

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

Date: 23 January 2014

ITEM 9

Title: Programme of Meetings 2014/15

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s): Mrs Norma Redfearn

Report from: Law & Governance

Report Author: Vivienne Geary, Head of Law and Governance

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Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

This report presents a draft programme of Council and committee meetings for the 2014/15 municipal year.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Council:

- (1) agrees the programme of meetings for 2014/15, as set out in Appendix A to this report; and
- (2) agrees that the meetings of the full Council proposed for 24 July 2014, 27 November 2014 and 12 March 2015 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 19 December 2013.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report has no direct relevance to the Council 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 2014/15 municipal year, attached as Appendix A to this report. The Authority'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. The provisional dates of Cabinet meetings are included in the timetable for information. These are determined by the Elected Mayor;
 - b) the commencement times of meetings based on the times determined by each committee and sub-committee during 2013/14;
 - c) 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;
 - d) two member briefings per month, one in the afternoon and one in the evening;
 - e) member development including the provision of training for regulatory committees taking place between the Annual Council Meeting and the first meeting of these committees; and
 - f) an Annual Meeting of the Youth Council to be held in the Council Chamber and conducted in the manner of a Full Council meeting.
- 1.5.4 The Area Housing Forums will be asked to determine a programme of meetings for 2014/15 at their meetings during January and February 2014, taking into account the dates of the committees as determined by Council.
- 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 2013, November 2013 and March 2014.

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 2014/15 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 2014/15 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 – 24 January 2013
- (2) The Authority's Constitution
- (3) Diary 2014 & 2015

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The running costs associated with the committee meetings held in 2014/15 can be contained within current budgets.

As a number of committee and sub-committee meetings 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.

2.2 Legal

The Authority'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 2014/15 has taken place with Group Leaders, the Elected Mayor, Chief Executive, 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 Authority 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
- Chief Executive
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager, Policy and Partnerships