

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-043-2016/17
Date of meeting: 1 December 2016



Portfolio: Governance & Development Management
Subject: Calendar of Council Meetings 2017/18
Responsible Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That, as attached at Appendix 1, the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2017/18 be recommended to the Council for adoption.

Executive Summary:

The Cabinet considers the calendar of meetings each year prior to its final approval by the Council. The calendar has developed over time to meet the changing needs of the authority and, where possible, meetings of a Committee have been standardised on a particular night of the week for consistency. The main changes proposed for the Calendar this year are:

- (i) Maintaining a two week gap between Cabinet and Council meetings to ensure that any reports from Cabinet to the Council are not published on a supplementary agenda;
- (ii) a new committee has been added, meeting twice a year, for the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen, Vice Chairmen & Officers to discuss any issues arising from the Council's Scrutiny meetings; and
- (iii) the Standards Committee has been removed following the Council's decision last year for it to meet only 'as and when' required.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To review the proposed Calendar of Meetings for 2016/17, prior to its final adoption by the Council.

Other Options for Action:

Individual frequencies of meetings could be varied. In practice additional meetings are added as and when issues dictate. Similarly, meetings can be cancelled if there is a lack of business.

Report:

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 predominantly 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.

The Executive

3. Some Cabinet meetings have been rescheduled for a Tuesday evening. This change will allow 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 2016/17. An extra meeting was arranged during 2016/17 to assist the Cabinet in meeting its work programme, and this can be repeated during 2017/18 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.

Overview & Scrutiny

6. Two years ago, an opportunity was been 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 was felt that this arrangement had worked well, and it is proposed to retain it for 2017/18.

7. A new committee has been added, meeting twice a year, for the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen, Vice Chairmen & Officers. Similar to the corresponding committee for the Development Management Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Officers, the purpose of this would be to discuss any issues arising from the Council's Scrutiny meetings and future training needs for Members.

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 2017/18.

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 20 September 2017, as this would clash with the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah. 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 Yom Kippur of 29/30 September 2017 and for Pesach of 30/31 March 2018 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 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 11 and 18 May 2017, prior to the Annual Council on 25 May. Two corresponding meetings have also been scheduled for May 2018.

15. The Chief Internal Auditor has proposed that the number of meetings of the Audit & Governance Committee be reduced from the current five to four meetings per year. A report will be considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 30 November 2015, and two potential schedules have been provided to allow for their decision.

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 is to minimise the impact upon the Calendar when Member Briefings are required, and the Planning Policy team can schedule these dates into their Project Plan. This arrangement has been retained for 2017/18 as these dates could also be used for other meetings or further Member Training sessions if they are not required by the Planning Policy team.

17. The Local Councils Liaison Committee has traditionally met three times a year, and this has been continued in the schedule for 2017/18. However, it should be noted that this Committee is reviewing its schedule with a view to only meeting twice a year, so the listed dates may change before the start of the municipal year.

18. One final change has been the removal of the Standards Committee from the calendar. Last year, when the Council decided not to amalgamate the Standards Committee with the Audit & Governance Committee, and that the Standards Committee should only meet as and when required. Therefore, Officers felt that no purpose would be served by scheduling regular meetings for the Standards Committee.

Conclusion

19. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2016/17, 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. Any changes requested by the Cabinet will be incorporated into the final version to be considered by the Council on 15 December 2015.

Resource Implications:

No identifiable savings as there are no significant changes planned for next year's Calendar.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None foreseen, as the proposed Calendar allows the Council to fulfil its obligations under the various different Local Government Acts.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Any substantial increase in the number of Member meetings would hinder the Council in meeting its obligations under the Nottingham Declaration and successor agreements.

Consultation Undertaken:

No external consultation undertaken.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

That an insufficient number of meetings would be scheduled for a particular Committee to complete its business for the year; however, if this became apparent then additional meetings could be arranged as necessary.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Wherever possible, meetings have not been scheduled to coincide with major religious festivals.