

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 18 February 2008
AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager

CABINET SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2008-2009

Purpose

1. To consider and agree a schedule of meetings for the 2008-2009 Civic Year. The matter was deferred from the last meeting to allow discussions with the Chairman of Scrutiny and Overview Committee to achieve better co-ordination of meeting dates. This meeting has since taken place and the issues successfully resolved. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee will be asked to agree its schedule for 2008-2009 at its meeting on 14 February 2008.
2. This is not a key decision, however it is appropriate for the Cabinet to agree publicly its meeting schedule in the interests of transparent local government.

Considerations

3. The proposal below provides for monthly Cabinet meetings except for August 2008 and follows the existing pattern of meetings which has operated since 2004. Over the past year, the number of Council meetings has been reduced, the Scheme of Delegation of Cabinet functions to Portfolio Holders extended and local targets to minimise the number of information items on the Cabinet agenda introduced. For these reasons, it is expected that the amount of business being considered by Cabinet during 2008-09 will be reduced. This may in turn allow a reduction in the number of Cabinet meetings required in future years.

Proposed meeting dates 2008-2009

4. Assuming meetings are held on, or as near to as possible, the second Thursday of the month:

CABINET MEETING	Council meeting
5 June 2008 (a)	
3 July 2008	17 July 2008
11 September 2008	25 September 2008
9 October 2008	
13 November 2008	27 November 2008
11 December 2008	
15 January 2009	29 January 2009
12 February 2009	26 February 2009
12 March 2009	
16 April 2009 (b)	23 April 2009
14 May 2009	21 May 2009

Note the following points:

- (a) June and July 2008 meetings on the first Thursday so as to allow a 2-week gap before Council on 17 July 2009.

- (b) April 2009 meeting scheduled only one week before Council to avoid Maundy Thursday.

Time and venue for meetings

5. Cabinet may wish to review times and venues for its meetings. Meetings are currently held at 2.00pm, with the exception of the meeting on 18 February 2008 which will commence at 7.00pm, the second in a trial to establish whether evening meetings stimulated higher levels of public interest and attendance. The evening meeting held in October 2007 did not attract higher public attendance. Meetings are currently held at the Council Offices; Cabinet may wish to consider whether it wishes to hold meetings at venues around the district in order to stimulate public interest in democracy.

Implications

6.	Financial	Holding evening meetings or those at outside venues will incur additional overtime, hiring and equipment costs.
	Legal	None specific
	Staffing	See above.
	Risk Management	There are specific risks associated with evening and outside meetings in terms of lone working and first aid cover which would need to be assessed in detail.
	Equal Opportunities	Holding evening and outside meetings increases accessibility to the Council's services amongst groups who would not normally have the opportunity to attend e.g. those working full daytime hours, those without cars or with other mobility issues. Having said this, previous trials of evening meetings have not been successful in this regard.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

7.	Affordable Homes	None specific
	Customer Service	Agreeing an appropriate amount of meetings at appropriate times and venues enhances customer service through greater accessibility to the Council's executive, and efficient decision-making.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	None specific
	Quality, Accessible Services	None specific
	Village Life	Holding meetings at venues around the district will enhance village life through the opportunity for the community to participate in democracy at a local level.
	Sustainability	None specific
	Partnership	None specific

Conclusions/Summary

8. Cabinet is invited to consider and agree date, time and venue arrangements for its meetings during 2008-2009.

Recommendation

9. That Cabinet agree a meeting schedule for the 2008-2009 Civic Year based on the following dates, and that consideration be given to the time and venue for meetings:

CABINET MEETING	Council meeting
5 June 2008	
3 July 2008	17 July 2008
11 September 2008	25 September 2008
9 October 2008	
13 November 2008	27 November 2008
11 December 2008	
15 January 2009	29 January 2009
12 February 2009	26 February 2009
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Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Cambridgeshire County Council meeting schedule 2008-2009

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