

To: Council
Date: 5 December 2016
Report of: Interim Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Council and Committee programme May 2017 to May 2019

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	This report sets out a programme of Council, Committee and other meetings for the 2017/18 council year (May 2017 to May 2018 inclusive) and for the 2018/19 council year (May 2018 to May 2019 inclusive)
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member with responsibility for this area:	Councillor Price, Leader of the Council
Corporate Priority:	None
Policy Framework:	None
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve the programme of Council, Committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 1 for the council year 2017/18; and 2. approve the programme of Council, Committee and other meetings attached at Appendix 1 for the council year 2018/19, subject to amendment at Council in December 2017; and 3. delegate the setting of dates for the Standards Committee, the Growth Board, and training and briefing sessions for members to the Interim Head of Law and Governance. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Programme of Council and Committee meetings for the council years 2017/18 and 2018/19
Appendix 1a	Programme of meetings in calendar format
Appendix 1b	Programme of Scrutiny, City Executive Board and Council meetings in calendar format
Appendix 2	School holidays, public holidays and major religious festivals taken into account in preparing this calendar

Introduction and background

1. This report and appendices set out the proposed schedule of Council and Committee meetings for the municipal years May 2017 to May 2019.
2. Setting the programme for all main Council and Committee meetings in advance allows for good governance, efficient decision making and helps councillors and officers to plan their workloads.
3. This schedule may require alteration as the year progresses because of changing constraints and requirements for decision making. The Constitution contains provisions for cancelling meetings where there is no business and scheduling special meetings if required. Committees have the authority to set or amend their meeting schedules.
4. Last December Council asked officers to reconsider meetings scheduled:
 - During school holidays; and
 - During some religious festivals

These dates are avoided wherever possible as the principle used in timetabling is that Council business must happen but the broader needs of members should be taken in account. It is not possible to schedule all meetings to avoid holidays and festivals. For most committees members are able to get substitutes.

School Holidays

5. Council meetings are scheduled to fall outside school holidays and to avoid the party conferences in 2017. To accommodate this and the business of the Council, the July 2017 meeting is on a Thursday. The budget meeting is on the last possible date (just after the half-term week) but this then requires the Executive Board to meet in half term. Other regular meetings need to be scheduled in school holidays but none require the attendance of all members. Appendix 2 shows Oxfordshire's school holiday dates.

Religious festivals

6. There are 6 main faiths represented in the UK and they all have festivals and days of obligation. The main Christian festivals coincide with public holidays. Public meetings on Eid-al-Adha, Eid-al-Fitr, and Rosh Hashanah have been avoided. In addition Diwali has also been taken into account because this is known to be celebrated in Oxford. Appendix 2 shows these dates.

The Programme

7. Appendices 1 and 1a set out in different formats the programme for all main committee meetings. Appendix 1b shows the programme for City Executive Board, Scrutiny Committee, and Council meetings as these provide the framework for non-regulatory decision making.
8. Additional dates for the Executive Board and corresponding dates if the Scrutiny Committee wishes to pre-scrutinise decisions are scheduled in:
 - June 2018 for the Local Plan
 - August only for urgent decisions
9. The two area planning committees have scheduled monthly meetings.

10. An additional date to be used for either committee is available in case the business cannot be completed at one meeting, and the Planning Review Committee is scheduled to meet if required on that date. These dates may be used for other committee meetings or briefings if not required for their original purpose.
11. The three sub-committees dealing with regulatory licensing functions meet frequently but not regularly. The Licensing Act 2003 Hearings Sub-Committee has to meet within set timescales and dates for this sub-committee have been scheduled. Meetings of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Sub-Committee have been scheduled. Officers can cancel or convene sub-committee meetings on these dates or on alternative dates as required by the caseload.
12. The default start time for all meetings is 6.00pm with the exception of Council and City Executive Board meetings which are 5.00pm. Committees are able to vary this time and in 2016/17 year some have. These agreed start times are reflected in the schedule in Appendix 1 and will be carried over, subject to confirmation at the first meeting of the 2017/18. Any committees wishing to vary the start time beyond 6.00pm should consult the Committee and Member Services Manager.
13. Where known, dates for training and for briefing sessions are included to allow Councillors to plan ahead. Councillors are advised to note these dates in their diaries now.
14. Councillors will be asked to book compulsory training dates when these are scheduled. Advanced non-compulsory planning training will be scheduled on at least four of the dates reserved for the Planning Review Committee. These sessions are not open to the public. The compulsory and non-compulsory training programme will be published separately taking into account changes agreed by Council. Officers are consulting on the programme for member briefing sessions these dates will be reflected in the programme.
15. Dates have not been set for the Standards Committee as it meets infrequently. It is recommended that the Interim Head of Law and Governance is authorised to convene the Standards Committee as required.
16. The Scrutiny Committee will agree review groups for 2017/18 and these groups will set their own meeting dates. When the Scrutiny standing panels are agreed, they will set their meeting dates and these will be added to the programme.
17. A revised schedule will be put before Council if Council makes changes to the committee structure at its annual meeting.
18. The schedule for 2018/19 reproduces that for 2017/18 with minor variations to account for changes in festivals and holidays. This is provisional and will be confirmed at Council in December 2017.

Access to the Diary

These diary dates will be available on line via the internet and intranet. This on-line diary is the most effective way to view accurate public meeting dates. In addition the diary file can be downloaded into individual member's calendars but will not automatically update. Committee and Member Services Staff can help with the downloading of calendars. Weekly schedules will continue to be issued throughout the year.

Legal issues

19. None.

Financial Issues

20. None.

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Background Papers: None
