

CABINET

21 May 2013

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| Title: Calendar of Meetings 2013/14 | |
| Report of the Leader of the Council | |
| Open Report | For Decision |
| Wards Affected: None | Key Decision: No |
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| Accountable Divisional Director: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services | |
| Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive | |
| Summary: This report sets out the proposed principles for the calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year 2013/14 and seeks the Cabinet's confirmation to those principles. | |
| Recommendation(s) The Cabinet is recommended to agree the basis of the calendar of meetings for 2013/14 as detailed in the report. | |
| Reason(s) To accord with the requirements of the Council Constitution. | |

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The annual programme of meetings covers all scheduled Council meetings and typically relates to the 12 month period from mid May each year.
- 1.2 The date of the 2014 Local Elections is likely to be influenced by the timing of the 2014 European Elections, the date for which has yet to be confirmed by the European Union. The timing of the Local Elections has a direct bearing on the Council's programme of meetings because of 'purdah' requirements. As a general rule, the purdah period begins six weeks before the date of an election and local authorities are prohibited from undertaking certain activities during that period. As a consequence, the Council has typically kept to a minimum the number of meetings held during the purdah period, holding only those meetings that are required.

- 1.3 With that in mind, the full programme for April and May 2014 will be set once the date of the Local Elections is known and in the context of the election period.
- 1.4 The proposed programme for 2013/14 can be viewed at <http://moderngov.barking-dagenham.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1>.

2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1 The general principles underpinning the annual calendar of meetings are well established and the proposals for the 2013/14 municipal year largely follow those principles.
- 2.2 Wherever possible clashes between meetings have been avoided and meetings scheduled outside of school holiday periods, although certain statutory deadlines and/or other legitimate reasons mean that this has not always been possible.
- 2.3 Set out below are the proposals in respect of the Council's main meetings:

Assembly

The Assembly has been scheduled to meet on five occasions during the 2013/14 municipal year. There are two key dates during the year, namely the end of February for the budget / Council Tax setting and mid May for the Annual Meeting (although the date of the Annual Meeting in 2014 will be set in the light of the date of the Local Elections). The proposed scheduling avoids school holidays and means that the Assembly would meet approximately every 10 weeks, which is considered sufficient.

Cabinet

There are 11 meetings of the Cabinet proposed for the 2013/14 municipal year, typically on a four-weekly schedule (no meeting during August).

Licensing and Regulatory Board

These have been scheduled fortnightly in order to ensure that applications are considered within statutory timescales. Where there are no applications to consider, the meetings would be cancelled.

Development Control Board

These have been scheduled four-weekly in order to ensure that applications are considered within statutory timescales.

Personnel Board

These have been scheduled fortnightly but where there are no cases to consider, the meetings would be cancelled.

Standards Committee

In the light of changes to the Standards Committee regime as a consequence of the Localism Act 2011, it is considered sufficient for the Committee to now meet on a quarterly basis rather than every two months as was the case under the former, more complex legislative arrangements. In addition, the scheduling of the meeting has been changed so that meetings now take place on either a Tuesday or

Wednesday at 5.00pm, as opposed to Thursday at 3pm, to better suit the needs of the membership which now consists entirely of Councillors.

Select Committees

The Constitution refers to Select Committees meeting approximately every six weeks (eight times a year). Up to the end of February 2014, six meetings of each Select Committee are scheduled. The programme allows for a further meeting to be scheduled in late March / April 2014 (subject to the timing of the Local Elections) and also allows for an additional meeting to be added if necessary towards the end of 2013 to deal with any budget-related issues.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Meetings of the new Health and Wellbeing Board have been scheduled on an approximate six-weekly basis.

2.4 Meetings of the Pensions Panel, Employee Joint Consultative Committee, Employee Joint Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee have been scheduled quarterly, in line with normal arrangements.

2.5 There are a number of other meetings, such as those associated with the Local Strategic Partnership, the Housing Forums and school governing bodies, which are also included in the full Council calendar. The scheduling of these meetings is determined by the bodies themselves but they are asked to have regard to the Council's programme when setting their respective schedules.

3. Options Appraisal

3.1 The proposals within this report generally reflect the standard approach to the annual calendar. There is always some flexibility within the calendar to allow for in-year changes.

4. Consultation

4.1 The key principles which underpin this report have been agreed in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader, Labour Group Secretary and relevant officers. Once the Cabinet has approved them, the full programme of meetings will be made widely available.

5. Financial Implications

Implications verified by: Jon Bunt, Divisional Director of Finance

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

Implications verified by: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Customer Impact** - The arrangements for the 2013/14 municipal year follow the same general pattern as previous years and are therefore not considered to have any material impact on customers.
- 7.2 **Property / Asset Issues** - The Council's meetings are typically held in the Civic Centre or Town Hall due to their accessibility and to minimise costs.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Council Constitution

List of appendices: None