

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

Date of Meeting:	25 th February 2010
Report of:	Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Subject/Title:	Calendar of Meetings for 2010-2011

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Under the Constitution, the Council is required to approve a calendar of meetings for the forthcoming Municipal Year.
- 1.2 Attached to this report is a draft Calendar of Meetings for Cheshire East Council for 2010-2011, together with explanatory notes for each Committee.
- 1.3 The calendar has been subject to consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Members, Committee Chairmen and Group Leaders. The Corporate Management Team has also been consulted.
- 1.4 Comments received during the consultation have been taken into account and amendments made, as appropriate, by the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Constitution Committee.
- 1.5 Council is asked to approve the calendar which will come into effect from the Annual Council meeting in May 2010.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Calendar of Meetings for Cheshire East Council for the Municipal Year 2010-2011 be approved.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 A Calendar of Meetings ensures that the Council carries out its business effectively.
- 3.2 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. The calendar will assist the Council in meeting this requirement.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All wards are affected.

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All local ward members are affected.

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 None identified.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

7.1 None identified.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

8.1 None identified.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 There are no specific legal implications.

10.0 Risk Management

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

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 The Constitution requires the Council to decide when its meetings will take place and these will be contained in a calendar of meetings (Part 4 – Procedure Rule 1 refers).

Under Part 3 of the Constitution, the Governance and Constitution Committee is responsible for:

“overseeing, monitoring, co-ordinating and implementing the Council’s administrative and political business, including administrative arrangements for the Council and other meetings;”

11.2 Consultation

The Corporate Management Team was consulted prior to the submission of the calendar to the Governance and Constitution Committee on 21st January 2010. The Committee resolved –

“That

- (a) the draft Calendar of Meetings for Cheshire East Council 2010-2011 be approved for consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Members, Group Leaders and Committee Chairmen; and*
- (b) the Democratic Services Manager be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman, to make any necessary amendments to the calendar as a result of the consultation with a view to submitting the calendar to Council for final approval as soon as possible.”*

Formal consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Members, Group Leaders and Committee Chairmen was undertaken between 25th January and 12th February. Comments made during consultation have been taken into account by the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Constitution Committee. Appropriate amendments have been made, and the revised calendar is attached. Comments and responses are given below -

- Annual Council 2010 should be held on Wednesday, 12th and Thursday, 13th May to mirror the arrangement in April 2009 (the date in the draft calendar indicated Thursday, 13th and Friday, 14th May).

The change has been made and all Members notified early in February.

- Annual Council should be confined to one day only.

The reason for the two-day event is to separate the civic part from the ordinary business of Council. This practice was adopted for Annual Council in April 2009 when Members considered it more practical for the Mayor-Making ceremony to be conducted on the first day, followed by a lunch. This gives the new Mayor and Councillors, together with their guests, the opportunity to mix informally.

Note: Congleton Town Council is holding its own Mayor-Making Ceremony on the evening of Thursday, 13th May. There are a number of Cheshire East Councillors who will be attending that event and for this reason, the re-convened Cheshire East Council meeting on 13th May (at Congleton Town Hall) has been re-scheduled to 2.00 pm (it was originally scheduled for 6.00 pm).

- In order to maintain the cycle of Planning Committees and Strategic Planning Board, a meeting of the Strategic Planning Board should be held on 11th May 2011.

The calendar of meetings is approved for a Municipal Year. The local elections are to be held on 5th May 2011 and this concludes the Municipal Year 2010-2011. In view of this, there are no meetings scheduled between that date and Annual Council. A newly-constituted

Council will exist after the 5th May and it will be for the new Council to make appointments to its committees on 18th/19th May 2011.

To try to accommodate the request for maintenance of the planning cycle, and taking into account the removal of meetings between the local elections on 5th May 2011 and Annual Council on 18th/19th May 2011, the Strategic Planning Board, originally scheduled for 4th May 2011 has been moved to Tuesday, 3rd May 2011. The Northern Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 11th May 2011 has been moved to 4th May 2011.

