

GENERAL COMMITTEE INFORMATION

FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Meets 6 times a year usually starting at 7.30pm (except Annual Council).
- Held in the Council Chamber.
- Seats are allocated by name.
- A sound system including an induction loop is available.
- All Members including the Mayor attend Council meetings.
- Certain matters have to be dealt with by Full Council.
- There are clear rules of debate which can be found in the Constitution, Part 4 (Rules of Procedure), section 15.0.
- Meetings are open to the public.

ANNUAL MEETING

- Starts at 6.30pm.
- Usually meets in May around 3 weeks after the election.
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected for the Municipal Year.
- All Committees (except Cabinet) are set up.
- Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs are appointed.
- Council appoints to outside bodies.
- The Mayor advises Council who will be in the Cabinet.

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Usually meet in July, October, December, January (Budget setting) and March.
- The Mayor puts a report to each Ordinary Council meeting.
- Members have the opportunity to question the Mayor about her report.
- Members of the public can submit petitions and speak on the subject of the petition (notice must be given).
- Members of the public can ask questions at Council meetings (notice must be given).
- Members can submit motions and questions but are required to give notice.

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- Arranged for a specific issue should the need arise or if requested by any 5 Councillors.
- A resolution to make someone a Freeman of the Borough must be passed at an Extraordinary Meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEES

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

- Quasi-judicial Committee and usually held in the Council Chamber.
- Committee consists of 9 Members.
- Members must have training before they can sit on the Committee.
- Certain rules around contact with applicants/residents
- Meets about 16 times a year: usually every 3 weeks.
- Meetings usually start at 7.30 pm.

- Briefing sessions usually take place before meetings, starting at 7.00 pm in the Planning Office.
- Other Members of the Council can request to speak at a meeting but should contact the Chair of the Committee or the Committee Team in advance.
- Members of the public can speak at committee:

Speakers must register with the Committee Team by 12 noon on day of meeting.
Each speaker is allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes.
Only one member of the public is permitted to speak against an application and one in support.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Approving or refusing Planning Applications for sites in the Borough.
- Reviewing any outstanding applications.

(1) LICENSING COMMITTEE

(2) LICENSING COMMITTEE (LICENSING ACT 2003)

- Quasi-judicial Committees.
- Councillors are Members of both of the Committees.
- The Licensing Committees comprise 15 Councillors.
- Each Committee meets about 7 times a year.
- Meetings usually start at 7.30 pm.
- They receive reports on topics related to all aspects of licensing.
- Licensing training is mandatory.

The **Licensing Committee** is responsible for:

- Approving licensing policy relating to:
 - Hackney carriages
 - Hackney carriage operators
 - Hackney carriage drivers
 - Private hire operators
- Approval of the Hackney Carriage fare tariff.
- Approval of byelaws relating to Acupuncture, Tattooing, Semi-Permanent Skin-Colouring, Cosmetic Piercing And Electrolysis
- Making Designated Public Places Orders.
- Approval of pavement licensing policy.
- Approval of other policies within Environmental Services.

The **Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003)** is responsible for:

- Recommendation of the Council's Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003 to full Council.
- Recommendation of the Council's Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005 to full Council.
- Approval of the Licensing Act Annual Report.
- Approval of draft responses to Government consultations related to the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.
- Approval and amendments to the Sex Establishment Venue Policy

(3) LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEES

- Sub-Committees comprise 3 Councillors from the Licensing Committee membership.
- The number of meetings varies; meetings take place as required.
- Meetings are usually held during the day but occasionally they may be held in the evening depending on the type of representations received.

There are several types of Licensing Sub-Committees. They are responsible for:

- Determining new and variation applications submitted under the Licensing Act 2003 where representations have been received.
- Conducting reviews of premises' licences and club premises' certificates as requested.
- Gaming machine applications for licensed premises requesting 5 or more machines.
- Conducting reviews of gaming premises as requested.
- Determining new and variation applications submitted under the Gambling Act where representations have been received.
- Consideration of appeals from licensed hackney carriage/private hire drivers when their licence is being revoked by the Council.
- Determining Temporary Event Notices when representations had been received by the Police. These hearings have to be held at short notice.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

- Meets about 4 times a year.
- Meetings usually start at 7.00 pm.
- Deals with quite specialist topics: Training sessions sometimes take place before meetings.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Approving the internal audit strategy.
- Reviewing the annual internal audit report.
- Considering the reports of external inspection agencies.
- Risk management arrangements.
- Anti fraud and corruption policies.
- Approving the annual financial statement and receiving the external auditor's opinion.
- Receiving reports on Freedom of Information Requests.
- Treasury Management.
- Corporate Governance.
- Use of Resources.
- Receiving the Annual Ombudsman's Letter.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- Meetings of the Standards Committee usually start at 5.00 pm and meet as necessary.
- The Localism Act 2011 resulted in a number of changes to the Standards regime which came into effect on 1 July 2012.
- At the Annual Meeting on 23 May 2012 Council established a Standards Committee comprising 5 elected members of the Council. Council agreed that the committee would not be constituted on the lines of proportionality but would comprise one seat for each of the opposition groups and 2 seats for the ruling group. This arrangement was agreed by a unanimous vote.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Mayor, Councillors and any co-opted Members.
- Members' Code of Conduct.
- Considering requests to grant the Freedom of the Borough to an individual and submitting a formal recommendation to an Extraordinary Council meeting.

