

# COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

## City Council Meetings Timetable and Meeting Times - 2011/12

11<sup>th</sup> November 2010

### Report of the Chief Executive

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider and agree a timetable of meetings and meeting times for the year 2011/12 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 2011/12 can be approved, as set out in the Appendices of the report.

##### 1.0 Timetable

- 1.1 The Committee is advised that two versions of the 2011/12 timetable of meetings have been prepared. These are appended to the report for consideration.

The first version, attached at Appendix B, 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	4
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)

- 1.2 The Committee may also wish to consider the future of the Special Council meetings usually scheduled for October. The draft timetable includes a meeting scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Members may recall that in January 2009, the Committee resolved “that the Special Council meeting due to take place in October 2009 be cancelled as a cost cutting exercise in view of the Council’s financial position” and to reinstate the meeting in 2010/11. Whilst the meeting was re-instated this year, to provide an information event for those interested in standing for election to the Council in May 2011, Members may feel, in view of the Council’s current financial position, that Special Council should become a biennial event, or one that is considered year by year taking into account the Council’s financial position at the time.
- 1.3 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 2011/12 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.
- 1.4 The Budget Council has for many years been held during the last week of February. However, this was been moved to a later date in the last 2 years and now fits with other local authority tax setting timescales.
- 1.5 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. Further, in accordance with the previous wishes of the Committee, an August recess has been maintained with the only meetings timetabled being Planning and Cabinet, which have been set later in the month to maintain the frequency of meetings.
- 1.6 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 2011/12. Meeting timescales for the Budget and Performance Panel should be informed by the performance management framework and meetings of the Panel have been timetabled, but may be reviewed further in line with any changes to the Council’s framework.
- 1.7 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 30<sup>th</sup> June each year.
- 1.8 Members are advised that an additional meeting of the Planning Committee has been included at the end of April to ensure that planning applications are considered on a regular basis. Site visits for this Committee are usually held on the Monday prior to the meeting. Unfortunately, because of Bank Holidays, it has not been possible for this to be maintained throughout the year and alternative dates have been timetabled.

- 1.9 In accordance with the wishes of this Committee in setting the previous timetable Member Briefings have been timetabled on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in every month, with the exception of May when the City Council Elections will be held and June when it is anticipated that there will be an Induction Programme for new Members of the Council, with arrangements being made nearer the time. The venue for the timetabled Briefings will alternate between Lancaster and Morecambe, subject to room availability. It should be noted that the Briefings are not formal meetings, or part of the Council's decision-making process, with no requirement for agenda or minutes.
- 1.10 The second timetable, attached at Appendix C, is an alternative model of the 2011/12 Timetable of Meetings, which includes only 6 meetings each of Budget and Performance Panel, Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Other meetings would continue with the same number of meetings per Municipal Year. It is anticipated that, with fewer meetings, the remaining meetings would be longer in duration, but would enable Members to undertake more Ward work. There may also be some small cost savings and Members may wish to consider this in view of the Council's current financial position.
- 1.11 The Committee is requested to consider the timetable and times of meetings for 2011/12, as set out in the Appendices to the report.

## **2.0 Consultation**

- 2.1 Officers have also been consulted to ensure that meetings are held on appropriate dates and for external deadlines to be met.

## **3.0 Conclusions**

- 3.1 The timetable of meetings for 2011/12, attached at Appendix B, incorporates the resolutions of Council last year and follows the same principles in terms of frequency of meetings. The timetable, attached at Appendix C, proposes only 6 meetings each of Budget and Performance Panel, Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and is an alternative model for the Committee to consider. Members are requested to consider the timetables appended to the report.
- 3.2 This Committee has delegated power to agree the timetable and related issues on behalf of full Council. However, in previous years the Committee has decided to make recommendations to full Council to ensure that all Members have every opportunity to make their views known on this matter. In view of 2011 being a Local Government Election year Members are asked whether they feel that referring the 2011/12 timetable to full Council is appropriate.

<b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> <b>(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b>
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None.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
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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.

There may be some resource and financial savings involved in reducing the number of meetings. However It is not possible to quantify these with any great certainty but if an alternative timetable was agreed these would then be calculated and any resultant savings would be built into future years' budgets as part of the 2011/12 budget process.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

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

#### **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.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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