

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

City Council Meetings Timetable and Meeting Times - 2010/11

14th January 2010

Report of the Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider and agree a timetable of meetings and meeting times for the year 2010/11 for publication purposes.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That consideration be given to the dates, venues and start times of meetings in order that a timetable of meetings for 2010/11 can be recommended to Council for approval, as set out in the Appendices of the report.
- (2) That Members re-consider the commencement times of the first meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups (as set out in paragraph 1.7 of the report) and consider the consultations undertaken with Committee Chairmen regarding commencement times of meetings (Section 2.0).
- (3) That Members note the scheduling of the Annual Meeting and of the possible need to re-schedule this if a General Election is called at this time.

1.0 Timetable

- 1.1 The timetable of meetings for 2010/11 has been prepared following the same principles as last year in terms of frequency of meetings with a recess over August and a short break at Christmas. Minor alterations to the dates of some meetings have been made where external deadlines have to be met. The number of meetings for each Committee is as follows:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Number of meetings per year</u>
Audit	5
Full Council	11 (including Annual, Budget and Special Councils)
Council Business Committee	6
Cabinet	11
Personnel	4 (with additional meetings called as required)
JCC	4
Planning Regulatory	13

Licensing Regulatory	8
Licensing Act	6 (with Sub-committees called as required)
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9
Budget & Performance Panel	9
Standards	4 (with additional meetings called as required)
Williamson Park Board	4 (please see paragraph 1.9 below).

- 1.2 The number of meetings for Council set out in paragraph 1.1 includes the Special Council Meeting to be held during Local Democracy Week in line with the Constitution and as previously determined by this Committee. As in the previous year it is also suggested that the date for the 2010/11 Annual Council be fixed at this stage to enable advance arrangements and publicity to commence. Members are advised that Annual Council, in accordance with legislation, must be held in either March, April or May once a year, but not beyond these months. If a General Election was to be called there is the possibility that the Annual Council meeting would need to be re-arranged, but, as stated above, there is the requirement to hold this meeting prior to the end of May, but not beyond. The Committee is advised that the last possible date for a General Election is 3rd June 2010. If an Election was to be called and it was felt that this was either on the date of the Annual Council meeting or felt too close to it to be held Members would be consulted and an alternative date sought. Further, as in previous years, there will be a need to suspend a number of meetings which may have been scheduled close to the date called for the General Election. Members will be advised of any meetings that may need to be re-arranged.
- 1.3 The Budget Council has for many years been held during the last week of February. However, this was moved to a later date last year following receipt of information that the Police Authority's precept would not have been received in time for a February tax setting meeting and in view of this the meeting has been scheduled again at the later date in 2010.
- 1.4 Efforts have been made to avoid school holidays wherever possible, although on occasions, due to the need to arrange meetings to report to each other and the requirements of the budget setting process, this is not always the case.
- 1.5 The Budget and Performance Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been timetabled so that the Panel meets prior to Overview and Scrutiny meetings on the Meetings Timetable for 2010/11. Further, meetings of the Budget and Performance Panel have been arranged to tie in with the quarterly monitoring cycle.
- 1.6 With regard to Audit Committee Members should note that the meeting scheduled for the end of June has been included as it is required to approve the closure of accounts by the deadline of 30th June each year. Members are advised that the Audit Committee, at its meeting held on 30th June 2009, resolved "That the timetabling of the Audit Committee meeting be looked at with a view to increasing the number of Audit Committee meetings to 6 in a Municipal Year." In view of this an additional meeting has been included in the timetable for this Committee in November 2010 making the total number 5. If any more meetings are needed then these can be arranged as required.
- 1.7 With regard to Overview and Scrutiny Task Groups Members previously recommended that the first meeting of all Task Groups should take place at 6.00 p.m., unless there are special circumstances. The start time of future

meetings and the frequency of these meetings would then be agreed at the first meeting. The Committee is advised that there have been difficulties in making arrangements for first meetings of Task Groups due to commitments to other meetings and events. In view of this the Committee is asked to re-consider its previous recommendation and it is suggested that meetings be arranged by Democratic Services based on the availability of Task Group Members and other organisations, or expert witnesses who maybe required to attend.

- 1.8 Members are advised that an additional meeting of the Planning Committee has been included at the beginning of May 2011, prior to the date of the elections, to ensure that planning applications are considered on a regular basis.
- 1.9 With regard to Williamson Park Board Members are advised that a report on the latest position with regard to the current and future operation of Williamson Park will be considered by Cabinet on 19th January 2010 and a decision on the future operation may have an impact on the meetings timetable.
- 1.10 The Committee is requested to consider the timetable and times of meetings for 2010/11, as set out in the Appendices to the report.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 The Chairmen of Committees which had their commencement time amended last year have been consulted in order to obtain their views on how this has impacted on the workings of those meetings. Comments received are set out below: -

Council Business Committee:

Councillor Dennison has advised that there seems to be a problem particularly at meetings in Lancaster with a 4.30 p.m. start, with problems associated with traffic delays which could affect members attendance at the start and also impacting on their time at the finish of meetings, unless it is an inordinately long meeting. Members can also be late arriving if they have to travel a significant distance. It seems less severe with a 6.00 p.m. start. Living in Morecambe other changes have not been a problem to Councillor Dennison, but may be to others.

Councillor Smith, former Chairman, has advised that he is happy with the commencement times of meetings.

Standards Committee:

Mr Lamley has advised that he does not mind when the commencement time is and he has not been informed by other members of the Committee of any problems encountered with the start time of the meeting.

- 2.2 Any further comments received after the publication of the Agenda will be reported at the meeting.
- 2.3 Officers have also been consulted to ensure that meetings are held on appropriate dates to ensure that external deadlines are met.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The timetable of meetings for 2010/11 has been prepared and incorporates the resolutions of Council last year and follows the same principles in terms of frequency of meetings. Members are requested to consider the proposed timetable.
- 3.2 Whilst this Committee has delegated power to agree the timetable and related issues on behalf of full Council it is suggested that the Committee's recommendations be referred to full Council to ensure that all Members have every opportunity to make their views known on this matter.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial implications to the retention of the meetings timetable as set out in this report. The cost of holding the meetings included in this timetable can be met from the existing Democratic Representation budgets.

However, there may be some additional resource and financial implications involved in increasing the number of evening meetings. It is not possible to quantify these with any great certainty, and a further report may be required if substantial amendments were made to the Meetings Timetable.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

It is a legal requirement that the Council publishes its timetable of meetings by the commencement of each Municipal Year. Amendments can be made throughout the year provided at least 5 days notice is given.

If changes were to be made to the start times of meetings consideration may need to be given, in some circumstances, to amendments to other elements of the Constitution, particularly where a given timescale is set out for the production of Minutes (i.e. Cabinet minutes etc).

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	Contact Officer: Stephen Metcalfe Telephone: 01524 582073 E-mail: smetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk Ref: Sjm
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None.