

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 18 December 2012

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Ulkun

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2013/14

Recommending:

That the Calendar of Council Meetings for 2013/14 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 the Cabinet for consideration prior to its adoption by the Council.
2. We have considered a draft calendar for 2013/14 based on the current year's calendar, with approximately the same number of meetings.
3. The calendar we are recommending for 2013/14 retains where possible:
 - (a) all Cabinet and Cabinet Committees on a Monday or a Thursday;
 - (b) all Overview and Scrutiny Panels on a Tuesday;
 - (c) all Area Plans Sub-Committee meetings on a Wednesday; and
 - (d) all miscellaneous Committee meetings on a Thursday.
4. We wish to draw attention to the following proposed exceptions and changes:
 - (a) the Council is required to agree its Statutory Statement of Accounts by 30 September each year and in order to provide as much time as possible for the Accounts to be finalised we are recommending that the Council meeting in September 2013 be held on Thursday 26 September rather than a Tuesday;
 - (b) there is a Licensing Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel currently undertaking a review of the Licensing Committee arrangements including the possibility of having additional meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee held in the evening; in order to accommodate this option if it is adopted we have made provision for an additional meeting each month to be held on a Thursday evening;
 - (c) at the request of the current membership of the Housing Appeals and Review Panel we are recommending that meetings be moved from Thursday afternoons to Monday afternoons;

- (d) additional meetings of the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Panel and the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel are proposed to reflect their current workloads;
- (e) an additional meeting of the North Weald Airfield and Asset Management Cabinet Committee is scheduled to consider issues arising from the strategic review of the Airfield;
- (f) additional meetings of both the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel are planned to aid the budget process and a "joint" meeting is scheduled in January to consider the draft budget;
- (h) there are occasional instances where a Scrutiny Panel is scheduled on a Tuesday evening, but this is to enable the retention of a quarterly meeting schedule.

5. The proposed calendar continues to keep Friday evenings free of meetings and encroachment into August has been kept to a minimum. As a result there is a gap of only one week between the Cabinet and the Council in July and any recommendations from the former will need to be tabled at the Council meeting. However, we consider this is preferable to having a Council meeting in August.

6. The frequency of Area Plans Sub-Committee meetings was changed in 2011/12 from a three weekly cycle to a four weekly cycle. We have noted that this change has had little impact on the relevant Key Performance Indicators, and we are suggesting that this revised frequency of meetings be continued.

7. We adjusted the draft calendar presented to us to ensure wherever possible meetings have not been scheduled to coincide with major religious festivals.

8. We ask members to note that the proposed calendar is very congested and the organisation of any additional meetings will need careful consideration.

9. As we are not proposing any significant changes to the calendar we have been unable to identify any savings and wish to point out that there will be an increase in costs if there are additional meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee held in the evening.

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