- An Appeals Committee should be scheduled in May 2010.

A meeting has been scheduled for 20th May. This is the same date as a meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee. However, as one is held in the morning and the other in the afternoon, it is expected that on this occasion, there should be no difficulties for non-Scrutiny Committee Members who may wish to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

- There should be no meetings, including Member Training sessions, held on Fridays, as this can cause difficulties for Members who have outside commitments.

Efforts have been made to avoid Friday meetings (other than for the Local Authority School Governor Appointments Panel and the Shared Services Joint Committee). There is only one other Committee scheduled on a Friday (Staffing Committee – 21st January 2011). The days available for meetings are fewer than the number of meetings which need to be scheduled.

The Member Training sessions have been scheduled on Fridays at the request of the Member Development Panel. However, even if the Member Development Panel had not made such a request, it would have been necessary to utilise Fridays because of the limited availability of other days.

- Governance and Constitution Committee meetings should be held at different locations around the Borough on a rotational basis.

Firm arrangements will be made following approval of the calendar.

- The Northern Planning Committee meetings should move to another day, or be held in the morning, to accommodate the non-Council work commitments of some Members of the Committee.

The Chairman of the Committee does not propose making any changes.

11.3 Calendar

A summary timetable is attached as an Appendix. This is an “at a glance” schedule of all meetings, by Committee, for 2010-2011. This schedule also indicates the dates of the Police Authority and Fire Authority meetings and Manchester Airport Committee meetings. When dates have been agreed, this appendix will form the basis of the published calendar. The agreed meeting dates will then be incorporated in a diary similar to that which has been in use for 2009-2010.

There is an overlap of membership between the Fire Authority and the Strategic Planning Board, Northern Planning Committee and Southern Planning Committee, all of which meet on Wednesdays. However, the Fire Authority holds its meetings on Wednesday mornings and the Committees meet in the afternoons; this may not, therefore, present difficulties for those Councillors who are Members of one of the Committees and the Fire Authority.

11.4 Frequency/Scheduling of Meetings

The frequency of meetings has followed the practice adopted in 2009-2010, except where a variation has been requested.

11.5 Main Variations from 2009-2010

Scrutiny Committee Meetings: Scrutiny Committee meetings have been scheduled on days when there are no other committee meetings, as far as possible. This is to enable non-Committee Members to attend the Scrutiny meetings.

Cabinet Meetings: At the request of the Cabinet, these meetings have moved from Tuesday afternoons to Monday afternoons.

Portfolio Holder Decision Meetings: During 2009-2010 Cabinet Member meetings were arranged as and when required. Individual decision-making has increased and to accommodate this, the Cabinet has requested that each Monday morning be reserved for Portfolio Holder Decision Meetings.

Standards Committee: A consequence of scheduling Portfolio Holder Decision Meetings on Monday mornings is that Standards Committee meetings have been moved to Monday afternoons.

Corporate Scrutiny Committee: The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has changed from morning to afternoon meetings. The principal reason for this is to try to balance the non-Council work of Members with their Council duties. This is particularly relevant in respect of morning meetings which can sometimes extend beyond lunchtime.

Licensing Committee: Meetings have increased to bi-monthly.

Member Training: Specific sessions have been reserved on Fridays, at the request of the Member Development Panel.

Budget Consultation Events/Financial Briefings: It is important for all Members to be consulted on the budget and for this reason, a number of budget consultation events and financial briefings have been included in the calendar.

- 11.6 Subject to any comments which Members may wish to make, Council is recommended to approve the calendar for adoption with effect from the Municipal Year 2010-2011.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 None identified.

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

Background documents:

- Approved schedule of Cheshire Fire Authority meetings
- Approved schedule of Cheshire Police Authority meetings
- School holiday calendar for Cheshire Schools for academic year 2010-2011

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