

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 17 December 2013

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Ulkun

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2014/15

Recommending:

That the Calendar of Council Meetings for 2014/15 attached an Appendix to this report be adopted.

1. The Democratic Services Business Plan requires a review each year of the Calendar of Council Meetings, and in particular the frequency of individual Committees. As a result, Democratic Services submit the draft Calendar of Council meetings each year to us for consideration prior to its adoption by the Council.

2. We have considered a draft calendar for 2014/15 based on the current year's calendar, with approximately the same number of meetings.

3. The calendar we are recommending for 2014/15 retains where possible:

(a) all Cabinet and Cabinet Committees on a Monday or a Thursday;

(b) all Area Plans Sub-Committee meetings on a Wednesday; and

(c) all miscellaneous Committee meetings on a Thursday.

4. The proposed calendar continues to keep Friday evenings free of meetings and encroachment into August has been kept to a minimum. We ask members to note that the proposed calendar is very congested and the organisation of any additional meetings will need careful consideration. Wherever possible, meetings have not been scheduled to coincide with major religious festivals. However, there is one meeting of Area Plans Sub-Committee West where it has not been possible to avoid a clash with the Jewish New Year festival of Rosh Hashanah.

5. We wish to draw attention to the following proposals.

Council

6. Due to the delay in holding the local elections to coincide with the European Parliamentary Election on 22 May 2014, the Annual Council meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday 10 June 2014 as previously agreed by the Council.

The Executive

7. We are proposing that the frequency of Cabinet meetings in the Autumn should be revised from every six weeks to every four weeks which results in an additional meeting being held during this period. This year it was necessary for us to hold two meetings in July in order to complete the business and the extra meeting will assist us in meeting our work programme without the need for an extraordinary meeting.

8. The Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee is not included on the calendar as we have been advised that it meets as and when evaluations for the various sites are received. Meetings will therefore be arranged by officers in consultation with the Chairman of that Committee when required.

Overview and Scrutiny

9. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has traditionally met approximately a week before the Cabinet to enable it to review the Cabinet agenda, published a few days before. However, one of the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Review Task & Finish Panel is that there should be more time between meetings of the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee so as to ease the process for Call-ins of Cabinet decisions and also the review of Cabinet business via the Key Decision List. At the meeting of the Cabinet it was agreed that meetings of the Committee should be rescheduled with a revised programme submitted to the Council. To facilitate this the attached calendar provides for meetings of the Committee to be held approximately three weeks before the next Cabinet on either a Monday or a Tuesday, which will also permit reports to be forwarded from Overview & Scrutiny to Cabinet for consideration.

10. We are proposing an additional meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn in order to mirror the additional meeting of the Cabinet.

11. The quarterly meeting schedule for Scrutiny Panels is maintained with the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel having an additional meeting as part of the budget preparation process and a joint meeting with Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in January to consider the draft budget.

Plans Sub-Committees

12. We are recommending that the four week cycle be maintained with the week after the local elections being kept free of Plans-Sub Committees to enable member training to take place.

Licensing Sub-Committees

13. The proposed calendar makes provision for evening meetings of the Sub-Committee to consider premises licences although the need for these meetings is being reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Waste Management Contract

14. In order to meet the timescale for the letting of the new Waste Management Contract in 2014 it will be necessary to hold additional meetings of the Cabinet and possibly the Council. Currently these are scheduled for 19 May 2014 (during the current municipal year) and provisionally 16 June 2014 (the 2014/15 municipal year) respectively.

Parish and Town Council Meetings

15. At the meeting of the Cabinet, concern was also expressed by some dual-hatted members about the proposed dates of some meetings being held on the same evenings as certain full Parish/Town Council meetings. Since the meeting of the Cabinet the officers have made enquiries of the clerks of the local councils specifically mentioned. It has been established that two of the local councils will not be approving their calendars until the New Year. In relation to another one which has an approved calendar until the end of the calendar year 2014 showing meetings of the full parish council on the last Thursday of a month there is only one clash with a District Council Cabinet Committee meeting.

16. With 24 parish and town councils it is extremely difficult to avoid some clashes and many parish/town councils wait for the District Council calendar to be published so that they can work around it. It is considered that the attached calendar meets the concerns of the dual-hatted members as far as possible.

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