

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-042-2012/13  
**Date of meeting:** 3 December 2012



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Support Services  
**Subject:** Council Calendar of Meetings 2013/14  
**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 2013/14 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. No radical changes to the calendar have been proposed for next year.

### **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 16 in 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 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. Council meetings have remained on their traditional Tuesday night, with the exception of the September meeting. The Council is under an obligation to agree its Statutory Statement of Accounts by 30 September each year, and the meeting in September is scheduled for Thursday 26 September to give as much time as possible for the Accounts to be finalised. The Council meeting normally scheduled for the last week in July has been put back by one week to allow any reports from the June and July Cabinet to be considered.

4. Licensing Sub-Committees have remained on a Tuesday morning, but there has also been an additional meeting each month scheduled for a Thursday evening. This is an option being discussed by the Licensing Task & Finish Scrutiny Panel, and has been included in case this recommendation is agreed for implementation. There are still the two full meetings of the Licensing Committee on a Wednesday afternoon.

5. 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.

6. 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. Planning Sub-Committees have always continued to meet throughout August, along with the Licensing Sub-Committee and Housing Appeals Panel.

7. Following consultation with the current membership, meetings of the Housing Appeals & Review Panel have been moved from Thursday afternoons to Monday afternoons. One additional meeting of the Safer, Cleaner & Greener, and Constitution & Member Services Scrutiny Panels have been arranged due to their current workloads. An extra meeting of the North Weald Airfield & Asset Management Cabinet Committee has been scheduled to consider the issues arising from the strategic review of the Airfield.

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 within Democratic Services that this change has worked well, with minimal impact upon the relevant Key Performance Indicators, and this arrangement has been retained for 2013/14.

9. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2013/14 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 considered by the Council on 18 December 2012.

#### **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 monthly meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee to be held in the evenings.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

None foreseen.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Any reduction agreed 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:**

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.

Equality and Diversity

Wherever possible, meetings have not been scheduled to coincide with major religious festivals; however there is one meeting of Area Plans Sub-Committee South where it has not been possible to avoid a clash with the Jewish New Year festival of Rosh Hashanah.

*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