

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

Date: 24 January 2013

ITEM 6

Title: Programme of Meetings 2013/14

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Mrs Linda Arkley

Report from Directorate: Legal, Governance and Commercial Services, Chief Executive's Office

Report Author: Vivienne Geary, Head of Legal, Governance and Commercial Services Tel: (0191) 6435339

David Brown, Legal, Governance and Commercial Services Tel: (0191) 6435358

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

This report presents a draft programme of Council and committee meetings for the 2013/14 municipal year.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) agree the programme of meetings for 2013/14, as set out in Appendix A to this report;
- (2) authorise each individual committee to determine the commencement time of its meetings for 2013/14 at their first meetings of the year; and
- (3) agree that the meetings of the full Council proposed for 25 July 2013, 28 November 2013 and 13 March 2014 be those at which questions will be taken from members of the public.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This report appears on the Forward Plan that was published on 12 December 2012.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report has no direct relevance to the Council Strategic Plan priorities.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 The Council is requested to consider a programme of meetings for the Council and its committees for the 2013/14 municipal year, attached as Appendix A to this report. The Council's constitution states that where possible the Council will set a programme of ordinary meetings of its committees and sub-committees for each year ahead. The timetable of meetings is normally agreed each year at the January Council meeting to allow Members and officers to plan ahead.
- 1.5.2 The draft programme provides for:-
- a) a timetable of meetings of the Council, its overview and scrutiny, regulatory and other committees and sub-committees and provisional dates for the area forums. The provisional dates of Cabinet meetings are included in the timetable for information. These are determined by the Elected Mayor;
 - b) a minimal number of meetings being scheduled in August; in the last 2 weeks of December; no meetings on Maundy Thursday, or other key religious days;
 - c) two member briefings per month, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. No briefings to be held before Council meetings; and
 - d) member development including the provision of training for quasi-judicial committees taking place between the Annual Council Meeting and the first meeting of these committees.
- 1.5.3 The Council is asked to authorise each individual committee to consider and determine the commencement time of their meetings for the year, taking into account the availability and preference of members, the work life balance of officers and the cost implications of evening meetings as set out in Section 2.1 of this report. It is proposed that the first meeting of each committee be held at the time they normally met in 2012/13. The Full Council will continue to meet at 6.00pm in accordance with the Constitution.
- 1.5.4 The Area Housing Forums will be asked to determine a programme of meetings for 2013/14 at their meetings during January and February 2013, taking into account the dates of the committees as determined by Council tonight.
- 1.5.5 The Council is requested to specify those Council meetings during the year at which questions from members of the public will be taken. For Members' information, in the current municipal year, three meetings were specified for that purpose, ie those meetings held in July 2012, November 2012 and March 2013.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Council:

To agree or not to agree the dates of meetings of the Council and its committees for the 2013/14 municipal year as set out in Appendix A.

Should the Council decide not to agree the dates, a further programme of meetings would be prepared and submitted to a future meeting of the Council for approval taking into account the reasons given by Council for not agreeing the programme.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

The Council is recommended to agree the programme to allow Members and officers to plan ahead for individual committee work programmes.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Programme of meetings of the Council and its committees for the 2013/14 municipal year.

1.9 Contact officers:

David Brown, Democratic Services Manager (0191) 643 5358
Alison Campbell, Financial Business Manager (0191) 643 7038

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Report to Council on the Programme of Council meetings – 26 January 2012
- (2) Council Constitution
- (3) Diary 2013 & 2014

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

It is estimated that the catering costs associated with the committee meetings held in 2013/14 will amount to £10,000 and can be contained within current budgets. A reduction in the number of meetings held in the evening would reduce catering costs.

There are also indirect facilities management costs associated with the operation of Quadrant outside core office hours relating to security, health and safety, technical support, heating and lighting. All such expenditure will continue to be met from existing budgets.

As the majority of committee and sub-committee meetings currently commence at 6:00pm there are implications in terms of work-life balance for those officers who are frequently required to attend and support evening meetings. It is estimated that if the committees and sub committees which currently start their meetings at 6.00pm continue to meet at 6.00pm in 2013/14, officers would work an equivalent of 300 working days (2171 hours) attending or supporting evening meetings during the municipal year.

2.2 Legal

The Council's Constitution requires a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year to be approved by the Council. The Council has agreed that the timetable of meetings

of the Council and its committees/sub committees should be agreed each year at the January Council meeting to allow Members and officers to plan ahead and to enable the decision making processes to be complied with.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation on the proposed timetable of meetings for 2013/14 has taken place with Group Leaders, the Elected Mayor, Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Section 151 Officer, Heads of Service and officers within Democratic Services, Financial Services, Internal Audit, North Tyneside Homes and Community Engagement.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

In considering the programme of meetings consideration should be given to the impact in terms of equality of access for Members, potential new members, the public and staff.

In determining the timetable of meetings for 2012/13 a survey of Members was undertaken to indicate whether or not they would be available to attend meetings commencing at 10.00am; 2.00pm; 4.00pm and 6.00pm. The results of the survey were as follows:

Commencement Time	Availability of Members
10.00am	32 (61.5% of those responding)
2.00pm	30 (58% of those responding)
4.00pm	29 (56% of those responding)
6.00pm	51 (98% of those responding)

To date the Council has not undertaken any research on the accessibility of meetings to the public or how the timing of meetings impacts on accessibility for different sectors of society.

2.6 Risk management

A risk assessment has not been undertaken in respect to the formulation of the programme of meetings. The risks associated with human resources policies and equalities and diversity are addressed in the report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Executive
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager, Policy and Partnerships