

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 15 December 2015

Subject: Calendar of Council Meetings 2016/17

Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip (Governance & Development Management)

Recommending:

(1) That, as attached at Appendix 1, the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2016/17 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.

The Executive

3. Regular Council meetings have remained on their traditional Tuesday night. With the elections returning to their traditional date of the first Thursday in May, the Annual Council is scheduled for Thursday 26 May 2016. This is two days later than in the past but allows extra time to complete the appointment process and prepare the papers for the meeting.

4. One amendment from the Calendar considered by the Cabinet, is the re-scheduling of the Council meeting in December. It has been put back by 2 days to Thursday 15 December 2016. This will allow any reports to the Council from the

Cabinet to appear on the main agenda, as opposed to a supplementary agenda which was the case this year.

5. The Cabinet is scheduled to meet nine times throughout 2016/17. An extra meeting was arranged during 2015/16 to assist the Cabinet in meeting its work programme, and this can be repeated during 2016/17 if required.

6. Meetings of the Local Plan Cabinet Committee have been removed from the Calendar for 2016/17. This Cabinet Committee has not met since 25 March 2013 as all reports concerning the Local Plan are being submitted to the Cabinet for consideration and decision. It is felt by the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder that this arrangement ensures the reports get a wider audience amongst Members, and consequently the dates formerly reserved for the Cabinet Committee in the Calendar have been released.

7. 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

8. Last year, 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 2016/17.

Planning

9. 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 2016/17.

10. The week of the Annual Council meeting has been kept free of Planning meetings and this will enable training to take place for any new Members elected. 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

11. No Area Planning Sub-Committee meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 12 October 2016, as this would clash with the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur. This has necessitated a five week gap between Sub-Committees from September to October, 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 2/3/4 October 2015 and for Pesach of 10/11 April 2016 has also been kept clear of all meetings.

Licensing

12. 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.

Miscellaneous Committees

13. Both the Youth Council and the Local Highways Panel have not been included in this schedule as it is felt that these 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 12 and 19 May 2016, prior to the Annual Council on 26 May. Two corresponding meetings have also been scheduled for May 2017.

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 is 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. 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 was asked to indicate their preferred evening for their meetings at their last meeting on 16 November 2015. Their preference was to hold their meetings on a Monday evening and this has been accommodated in the schedule.

Parish and Town Council Meetings

18. With 24 Parish and Town Councils within the District, it is extremely difficult to avoid some clashes and many Local 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.

19. 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.