COUNCIL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE

- Committee consists of 7 Councillors.
- There are 5 scheduled meetings per year.
- Meetings usually start at 7.30 pm.
- Deals with specialist topics.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Council Tax is agreed at Council in January; towards the end of February the Council Functions Committee agrees the final figure which combines the County Council's share and the Police Authority's amount.
- HR Policies.
- Appointment of Proper Officer of the Council.
- Elections – majority of functions are delegated to the Returning Officer. The Committee can approve fees and conditions for supply of extracts from election documents and pilot schemes.

CHIEF OFFICER PAY PANEL

- Determines and reviews the terms and conditions of Chief Officers.
- Meets as and when necessary.

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

- Deals with the appointment of Chief Officers.
- Meets as required.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- Committee consists of 9 councillors.
- Chaired by a majority Group councillor.
- There are 6 scheduled meetings per year;
- Committee meetings are usually held at 7.00 pm.
- Deals with called in key decisions made by Cabinet, Portfolio Holders and Officers; the call-in must be requested by 3 Councillors stating a reason.
- Reviews the Executive's Forward Plan
- Sets a rolling scrutiny work programme
- Follows up progress on the recommendations of previous scrutiny reviews.
- Responsible for the setting up of task groups on specific topics and agreeing the scope.
- Checks progress of Task Groups and tests soundness of recommendations.

BUDGET PANEL

- The Panel consists of 9 Councillors.
- There are 7 scheduled meetings per year.
- The meetings start at 7.00 pm.
- Finance training is occasionally arranged at the start of Budget Panel, covering an area included on the agenda.
- The Panel is usually chaired by an opposition Member.

The Panel:

- Reviews fees and charges, the draft budget and final budget proposals and forwards any comments to Cabinet.
- Reviews the quarterly budget monitor; the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Asset Management and Capital Strategy.
- Undertakes Value for Money studies of selected services.

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

Formerly known as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

- This task group consists of 7 Members (in 2011/12).
- This is a statutory part of the scrutiny function of the Council.
- The task group meets approximately 3 times per year.
- The role of the task group is to scrutinise the work of the local Community Safety Partnership.
- The task group reports its findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OUTSOURCED SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

- This Panel was set up by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in response to a recommendation made by the "Way Ahead for Council Services" Task Group that there should be greater non-executive scrutiny of outsourced contracts.
- The Panel is politically balanced and responsible for scrutinising all outsourced services on a regular basis .

TASK GROUPS

- Set up to review a specific issue
- Any councillor can submit a topic for review. This is done by completing a pro-forma which is put to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider.
- Task Groups comprise 3-5 members. Membership is open to all non-executive councillors who may have a particular interest/ expertise in the topic being reviewed.

NON-DECISION MAKING COMMITTEES

MAJOR PROJECTS BOARD

- The Board consists of 7 Councillors
- Meets approximately 4 times a year.
- Meetings start at 6.30 pm.

The Board:

- Advises the Executive on the Council's procurement strategy.
- Oversees the ongoing development of major projects in the Borough, for example Charter Place redevelopment and Watford Health Campus.

CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY

- Meets as and when necessary in the evening.
- Reviews the Council's Constitution and makes recommendations to Council.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP

- Meets approximately every 6 weeks starting at 6.30 pm.
- Reviews Member training and development.
- Considers recommendations made by the Independent Member Remuneration Panel.
- Members are expected to act as "Training Champions" within their Groups and encourage the take up of training and development opportunities.

PLANNING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

- The Advisory Group comprises 9 Members
- Meetings set up as required.
- Meetings start at 6.00 pm.

The Advisory Group:

- Reviews the Core Strategy and supporting planning documents, prior to the final documents being submitted to Cabinet.

HOUSING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

- Chaired by the Portfolio Holder. Comprises 7 members. All Groups are represented.
- The group meets at least four times a year in the evenings

The Advisory Group:

- Raises the profile of housing and its contribution to the vision for Watford

- Advises Cabinet and/or Council on policies or areas of service development that relate to housing issues
- Identifies briefing and training requirements for councillors both within and beyond the Housing Advisory Group
- Provides a sounding board and key link between Members and officers.

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS FORUM

- Comprises 6 Watford Councillors (politically balanced) and 6 co-opted County Councillors each representing the County Divisions in Watford.
- Meets at the same time as the County Council holds its briefing meetings with Watford Councillors on highways matters

The Forum:

- considers and give views to the County Council on any consultation documents, or policies brought forward by the County Council on Highway Issues that affect Watford Borough Council
- formally responds on behalf of Watford Borough Council at any briefing meeting called by Hertfordshire County Council on Highway Issues
- recommends to Hertfordshire County Council any highway projects for Watford the Forum consider should be adopted by the County Council

JOINT COMMITTEES

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WEST HERTS GOLF CLUB JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

- Committee consists of 8 members: 4 Borough Councillors, 4 members of the Golf Club.
- There is 1 meeting per year, usually held in March.
- Meetings are usually held late afternoon/early evening.

The Committee:

- The Golf Club provides updates on usage, fees etc.
- The Committee discusses issues such as publicity arrangements.