

OPEN

**Corporate Policy Committee**

**6 February 2025**

**Calendar of Meetings 2025-2026**

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**Report of: Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer**

**Report Reference No: CPC/40/24-25**

**Ward(s) Affected: All Wards**

**For Decision**

**Purpose of Report**

- 1 This report seeks agreement of the Committee in respect of a draft calendar of meetings for the Council for the municipal year 2025-2026 and a draft calendar of dates of meetings for the period June to October 2026.

**Executive Summary**

- 2 In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required to give public notice of its meetings. The calendar of meetings assists in fulfilling this legal obligation and provides certainty for Council members, officers and members of the public.
- 3 Having an approved and published calendar of meetings enables effective business planning and decision-making procedures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee recommend to Council:

- 1 for approval, the draft calendar of meetings for Cheshire East Council for the municipal year 2025-2026 and that the draft calendar for June to October 2026, be noted
- 2 that the start time for morning meetings, excluding full Council, be 10.30 am.
- 3 that each committee determine whether their committee meetings during the 2025-26 municipal year should include twilight meetings.

### **Background**

- 4 As set out in its Constitution (Chapter 3 – Part 1 para 1.1) the Council is required to decide when its meetings will take place. These are set out in a calendar of meetings. The calendar of meetings is intended only to deal with formal decision-making meetings and, therefore, does not provide details of other meetings involving Members.
- 5 Full Council must approve the calendar.
- 6 The scheduling of meetings takes into account the Council's business planning/performance reporting cycle, together with a range of additional issues arising from the implications of the committee system and learning from its operation since May 2021.
- 7 Where possible August has been retained for recess, except for planning committee meetings.
- 8 Council at its meeting on 27 February 2024 when considering the Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25, resolved that "each Service Committee, including the Finance Sub Committee, arrange one twilight meeting over the course of its scheduled cycle of meetings during 2024/25."
- 9 Following the trial, a survey was undertaken of Elected Members to ascertain how Councillors felt about twilight meetings. The survey was conducted between 6 November 2024 and 1 December 2024
- 10 The results of the survey can be found at Appendix 2 to the report
- 11 In the light of the survey responses, it is recommended that individual Committees should be allowed to determine whether it wishes to hold any further twilight meetings.

- 12 Meetings of full Council have been scheduled to take place on a Wednesday on the following dates – 14 May 2025, 16 July 2025, 15 October 2025, 10 December 2025, and 25 February 2026, with a start time of 11.00 am.
- 13 The meetings of the service committees have been scheduled to take place on the same day of the week where possible. If there is a specific need for additional or fewer meetings, this can be dealt with under existing arrangements.
- 14 The dates for the Strategic Planning Board, Northern Planning Committee and Southern Planning Committee have been scheduled to meet on a Wednesday in accordance with the scheduling timeframe agreed by full Council on 13 December 2023. Site visits usually take place on the Friday before the meeting in question.
- 15 The Audit and Governance Committee and the Licensing Committee have been scheduled to meet five times a year. Provisions exist for additional meetings to be called if needed.
- 16 The scheduling of the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee has been scheduled quarterly. It is acknowledged however that there may be the need to arrange ad-hoc meetings when required to deal with bespoke external scrutiny matters e.g. external proposals by health providers, using the general powers of the Committee Chair. The quarterly scheduling will provide for annual reporting, with flexibility around the dates of meetings, to suit business needs.
- 17 A draft calendar of dates for the period June to October 2026 is also included to help with diary planning.
- 18 The Committee is asked to refer the calendar to Council for approval.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

- 19 The calendar has been shared with the Group Leaders, Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees and senior officers.
- 20 In response to this consultation, it was suggested that 10.00 am meeting commencements move to 10.30 am to allow for travel from one end of Borough to the other as meetings will be in either Macclesfield or Crewe. However, in accordance with the Constitution, committees can alter the start time of meetings as required.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 21 The Council is required to give public notice of its meetings in order to fulfil its legal obligations under the Access to Information Rules set out in the Constitution, and to meet its obligations under the Local

Government Act 1972. The calendar will assist the Council's meeting these requirements and will provide certainty for Members.

## Other Options Considered

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| Option     | Impact  | Risk  |
|------------|---|---|
| Do nothing | The authority would be unable to plan the decision-making function of the Council in an effective manner. | Decisions not being made in a timely manner.<br><br>The business needs of the Council would not be met. |

## Implications and Comments

### *Monitoring Officer/Legal*

- 19 In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and the Access to Information Rules in the Constitution, the Council is required to give public notice of its meetings, and a calendar of meetings assists in fulfilling this legal obligation.
- 20 Members of the public have a legal right to attend to participate in and observe council meetings, e.g., make representations in respect of planning applications, asking questions at meetings, and presenting appeals.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

- 21 There are no direct financial implications.

### *Policy*

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**An open and enabling organisation.**

**Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision-making.**

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- 23 There are no direct implications for equality.

*Human Resources*

24 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

*Risk Management*

25 A published calendar of meetings enables effective business planning and decision-making procedures.

*Rural Communities*

26 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

27 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

*Public Health*

28 There are no direct implications for public health.

*Climate Change*

29 There are no direct implications for climate change.

| <b>Access to Information</b> |  |
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| Contact Officer:             | Brian Reed, Head of Democratic Services<br>brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk  |
| Appendices:                  | Appendix 1 – Calendar of Meetings for Municipal Year 2025-2026<br>Appendix 2 – Members Twilight Meetings Survey 2024 |
| Background Papers:           | None   |