

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-062-2013/14  
**Date of meeting:** 2 December 2013



**Portfolio:** Support Services  
**Subject:** Calendar of Council Meetings 2014/15  
**Responsible Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).  
**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**(1) That, as attached at Appendix 1, the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2014/15 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. Within the current Democratic Services Business Plan, there is an item to review the Calendar of Council Meetings, and in particular the frequency of meetings. The only changes proposed for the Calendar this year are:

- (i) an extra meeting of the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny in the autumn;
- (ii) Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings rescheduled to allow Members more time to study the Cabinet agenda; and
- (iii) an additional week after the Local Elections free from Area Planning Sub-Committees to allow training in the Planning Protocol for any new Members elected to the Council.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Item for action within the Democratic Services Business Plan for 2012/13 & 2013/14.

### **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. Within the current Democratic Services Business Plan, there is an item in the Action Plan to review 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 the Cabinet for consideration prior to its approval by the Council.

2. 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) all Cabinet and Cabinet Committees have been scheduled for a Monday or a Thursday;
- (b) all Overview and Scrutiny Panels have been scheduled for a Tuesday;
- (c) all Planning Sub-Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Wednesday; and
- (d) all Miscellaneous Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Thursday.

3. 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

4. Council meetings have remained on their traditional Tuesday night. Due to the delay in holding the Local Elections to coincide with the European Election on 22 May 2014, the Annual Council has had to be rescheduled for Tuesday 10 June.

5. One small change to the calendar for Cabinet meetings has been requested by the Leader of Council. The frequency of Cabinet meetings in the autumn has been revised from every 6 weeks to every 4 weeks, which results in an extra meeting of the Cabinet being held during this period. Recent Cabinet agenda have contained a large number of reports (the July cycle required two meetings to complete all the business), and it is felt that an extra meeting of the Cabinet will assist in meeting its work programme. This will involve some additional costs to the Council, but most other Councils hold monthly Executive meetings as a matter of course.

6. It will be noted from the Appendix that that the North Weald Airfield & Asset Management Cabinet Committee has been renamed the Asset Management & Economic Development Cabinet Committee, in line with the Leader Decision in October 2013. 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

7. The additional Cabinet meeting in the Autumn will also entail an extra meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as it has traditionally met six days before each Cabinet to scrutinise the published Cabinet agenda. However, due to the increasing size of Cabinet agenda, the Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Panel has recommended that meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be rescheduled to allow the Members a little more time to study the Cabinet agenda. Therefore, meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee have now been moved to the Thursday before Cabinet, i.e. 4 days before the meeting.

8. There may be occasional instances where a Scrutiny Panel is not on a Tuesday evening, but this is to enable the Scrutiny Panel to retain their quarterly meeting schedule.

Both the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee and Scrutiny Panel have an additional meeting to allow for their participation in the budget preparation process, including a 'joint' meeting in January to consider the draft budget for the following year.

### 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 been retained for 2014/15. An additional week after the Local Elections has been kept free of Planning meetings to enable training to take place for any new Members elected.

### Licensing

10. Licensing Sub-Committee meetings to consider applications from Taxi Drivers have remained on a Tuesday morning, but there has also been an additional meeting each month scheduled for a Thursday evening to consider Premises (Alcohol) Licences. The evidence so far is that more than one evening Licensing Sub-Committee meeting has been required per month, but additional meetings have been scheduled as necessary, and the current process is due to be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny shortly. If the result of this review is that the evening meetings for Alcohol Licences are no longer continued then these meetings can be cancelled and the accommodation would become available for other meetings.

### Miscellaneous Committees

11. 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 the Local Highways Panel involves the County and Local Councils.

### Waste Management Contract

12. As part of the process to let the new Waste Management Contract in 2014, there will be some additional meetings required. Currently, the Member Appointment Panel is provisionally scheduled for either 25 April 2014 or 30 April 2014; the date to be confirmed when the composition of the Panel is confirmed.

13. Following on from the member Appointment Panel, there will need to be an additional meeting of the Cabinet and Council; these currently are scheduled for 12 May 2014 and 16 June 2014 respectively. The Cabinet meeting has been added to the matrix at Appendix 1, and the Council will be added to the matrix for the following year. However, the accommodation for both meetings has been provisionally booked.

### Conclusion

14. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2014/15, as attached at Appendix 1, and whether any further changes are required. However, it should be noted that the current Calendar is very 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 17 December 2013.

**Resource Implications:**

No identifiable savings as there are no significant changes planned for next year's Calendar. There may be a slight increase in costs due to the extra meetings of the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny planned for the Autumn.

**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.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

All Directors, Assistant Directors & other Senior Officers.

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Impact Assessments:**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.