

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Calendar of Meetings 2018/2019	
Report No:	COU/FH/18/008	
Report to and date:	Council	21 February 2018
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Stephen Edwards Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance Tel: 01799 530325 Email: stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officers:	Karen Points Assistant Director (Human Resources, Legal & Democratic) Tel: 01284 757015 Email: karen.points@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
	Leah Mickleborough Service Manager (Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer Tel: 01284 757162 Email: leah.mickleborough@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To approve the forthcoming Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019.	
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019, attached as Appendix A to Report No: COU/FH/18/008, be approved.	
Key Decision:	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:	The Leadership Team and both the West Suffolk councils' Cabinets were informally consulted on the content of the draft calendars.	
Alternative options:	Not applicable	

Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> The Council has a statutory responsibility for the provision of a range of services and has to ensure that the procedures which are followed to make relevant decisions are efficient, transparent, and accountable to local people. The publication of a calendar of meetings supports this decision making process.	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Not publishing a calendar of meetings could mean that local people were not aware of when the Council was due to conduct business and could restrict their opportunity for their rightful participation	Medium	Publication of the calendar of meetings on the Council's website	Low
Wards affected:		Not applicable	
Documents attached:		Appendix A – Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

- 1.1 The Council is invited to approve the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019 as at Appendix A.
- 1.2 Other meetings not listed in the Council's Constitution will also be scheduled for the 2018/2019 year and Members will be advised of these accordingly.
- 1.3 Those meetings which are arranged on an 'as required' basis such as the newly established informal non-decision making Growth and Innovation Group, will continue to be scheduled and publicised as normal and Members will receive notification of these as per the current process.

2. Particular Issues of Note

- 2.1 In light of our important journey towards the creation of a single council for West Suffolk, which is currently timetabled to become effective from 1 April 2019, and the extensive number of projects currently in progress, elements of which require Member approval, the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/2019 contains a higher quantity of meetings than a usual municipal year.
- 2.2 The main changes from other years are as follows:
 - (a) **Joint Forest Heath District Council (FHDC)/St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) Cabinets and Full Council:** Meetings have initially been arranged on a monthly basis to accommodate the expected increase in substantive business. Agendas will be managed accordingly, and where it is considered insufficient business is scheduled to warrant the convening of a meeting, the meeting will be cancelled (subject to the necessary agreements being obtained). Already having meetings in diaries reduces the need to arrange additional extraordinary meetings, which can sometimes be called at relatively short notice and cause problems for members who have prior commitments. As previously informally discussed with FHDC and SEBC Cabinet Members, FHDC and SEBC Cabinets will now hold **all** their meetings jointly (with voting and decisions taken during formal separate meetings, as is current practice for joint meetings). This will ensure the principle is maintained that each Council only votes on their "own" decisions.
 - (b) **Shadow Authority:** Report No COU/FH/17/029, considered by Council at its extraordinary meeting on 18 October 2017, provided details of the technical matters and transitional arrangements required in the lead up to the creation of the single council. The new Council will be technically implemented using a Shadow Authority to run parallel to the two Councils, and comprise all current FHDC and SEBC Councillors. The Shadow Authority will set policies, the constitution and budget for the

new Council before it takes on the powers and functions in April 2019. Meetings have therefore been arranged on a monthly basis at West Suffolk House alongside every meeting of SEBC's Council. The Shadow Council will meet first, and will be immediately followed by SEBC Council, thus allowing FHDC Members to depart if they wish. Again, agendas will be managed accordingly, and where it is considered insufficient business is scheduled to warrant the convening of a meeting, the meeting will be cancelled. The current Council Chamber at Forest Heath does not have the capacity to accommodate a Shadow Council meeting.

- (c) **Implementation Executive:** The Implementation Executive (Shadow Cabinet) will take ownership of the oversight of ensuring a smooth transition at the new authority's transfer date. Meetings have been arranged on a monthly to six-weekly basis up until the implementation of the new council.
- (d) **Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee:** This will comprise Members of FHDC and SEBC and will be responsible for holding the Implementation Executive to account for its actions, and review and scrutinise some policies to be set by the Shadow Authority (such as scrutinising the budget for 2019/20). Meetings have been arranged alongside both SEBC and FHDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) meetings in September 2018, January 2019 and March 2019. O&S Committee Members of both authorities are requested to note ***all*** Shadow O&S Committee dates in case either date is used for a Shadow O&S Committee meeting. Meetings will be cancelled where not required.
- (e) **Joint Constitution Review Group and Future Governance Steering Group:** The workload for each of these informal Groups is expected to increase considerably during the single council transition period. Whilst non-decision making, each Group has an important role in working through the technical and constitutional requirements of creating the single council. Meetings have therefore been arranged to reflect this increase in workload accordingly. *Note: Meetings of these informal, non-decision making Groups are not open to the public; however, any recommendations emanating from meetings will be subject to the usual democratic process and will be considered in public at Cabinet/Council meetings, as appropriate.*
- (f) **West Suffolk Joint Independent Remuneration Panel/Selection Panel:** A new Members' Allowances Scheme will need to be agreed and approved with effect from 1 April 2019. Dates for meetings of the Selection Panel for appointing a new Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and dates for meetings of the new IRP itself, will be arranged in due course.

2.3 As it is still not certain that a single council will be created from 1 April

2019, some meeting dates remain in the calendar for the separate authorities post 1 April. The full Calendar will therefore be reviewed towards the end of 2018 to ascertain whether meeting dates remain relevant and appropriate, although these dates may well be used for equivalent meetings in the 2019/20 calendar. Any amendments required will be recommended accordingly.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The addition of extra meetings in 2018/2019 is exceptional and largely relates to the consideration of business during the transition period leading to the creation of a single council for West Suffolk from 1 April 2019.
- 3.2 We are unlikely to experience another municipal year in the near future which warrants such an increase in meetings convened. Members' flexibility and patience is therefore appreciated during this shadow/transition year.
- 3.3 Members are asked to note **all** meeting dates relevant to them in their diaries, whilst noting that rather than calling extraordinary meetings at relatively short notice, some meetings may be cancelled where insufficient business warrants the convening of a meeting.