

| Report of | Meeting | Date |
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| Director of Transformation (Introduced by the Executive Leader) | Executive Cabinet | 18 February 2010 |

REVIEW OF COUNCIL MEETINGS CALENDAR 2010/2011

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The Value for Money Review of Corporate Services raised a number of areas for further investigation, including recommending that a review be undertaken of the Council's meetings calendar with a view to conducting the Council's business through fewer meetings, enabling the deletion of one of the four posts of Democratic and Members Services Officer

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the following changes in scheduled meetings be agreed:

2. Executive Cabinet, Informal Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee each reduce from 10 meetings a year down to 8.
3. Council meetings reduce from 7 meetings a year to 6 with the January meeting being removed from the calendar.
4. Member Support Working Group reduce from 5 meetings a year to 4.
5. That support for the Rivington and Brinscall Advisory Group be reviewed with Lancashire County Council.
6. That the number of scrutiny reviews be managed within the resources of the team.
7. The Policy team rather than Democratic Services team, support both the Chorley Partnership Board and Chorley Partnership Executive.
8. The Policy team rather than the Democratic Services team support any Task Groups established by the Equality Forum.
9. The Planning team rather than Democratic Services team support the Local Development Framework Working Group, but Democratic Services continue to support the Joint Central Lancashire LDF (on a rotational basis) as at present.
10. In recognition of the importance of the neighbourhood working agenda to Councillors, Democratic Services support one Neighbourhood Tour and one Neighbourhood Area Action Planning meeting per Neighbourhood Area per year – dates to be set in advance and included in the meetings timetable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

11. These recommendations, along with other more minor changes in working practice, will allow a sufficient reduction in the workload of the team to allow the deletion of one post of Democratic and Member Services Officer.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12. There remains an option to retain a similar calendar of meetings with no fundamental changes but this would not allow the reduction in staffing and therefore costs in the Democratic Services team.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

13. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

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| Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region | | Develop local solutions to climate change. | |
| Improving equality of opportunity and life chances | | Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live | |
| Involving people in their communities | | Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization | / |

BACKGROUND

14. On 3 December 2009, Executive Cabinet agreed a report on the outcome of Corporate Services VFM Reviews including a review of Democratic Services.

Democratic Services scored 14.5 overall from the elements of rationale (3/4), efficiency (3/4), economy (3/4), effectiveness (2.5/4) and impact (3/4). The report indicated that there was approximately 30% more meetings taking place in Chorley than in other similar authorities and recommended that a review be undertaken looking at:

- The number of meetings overall
- The frequency and time of meetings; and
- The need for Democratic Services to support all meetings

REVIEW OF MEETINGS

15. In 2008 a review of meetings was undertaken which resulted in a number of changes including the restructuring of Overview and Scrutiny and changes to the Licensing meetings structure. The team also took on the Member Development role from HR; introduced intheknow; absorbed new Standards requirements. There was also a change in the staffing of the team with the four staff supporting meetings being brought onto the same grade.

16. In reviewing the current meetings structure there is a need to ensure continued good governance of decision making and that the Council's business is transacted as quickly and efficiently as possible. However there is some scope for change and the list below considers each element of the meetings calendar with recommendations and the rationale for those suggested changes. This includes formalising arrangements around Neighbourhood Area Working.

| Meeting | Current | Proposed | Rationale and recommendations |
|---------|---------|----------|-------------------------------|
|---------|---------|----------|-------------------------------|

| | number of meetings 2009/10 | number of meetings in 2010/11 | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Council | 7 (3 special, 4 ordinary) | 6 (3 special, 3 ordinary) | If meetings are evenly spaced and special meetings consider other Council business, the January meeting could be removed |
| Executive Cabinet | 10 | 8 | By reducing meetings down to approximately every 6 weeks, there is scope for fewer meetings of the Executive Cabinet. The business could be accommodated in fewer meetings - as long as they are timed to allow key decisions to be made at the right time. |
| Informal Cabinet | 10 | 8 | |
| Overview & Scrutiny Committee | 10 | 8 | |
| Scrutiny Task Groups/ Reviews | 3 to 4 task groups, total of 24 meetings a year | To be managed within the resources available | It is suggested that the number of scrutiny reviews not be specified, but managed within the resources available, bearing in mind the additional crime and disorder scrutiny to be undertaken. |
| Development Control Committee | 12 | 12 | No change is suggested |
| Licensing & Public Protection Committee | 4 | 4 | There were a number of changes to licensing last year – all of which worked well – no further change is suggested. |
| Licensing Sub Committees | 12 scheduled but are arranged/ cancelled as required | 12 scheduled but are arranged/ cancelled as required | The number of Sub Committee meetings is dictated by licensing applications/reviews. |
| Audit Committee | 4 | 4 | No change suggested |
| Standards Committee | 4 | 4 | No change suggested |
| Standards Sub Committees | 12 approx – meet as and when required | As and when required | The number of Sub Committee meetings is dictated by cases being considered. |
| Member Learning Sessions | 8 | 8 | No change suggested |
| LDF Working Group | 7 | 7 | It is suggested that the Working Group continue but that the Planning team supporting the Group. |
| Central Lancs LDF Joint Advisory Committee | 5 | 5 – Chorley supports 1 in 3 meetings | No change |
| Equality Forum | 4 | 4 | No change |
| Equality Forum Task Groups | Approx 2 per year, total of 6 to 8 meetings | | It is suggested that the Policy team support any Task Group set up by the Equality Forum |
| Borough Parish Liaison | 3 | 3 | No change |
| Parish Clerks Meeting | 3 | 3 | No change |

| | | | |
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| Members Support Working Group | 5 | 4 | Suggest reduce to quarterly meetings |
| Chorley Partnership Board | 4 | 4 | No change to meetings frequency but suggest the Policy team support rather than Democratic Services |
| Chorley Partnership Executive | 6 | 6 | |
| Safer Chorley & South Ribble Partnership | 4 | 4 | No change |
| Rivington & Brinscall Advisory Committee | 4 | To be reviewed | Suggest that support for this be reviewed and be subject to discussions with LCC who manage the overarching West Pennine Moors body. Most of the business of the meeting is United Utilities or LCC with very little officer input from Chorley Council. |
| Neighbourhood Working Action Plan Meetings/Tours | No formalised meetings but ward walks; action plan meetings; n/hood bus tours etc with partners have been organised by Democratic Services | 7 x N/hood Action Plan Meetings in Jan/Feb 7 x N/hood Tours in Sept/Oct with partners | Providing Members in each of the Neighbourhood Areas with one meeting and one tour a year would retain the formal involvement of Members in Neighbourhood Working. It is suggested that these dates to be scheduled in the meetings calendar. |

Members views on the suggestions are invited. As soon as a way forward is agreed a calendar of meetings for 2010/2011 will be circulated.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

17. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

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| Finance | | Customer Services | |
| Human Resources | | Equality and Diversity | |
| Legal | / | No significant implications in this area | |

GARY HALL
DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

| Report Author | Ext | Date | Doc ID |
|---------------|------|-----------------|--------|
| Carol Russell | 5196 | 1 February 2009 | |