

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council 26 November 2009
AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Corporate Manager for Community and Customer Services

CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE 2010-2011 CIVIC YEAR

Purpose

1. To recommend a programme of meetings for the 2010-2011 Civic Year (May-May) for consideration and agreement by Council in accordance with Standing Order 2.1.

Considerations – Dates and times for meetings

2. It is proposed that five ordinary meetings be scheduled during the 2010-2011 Civic Year, plus a meeting to set the budget in February 2011 and an Annual Meeting in May 2011.
3. Council meetings have traditionally taken place at 2.00pm; during the 2009-2010 Civic Year, the July and November 2009 meetings commenced at 7.00pm. Council is invited to determine suitable start times for its meetings during 2010-2011.
4. The meeting dates proposed take into account meetings of the County Council and school term dates for 2010-2011. Where possible, half-term and school holidays have been avoided, with the following exceptions:
 - The meeting to set the budget on 24 February 2011 falls during half-term; however, a meeting is necessary on this date to comply with statutory timescales and enable Council Tax bills to be dispatched in a timely manner;
 - The meeting on 14 April 2011 falls during the school holidays. Traditionally, the April meeting has taken place later in the month; however, Maundy Thursday falls on 21 April 2011 and the Council Chamber is required for preparation for local elections on 28 April 2011;
5. The proposed meeting dates are set out in the following table:

Date	Type of meeting
22 July 2010*	Ordinary
23 September 2010	Ordinary
25 November 2010	Ordinary
27 January 2011	Ordinary
24 February 2011	Budget
14 April 2011	Ordinary
26 May 2011	Annual

* School summer holidays commence on this date.

6. The proposal provides for the same number of meetings as in 2009-2010.

Implications

7.	Financial	The cost of Members' travelling expenses is around £375 per meeting. The cost of paper and postage is around £100 per meeting. The agreement of additional Council meetings would result in these costs rising proportionally.
	Legal	There is a legal requirement for the whole Council to meet at certain times to carry out functions only it can perform such as appointing the Leader of the Council and committees, deciding the budget and approving the Performance Plan. There is no laid-down number of other ordinary meetings. In years where elections are held the Annual Meeting must be held within 21 days of the retirement of the outgoing councillors (Standing Order 1.1 and the Local Government Act 1972).
	Staffing	A higher number of meetings would entail a proportionately greater demand on senior officer time.
	Risk Management	None specific
	Equal Opportunities	None specific

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

8. The scheduling of an appropriate number of Council meetings at which the policy and budgetary frameworks are agreed (and amended where necessary) and other business dealt with in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution, is essential to the efficient and effective operation of the whole organisation. It is considered that a schedule of seven Council meetings per year best provides a timely forum in which all Councillors can debate issues of concern to the district, whilst allowing Officers and Members sufficient time between formal meetings to progress work towards meeting the Council's strategic aims.

Recommendations

9. (1) That meetings during the 2010-2011 Civic Year be scheduled to take place on the following dates:
- 22 July 2010;
 - 23 September 2010
 - 25 November 2010
 - 27 January 2011
 - 24 February 2011 (Budget Meeting)
 - 14 April 2011
 - 26 May 2011 (Annual Meeting).
- (2) That suitable start times for the above meetings be agreed.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

The Council's Constitution

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