

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Constitution Committee

Date of Meeting: 29th January 2015
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Calendar of Meetings for 2015-16

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report includes a draft Calendar of Meetings for Cheshire East Council for 2015-2016.
- 1.2 The Committee is invited to recommend the draft calendar to Council for approval.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the draft Calendar of Public Meetings for Cheshire East Council 2015 - 2016 be recommended to Council for approval.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 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 in meeting these requirements.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Ward Members

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 None identified.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None identified.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications other than those identified in the main body of the report.

9.0 Risk Management

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

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 As set out in its Constitution (Part 4 – Council Procedure Rule 1) the Borough Council is required to decide when its meetings will take place and these will be contained in a calendar of meetings.

It is for full Council to approve the calendar.

- 10.2 Under Part 3 of the Constitution, the Constitution Committee is responsible for:

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

10.3 Calendar

Attached at Appendix 1 is a timetable of meetings for 2015-16.

10.4 Scheduling of Meetings

The recommended frequency of meetings largely follows the pattern previously adopted. As far as possible, only one Committee per day has been scheduled and meetings of each Committee have been scheduled on the same weekday. Where possible Fridays have been avoided for Committee meetings; these are generally used for Member development sessions as and when required.

Scheduling of meetings has taken into account the business planning/performance reporting cycles.

Certain categories of meetings which do not form part of the formal decision-making process will be omitted from the public calendar but will be added to the Members’ diary for convenience. These include Member development sessions and meetings of the Cheshire Fire Authority and Cheshire Police and Crime Panel.

August has been retained for recess except for Cabinet and Planning Meetings.

10.5 Consultation

The calendar of meetings has been circulated to the following:

- Corporate Management Team
- Cabinet
- Committee Chairmen
- Group Leaders
- Group Whips

Few responses have been received from the consultees. These are very briefly summarised as follows:

- No evening meetings have been scheduled
- A view that there would be no need to follow the 2014/15 pattern of frequent overview and scrutiny meetings
- Query over the Council start time and whether this should revert to the former pattern of evening meetings during summer, with afternoon meetings taking place in the winter
- Request not to have Cabinet and Council in same week.

10.6 Council

Meetings of full Council are scheduled as follows:

11 am – Annual Council (normally at Tatton Park)
2.00 pm - Summer months
10.00 am – Winter months

10.7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Whilst there will be informal introductory meetings in June of the new municipal year, meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been scheduled to meet on a bi-monthly basis. If there is a specific need for additional meetings, these can be dealt with under existing arrangements.

10.8 Cabinet Meetings:

Cabinet meetings have been scheduled monthly on the second Tuesday of each month and will take place in the Committee Suite at Westfields to enable the meetings to be webcast. Other venues do not have the requisite ICT connectivity.

10.9 Portfolio Holder Meetings

Portfolio Holder meetings have not been scheduled into specific dates, but for ease Committee Suite 1+2 at Westfields has been reserved on Monday mornings between 9 am and 1.00 pm to allow them to take place when required. However, meetings will be arranged at the most appropriate venue, following consultation with Portfolio Holders.

10.10 Planning Committees

Strategic Planning Board, Northern Planning Committee and Southern Planning Committee are scheduled on a four weekly cycle of meetings on Wednesday; with any site visits taking place the Friday before the meeting.

The Strategic Planning Board will commence at 10.30 am, with the Northern Planning Committee at 2.00 pm and Southern Planning Committee commencing at 1.00 pm.

10.11 Sub-Committees

Dates have been included for meetings of the General Licensing Sub Committee and Licencing Act Sub Committee but there may be a need for additional meetings of these Sub Committees which will be arranged as required. There are also a number of other Sub Committees and other bodies which meet on an ad-hoc basis and are therefore not included in the calendar.

10.12 Audit and Governance Committee and Constitution Committee

In line with expected business for 2015/16, these meetings have been scheduled to take place on a quarterly basis. Provision exists for additional meetings to be called if needed.

10.13 Subject to additional recommendations which Members may wish to make, the Committee is asked to refer the calendar to Council at its meeting to be held on 26 February 2015.

11.0 Access to Information

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

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