

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 22 February 2018
Subject: Calendar of Council Meetings 2018/19
Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip

Recommending:

(1) That, as attached at Appendix 1, the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2018/19 be adopted.

1. Democratic Services submit the draft Calendar of Council meetings each year to the Cabinet for consideration prior to its approval by the Council. The draft Calendar at Appendix 1 is based upon the current year's calendar, with approximately the same number of meetings. It has been slightly amended in some places but wherever possible:

- (a) Miscellaneous meetings have been scheduled for a Monday evening;
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Tuesday evening;
- (c) Planning (Sub-)Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Wednesday evening; and
- (d) Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Thursday evening.

2. Friday evenings have continued to be kept free of meetings, and any encroachment into August has been kept to a bare minimum due to holidays. However, the Regulatory Committees have always continued to meet throughout August in the past and this practice has been continued. A very small number of meetings (four) have been re-scheduled to avoid clashes with scheduled Member Training sessions.

The Executive

3. Last year, it was proposed to move Council meetings from Tuesday evenings to Thursday evenings. Some of the Council meetings had already moved to a Thursday evening, including the Annual Council meeting in May each year to allow extra time to complete the full appointment process. This change has allowed a minimum of two weeks between Cabinet and Council meetings, ensuring that any reports from the Cabinet to the Council will appear on the main agenda for Members to consider rather than a supplementary agenda.

4. The Cabinet is scheduled to meet 9 times throughout 2018/19. No extra meetings have been arranged so far during 2017/18, but they are an option to assist the Cabinet in meeting its work programme if required.

5. In line with previous years, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has not been included on the Calendar as the advice from Officers is that it meets as and when evaluations for the different sites are received. Therefore, no purpose would be served in scheduling regular quarterly meetings.

6. With the draft Local Plan now at the Regulation 19 stage, and expected to be submitted for the Examination in Public before the end of March, the Local Plan Cabinet Committee has been resurrected for the coming municipal year. Currently, it is scheduled to meet quarterly, but additional meetings can be arranged if required.

Overview & Scrutiny

7. Three years ago, an opportunity was taken to revise the organisation of Overview & Scrutiny for 2015/16. Following the initial meeting in June 2015, to confirm the membership and Chairmen of each Select Committee, there were five Scrutiny cycles – each spread over two months and culminating in a meeting of the full Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It is felt that this arrangement has worked well, and it is proposed to retain it for 2018/19.

Planning

8. The Calendar for 2011/12 changed the frequency of the Area Planning Sub-Committees from a three weekly cycle to a four weekly cycle. It is felt that this change has worked well, with minimal impact upon the relevant Key Performance Indicators, and this arrangement has again been retained for 2018/19.

9. The week of the Annual Council meeting has again been kept free of Planning meetings and this will enable further training to take place. However, Planning meetings have been arranged for the other weeks in May between the Election and the Annual Council meeting, as there would be a detrimental impact upon the Planning Performance Indicators if there was a six or seven week gap between meetings of the Sub-Committees.

Religious Festivals

10. No Area Planning Sub-Committee meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 19 September 2018, as this would clash with the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur. This has necessitated a five week gap between Sub-Committees from August to September, but the usual four week gap has been reinstated for the meeting cycles for the remainder of the municipal year (with the exception of Christmas week). The scheduled dates for Rosh Hashanah of 10/11 September 2018 and for Pesach of 19/20 April 2019 have also been kept clear of all meetings.

Licensing

11. Licensing Sub-Committee meetings have remained on a Tuesday morning, and no evening meetings for the Licensing function have been scheduled. A Premises Review would only be held in the evening if the Chairman of the Licensing Committee felt that it would be in the public interest to do so. Oftentimes, additional meetings of the Sub-Committee are arranged to hear cases concerning Premises (Alcohol) Licences, but these are scheduled as and when required. All members of

the Licensing Committee continue to meet twice a year to consider policy and procedural matters.

12. A legal technicality has arisen in previous years whereby a meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee cannot consider both Alcohol Licences and Taxi Licences. However, it is intended to run two meetings consecutively on the same day with the same membership, and therefore does not impact upon the calendar.

Miscellaneous Committees

13. Both the Youth Council and the Local Highways Panel have not been included in this schedule as it is felt that they are meetings that sit outside the Council. The Youth Council have their own programme, and although the Local Highways Panel involves both the County and District Councils they are not organised by the District Council.

14. Two meetings of the Appointments Panel have been scheduled for the two Thursdays following the Local Elections on 10 and 17 May 2018, prior to the Annual Council on 24 May. Two corresponding meetings have also been scheduled for May 2019.

15. The Summer meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee has been pushed back from the last week of June to the last week of July. This is to enable the Committee to examine the Statutory Statement of Accounts and report back to the Council meeting scheduled for the following evening.

16. A new initiative for 2016/17 was the scheduling of one date per month predominantly for Member Briefings in relation to the development of a new Local Plan. This was to minimise the impact upon the Calendar when Member Briefings were required, and the Planning Policy team could schedule these dates into their Project Plan. With the draft Local Plan now approved at the Regulation 19 stage and due to be submitted for its Examination in Public next month, it is felt that very few, if any, Member Briefings will be required during 2018/19.

17. The Local Councils Liaison Committee has traditionally met three times a year. However, this Committee has reviewed its schedule and resolved to only meet twice a year.

Member Training Sessions

18. A number of Member training sessions have already been booked for 2018/19 and this has led to a small number (five) of clashes with the proposed dates for meetings. In four of these cases, we have changed the date of the meeting to accommodate the Member Training Session; the one other instance is the evening that the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee considers the draft budget in January 2019 and we feel that this should take precedence. The Treasury Management training currently scheduled for the same evening will be re-arranged.

Conclusion

19. The Council is requested to consider the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2018/19, as attached at Appendix 1, and whether any further changes are required. However, it should be noted that the current Calendar is extremely congested and the organisation of any additional meetings should be given very careful consideration.

20. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.