

Cheltenham Borough Council
Council – 15 May 2017
Council Diary September 2017 to August 2018

Accountable member	Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Roger Whyborn
Accountable officer	Democratic Services Manager, Rosalind Reeves
Accountable scrutiny committee	Not applicable
Ward(s) affected	All
Significant Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>The proposed diary of Council meetings for September 2017 to August 2018 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 2017 – August 2018 be approved.</p>

Financial implications	<p>No direct financial implications as any additional hours paid for attending meetings may only be considered providing that the additional cost is met from within existing budgets.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Paul Jones, Tel 01242 264 123 E-mail paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>
Legal implications	<p>No specific legal implications arising from the recommendation</p> <p>Contact Officer: Peter Lewis, Tel 01684 272012 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 e.g. use of flexitime. Additional paid hours may be considered providing any additional cost implications are met within existing budgets. Managers will need to be aware of potential health and safety risks for late evening meetings for individuals when travelling home outside normal office hours and in particular during the winter period.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Julie McCarthy, Tel 01242 264355</p> <p>E-mail: julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk</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 follows 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.
- With the occasional exception of the regulatory Planning and Licensing meetings, 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.
- 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.
- 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 ad hoc 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. The Asset Management and Treasury Management working group meetings are included in the diary but others will be set up as required.
- Seven 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.

Consideration has been given to party conference dates and meetings avoided during these times as far as possible. For reference, party conference dates are as follows:-
Lib Dem – 16-19 September; Conservative – 1-4 October 2017.

2. Consultation and feedback

- 2.1 Generally when the council diary is prepared in the first quarter of each year it follows a similar rationale to previous years. Democratic Services draft the diary in consultation with relevant officers and partners and then members are consulted before it is approved by Council.
- 2.2 Last year a number of members spoke at Council and gave their views, particularly on the timing of meetings, and so this year a slightly different approach was taken with the aim of seeking Members views earlier in the process. All Members were invited to join a working group and Councillors Flo Clucas, Paul McCloskey, Diggory Seacome, Tim Harman and Louis Savage put their names forward for the working group and the group met on two occasions. They set out their ideas in a discussion paper which they then took to their political groups for a further discussion. All groups were asked to give their feedback to Democratic Services by 24 March 2017. The Cabinet Member Corporate Services, Councillor Roger Whyborn, was supportive of this approach.
- 2.3 The feedback from the groups was to retain the current timings for scheduled meetings in the diary with the option for working groups to arrange their own start times as currently.
- 2.4 The groups were also supportive of continuing to schedule Members Seminars which they could try and keep free in their diaries and then these could be taken up as required.
- 2.5 The working group were asked to consider the production of Filofax diary pages which cost £675 last year and significant amounts of officer time to produce. Only 14 members had requested the Filofax diary in 2016 with the majority of Members using electronic diaries with the facility to download them from modern.gov. The working group and the groups' discussions supported discontinuing their production provided there was a simple one-page summary of meeting dates for members who wished to continue to use a hard copy format.
- 2.6 Further discussions are also taking place with ICT to facilitate members' use of electronic diaries.
- 2.7 Following discussions with Finance and due to the recent timings of announcements of Government settlements, in 2018, Budget and Tax Setting have been scheduled for a single Council meeting towards the end of February. A provisional meeting has also been scheduled in case a budget cannot be agreed at that meeting.

3. Performance management – monitoring and review

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

Report author	Rosalind Reeves E-mail rosalind.reeves@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel 01242 774937
Appendices	1. Draft Council Diary September 2017 – August 2018