

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**REPORT OF SENIOR  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**COUNCIL DECISION/CABINET DECISION**

**Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook**

**DEMOCRACY DIARY 2019-23**

1. Summary

In an attempt to give clarity for Members and Officers regarding the diary of scheduled Council and Committee meetings for the next entire electoral period of office, work has commenced on the draft Democracy Diary of Meetings 2019 – 2023.

Cabinet are invited to note the draft diary and invite Council to consider a proposed change to the time of Council meetings with effect from the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

2. Recommendations

Recommended that:-

1. Cabinet note the draft Democracy Diary for 2019/23 and that it be circulated to all Councillors/Officers for information.
2. Council consider the proposed change of time for Council meetings suggesting that the meetings commence at 6.00pm with effect from the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To give clarity for Members and Officers regarding the diary of scheduled Council and Committee meetings for the next entire electoral period of office.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**REPORT OF SENIOR  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**COUNCIL DECISION/CABINET DECISION**

**DEMOCRACY DIARY 2019-23**

**SUMMARY**

In an attempt to give clarity for Members and Officers regarding the diary of scheduled Council and Committee meetings for the next entire electoral period of office, work has commenced on the draft Democracy Diary of Meetings 2019 – 2023.

Cabinet are invited to note the draft diary and invite Council to consider a proposed change to the time of Council meetings with effect from the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommended that:-

1. Cabinet note the draft Democracy Diary for 2019/23 and that it be circulated to all Councillors/Officers for information.
2. Council consider the proposed change of time for Council meetings suggesting that the meetings commence at 6.00pm with effect from the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

**BACKGROUND**

1. The draft Democracy Diary (**Appendix 1**) has been prepared for the electoral period 2019 - 2023 with a view to key dates and scheduled meetings being confirmed to assist Members and Officers in their work planning for the entire electoral period.
2. Feedback obtained previously from both Officers and Members indicated support for advance certainty regarding the majority of Council and Committee dates as it facilitates service planning and gives Members the opportunity to manage other commitments around scheduled meetings and determine which committee times are most suitable for them to attend prior to them putting forward their nomination. It should be noted however that upon confirmation of the Chair/Vice and Members of each Committee at Annual Council, a Committee **could** decide to make changes to its scheduled date/time should it so wish; which we would advise only be done following reference to the Democracy Diary.

**DETAIL**

3. Consultation to date has taken place on the draft Democracy Diary with the following:-

-Service Directorates responsible for – Planning & Licensing Committees, Select and Audit Committees, Health & Wellbeing Board, scheduled Consultative Bodies; and the Director of Finance regarding need for Special Council meetings for budget consideration;

-School Governing Body Section of Children’s Services regarding dates of School Holidays.

4. Reference has also been paid to:-

- The current pattern of meetings of Joint Bodies, including the TVCA and the Fire Authority;
- LGA Annual Conference dates;
- SBC Events Team regards known dates of corporate events over the period.

5. The diary is based on the following principles as closely as they can be applied:-

- Council meetings being scheduled to consider Cabinet recommendations should any arise and held outside of the school holiday periods wherever possible,
- Cabinet meeting every four weeks with special meetings arranged as required,
- Meetings of the Executive Scrutiny Committee scheduled monthly but with the option of convening additional dates should a valid call-in of a Cabinet decision be received,
- Planning Committee now meeting every four weeks,
- Licensing Committee meeting every six weeks, Sub Committees as required,
- Indicative dates / times given for meetings of the Select Committees based on current timings and on the understanding that it would be the responsibility of the Committee itself to determine its own meeting requirements / cycle within the context of their agreed work programme and add/amend dates / times as necessary
- An August Recess with the exception of meetings considered necessary to carry out essential business that cannot be deferred; eg consideration of Planning and Licensing applications,
- Stockton Youth Assembly – it should be noted that the diary does not include currently any dates of meetings of this Assembly as its governance arrangements are at this moment under review.

6. The Democracy Diary also includes:-

- Health and Wellbeing Board meeting monthly
- Bi – monthly meetings of the Children and Young People’s & Adults Partnerships, along with bi-monthly meetings of the Domestic Abuse Steering Group
- Bi-monthly meetings of the newly established Corporate Parenting Board
- Safer Stockton Partnership meeting on average every 6 weeks
- Cleveland Police and Crime Panel meeting a minimum 4 times a year.

7. It should be noted that any proposed dates contained within the draft Democracy Diary can be amended or cancelled as appropriate with the agreement of the Chair of the Committee should it prove necessary to do so at any stage. At present, start times for each of the meetings vary with two thirds being held either morning or early afternoon, with the remainder held tea time or early evening.

8. With regard to the start time for full Council meetings, with the exception of the Annual Council meeting (11.00am) it has been the custom and practice for many years now for these meetings to commence at 7.00pm. A proposal has been put forward that it may be more favourable to both elected members and officers for these meetings to now commence at **6.00pm** and not 7.00pm.

9. A similar proposal was considered informally in December 2014 with opinion split at that time amongst members and each political group. The perceived benefits to the earlier start time would be that both members and officers would potentially be able to attend the

meeting after the normal working day and be home at a more sociable time; thereby improving the work/life balance for each.

10. It is therefore considered timely for this proposal to be considered by full Council once prior to the dates/times of Council meetings being confirmed at Annual Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.

#### **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

11. There are no Community Impact implications arising from this report.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. None specifically arising from this report.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

14. Low risk.

#### **COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES**

15. Developing strong and healthy communities

#### **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

16. As outlined at paragraph 3.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Margaret Waggott  
**Post Title:** Assistant Director of Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services  
**Telephone No.** 01642 527064  
**Email Address:**

Education related? No

Background Papers N/A

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: All

Property

None