

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-nnn-2010/11  
**Date of meeting:** 31 January 2011



**Portfolio:** Leader  
**Subject:** Draft Calendar of Council Meetings 2011/12  
**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 the period May 2011 to May 2012 be recommended to the Council for adoption.

### **Executive Summary:**

The Cabinet considers the calendar of meetings each year prior to 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, item 13 of the Action Plan is to review the Calendar of Council Meetings, and in particular their frequency.

A small change has been proposed to the schedule for the Area Planning Sub-Committees, whereby each Sub-Committee will meet every four weeks rather than the current three weeks. This measure would produce a small identifiable annual saving of approximately £3,500 per year and would not adversely impact upon the Council's performance in determining planning applications.

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

Item for action within the Democratic Services Business Plan for 2010/11 & 2011/12.

### **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, item 13 of the Action Plan is 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 agreement prior to its final approval by the Council in February 2011.

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 in

an attempt to standardise the nights that certain meetings take place on, and to alter the schedule of Area Planning Sub-Committees from meeting every three weeks to meeting every four weeks. Wherever possible:

- (a) all Cabinet and Cabinet Committees have been scheduled for a Monday;
- (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. Council meetings have remained on their traditional Tuesday night, whilst Licensing Sub-Committees have remained on a Tuesday morning with the two full meetings of the Licensing Committee on a Wednesday afternoon.

4. 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.

5. Friday evenings have continued to be kept free of meetings, however there has been some encroachment into August, mainly at the beginning and end of the month. Planning Sub-Committees have always continued to meet throughout this month, along with the Licensing Sub-Committee and Housing Appeals Panel.

#### Area Planning Sub-Committees

6. Last year, an attempt was made to reduce the number of Area Planning Sub-Committee meetings from approximately 50 down to 25, however this did not find favour with the Members and the current schedule was retained with each Sub-Committee meeting every three weeks.

7. The Cabinet has since indicated that a further attempt should be made to reduce the number of planning meetings, whereby the three Sub-Committees are retained but meet every four weeks rather than the current three week schedule. This arrangement would have the advantage of keeping one Wednesday free in every four weeks, which could be used for the bi-monthly meetings of the District Development Control Committee. In this scenario, all planning meetings of the Council would now be held on a Wednesday, regardless of which (Sub-)Committee it was. This would also keep five Wednesday evenings free for the occasional extraordinary meeting required by another Committee.

8. The proposed schedule of Planning Sub-Committees in Appendix 1 would generate £3,428.98 of identifiable savings, as detailed in the tables below. There would be no real savings in Print & Distribution costs as this budget has already been reduced by £2,850 (5.4%) for 2011/12. There would be further smaller savings in respect of energy and refreshment costs for Planning Sub-Committees East and West meeting in the Civic Offices, as well as Member Travelling Expenses.

9. The proposed schedule has been considered by Senior Planning Officers and it is felt that it would not have an adverse impact upon the Council's performance in determining planning applications.

## Conclusion

10. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2011/12 attached at Appendix 1 and whether any further changes are required to the draft Calendar. However, the current Calendar is very congested and the organisation of any additional meetings should be given very careful consideration.

### **Resource Implications:**

<u>Area Planning Sub-Committee South:</u>	£
Roding Valley High School Hire Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 less meetings at £104 per meeting</li></ul>	416
Committee Allowance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 less meetings x 4 Officers per meeting @ £58.63 per meeting</li><li>• 1 Planning + 1 Democratic Services + 2 Webcasters</li></ul>	938.08
Subsistence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 less meetings x 4 Officers per meeting</li><li>• £5.75 = midpoint of maximum allowable subsistence</li></ul>	92
On Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 17% of Committee Allowance &amp; Subsistence</li></ul>	175.11
Identifiable Saving:	<b><u>1,621.19</u></b>

<u>Area Planning Sub-Committees East &amp; West:</u>	£
Committee Allowance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 less meetings x 3 Officers per meeting @ £58.63 per meeting</li><li>• 1 Planning + 1 Democratic Services + 1 Webcasters</li></ul>	1,407.12
Subsistence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 less meetings x 3 Officers per meeting</li><li>• £5.75 = midpoint of maximum allowable subsistence</li></ul>	138
On Costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 17% of Committee Allowance &amp; Subsistence</li></ul>	262.67
Identifiable Saving:	<b><u>1,807.79</u></b>

Total Identifiable Savings = £3,428.98

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

None foreseen.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

A slight reduction in the number of Member meetings would continue to help the Council to meet its commitments under the Nottingham Declaration and 10:10 scheme.

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

Management Board.  
All Assistant Directors & selected Senior Officers.

## Background Papers:

Report to Management Board 15 December 2010.

## 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.

### Equality and Diversity:

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* N/A

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*  
N/A.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*  
N/A.