

Cheltenham Borough Council
Council – 31 March 2014
Council Diary September 2014 to August 2015

Accountable member	Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walkett
Accountable officer	Chief Executive, Andrew North
Accountable scrutiny committee	Not applicable
Ward(s) affected	All
Significant Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>The proposed diary of Council meetings for September 2014 to August 2015 is attached as Appendix 1.</p> <p>The dates and times for the Cabinet are shown for information only as it is for the Leader of the Council to determine the Cabinet meeting dates. However they follow the pattern of time and frequency followed in previous years.</p> <p>If it is necessary to make any subsequent amendments to the draft diary, these will be reflected in the published diary.</p>
Recommendations	<p>I therefore recommend that</p> <p>1. The draft Council Diary of meetings for September 2014 – August 2015 be approved.</p>

Financial implications	<p>No Financial Implications Contact Officer: Mark Sheldon E-mail mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel 01242 264 123</p>
Legal implications	<p>No specific legal implications arising from the recommendation Contact Officer: Peter Lewis E-mail peter.lewis@tewkesbury.gov.uk</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>Start and end times of Council meetings may impact on officer working hours, which may need to be adjusted through flexible working practices use of flexitime or additional paid hours which may have cost implication. Could be potential health and safety risk for very late meetings for those travelling, in particular in winter period.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Amanda Attfield E-mail: amanda.attfield@cheltenham.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel 01242 264186</p>

Key risks	None
Corporate and community plan Implications	The diary of council meetings supports the democratic process.
Environmental and climate change implications	None

1. Background

1.1 The diary followed a similar rationale to that adopted in previous years i.e.;

- As far as possible meetings of a particular committee are scheduled on the same day of the week.
- Easter, August and Whitsun half terms and Friday evenings will be avoided wherever possible.
- Evening meetings have been scheduled for 6 pm to facilitate Members' attendance after the working day. Asset Management Working Group has also been put back to a 6 pm start to bring it in line with other evening meetings, but councillors and officers can agree an alternative start time to suit the membership of the working group, once the membership has been decided.
- The start time for planning view meetings is again omitted to give greater flexibility in arranging an appropriate start time dependent on the time of the year and number of sites to be visited.
- Under the new standards regime adopted in 2012, three regular meetings of the Standards Committee have been scheduled in the diary per year. Due to the nature of the committee, there may be a need for adhoc meetings during the year to deal with specific issues.
- The dates and times for the Cabinet are shown for information only as it is for the Leader of the Council to determine the Cabinet meeting dates. However they follow the pattern of time and frequency followed in previous years.
- Generally, once a working group has been established it will be permitted to schedule meetings at a time to suit those members involved so working group meetings are not included in the diary.
- Six meetings have been scheduled for Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These are timetabled to cover key events during the year likely to require scrutiny involvement including the budget consultation, review of the corporate strategy and agreeing the annual work plan. The meetings have been scheduled wherever possible with a sufficient delay before the next Cabinet meeting to allow any recommendations to be finalised ready for publication with the Cabinet agenda.

2. Consultation and feedback

2.1 The draft diary was circulated to relevant councillors and officers in February as part of the consultation and feedback was also sought from Cheltenham Borough Homes to avoid any clashes. Minor changes were made as a result of the feedback received and these are outlined below.

2.2 At the request of several members, Licensing has been brought forward to a 2 pm start. One member requested a 6 pm start but not on a Friday. However an afternoon meeting facilitates the attendance of businesses and solicitors during the working day.

- 2.3 Some members requested a 5 pm or 5.30 pm start to evening meetings, however from replies received the majority favoured remaining with 6 pm to facilitate attendance for those who work.
- 2.4 The start time of Asset Management Working Group and Appointments Committee has reverted to 6 pm to bring it in line with other evening meetings, but officers and councillors can agree an alternative time to suit the members of the working group/committees once the membership has been decided.
- 2.5 A number of members favoured a later start time to Council meetings, ranging from 3 – 6 pm to negate the need for members who work full time to take time off work and to facilitate more members of the public to be able to attend. Looking at the length of council meetings over the past two years, five meetings lasted nearly 4 and a half hours; 3 meetings lasted between 3-4 hours; 5 meetings lasted between 2-3 hours and 5 less than 2 hours, hence with a 6 pm start, eight meetings would have finished after 9 pm and five of those after 10.30 pm. In the draft diary Council meetings have been left as starting at 2.30 pm but members may wish to debate this further.
- 2.6 In consultation with Cheltenham Borough Homes, the dates of CBH Board meetings are included in the diary for information. It is recognised that there is a clash in September and March with Audit committee, but CBH suggested that Audit remain as it is, as their Board membership may significantly change.
- 2.7 In 2015 there are no Borough elections, but there could be a General election. The diary is relatively free in April and May to accommodate this, except for regulatory meetings.

3. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 3.1 Any feedback on the diary during the year can be noted for consideration in future years.

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Appendices	1. Draft Council Diary September 2014 – August 2015