meeting of scrutiny chairs and deputies it has been agreed that the work programme be reset in the context of the Recovery Plan.

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Redcar and Cleveland	<p>Meetings restarted in June 2020 – all remote meetings</p> <p>Have held Cabinet, Council, Regulatory (planning), Employment Health and Safety, and Governance Committees.</p> <p>We agreed a limited first cycle of meetings and added an additional fully cycle of meetings in at the end of July / beginning August.</p> <p>Two full Borough Council meetings have been held and AGM to take place on 24 September.</p> <p>We are now back to our planned meeting schedule running all our meetings remotely.</p>	<p>Recovery from a cyber-attack and moving into remote meetings was a challenge!</p> <p>Members and Officers had Teams rolled out on their devices.</p> <p>Guidance documents developed and rolled out to Members with one to one support offered where needed.</p> <p>Democratic Services have led on developing the solution and training members with some support from IT and Comms.</p> <p>Much more resource intensive than physical meetings.</p>	<p>12 Scrutiny Committee meetings held and 2 Task and Finish Panel meetings.</p> <p>Started with partial cycle of scrutiny meetings held w/c 8 June (2 out of 4 Committees – Adult and Communities and Resources)</p> <p>Two further full cycles of scrutiny meetings held – w/c 27 July and w/c 14 September</p> <p>Reintroduced one Task and Finish Group (2 meetings since August)</p> <p>Now returned to full cycle of scheduled scrutiny meetings.</p> <p>Request for second Task and Finish Panel Group to begin meeting again.</p>	<p>Agendas slimmed down slightly.</p> <p>Daily and then weekly briefings on COVID-19 response and more general meetings.</p> <p>Task and Finish work delayed.</p>
South Tyneside	<p>The only meetings that took place initially were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet • Planning • Licencing • Human Resources 	<p>General positive experience from officers who have worked from home with the use of laptops with softphones and Zoom</p> <p>Whilst there was some Members found it difficult adjust to Zoom meetings, using their iPads,</p>	<p>Scrutiny meetings reinstated from 1 September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSC • People Select Committee • Place Select Committee 	<p>Work programmes reset to reflect the new challenges</p> <p>Slimmed down agendas and running orders</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit • Pension Investment Fund Panel <p>In July our 5 Community Area Forums Started to meet again followed in September by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts Performance Panel • Housing Performance Panel • Children and Adults Safeguarding Board • Education and Skills Panel <p>.. as well as our three scrutiny committees</p> <p>No Council meeting as yet No meeting dates yet beyond October 2020</p>	<p>Strategy and Democracy Officer lead training sessions and now Members are very familiar with the format</p>	<p>Each has had one meeting with further meetings scheduled for October</p>	
Stockton-on Tees	<p>Meetings restarted on the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet 18 June • Council 24 June • Audit and Governance Committee 27 July • General Licensing Committee 8 September • Planning Committee 29 July • Statutory Licensing Sub Committee 26 May 	<p>Officers all have laptops and Teams was rolled out in March.</p> <p>Members have laptops and iPhones.</p> <p>Some meetings have been paperless. A support hub was set up in a Council meeting suite to aide Chairs of Select Committees. Chairs had the option to conduct the meeting in the hub with the</p>	<p>All scrutiny meetings reinstated from the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Scrutiny Committee 23 June • Cleveland Police and Crime Panel 7 July • Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee 21 July • Children and Young People Select Committee 15 July • Crime and Disorder Select Committee 30 July 	<p>The completion of ongoing reviews has been prioritised. All ongoing reviews will incorporate the impact of COVID-19 where relevant.</p> <p>One more review per Select Committee will commence by the end of 2020-21 work programme.</p> <p>Executive Scrutiny Committee requested regular updates on</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Parenting Board 7 August 	<p>assistance of a Democratic Services Officer, a Scrutiny Officer, and an IT technician. All other Committee members, officers, and external speakers remotored into these meetings.</p> <p>Democratic Services and IT have provided support and training to members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People Select Committee 27 July Place Select Committee 20 July <p>15 scrutiny committee meetings held since 23 March (plus one Task & Finish group meeting).</p>	<p>the Council's response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Sunderland	<p>Meetings began on 6 May</p> <p>Cabinet Full Council Area Committees Corporate Parenting Board HR Committee Highways & Planning Port Board Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <p>Full Council diary now in operation. All meetings are being held via Microsoft Teams and streamed live where appropriate on the Council's YouTube page</p>	<p>Officers have new laptops and Teams was rolled out before lockdown and this rolling programme continues.</p> <p>Members use a mix of laptops, iPads and iPhones with varying degrees of functionality.</p> <p>Democratic services and IT support the operation of meeting and their live streaming.</p>	<p>Scrutiny meeting recommenced on 25 June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny Coordinating Committee Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee. <p>All committees have met at least once.</p> <p>Workshops were also held with each committee to develop work programmes via Teams with Member, Officer and External Partner involvement.</p>	<p>Work Programmes are now more focused on COVID-19 risks and recovery.</p> <p>Full work programmes and scrutiny programme for 20/21 municipal year has been agreed.</p> <p>Very much working on the premise of business as usual. Further lockdowns or second wave of COVID-19 could result in potential disruption to scrutiny function.</p>