



To: Members of the Democratic Services Committee

Date: 7 February 2013

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **FRIDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2013** in **CONFERENCE ROOM 1A, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN.**

Yours sincerely

G Williams
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at this meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 5 - 10)

To receive and approve the minutes of the Democratic Services Committee meeting held on 13th December, 2012 (copy attached).

5 COMPARISON OF RESOURCES FOR SCRUTINY IN NORTH WALES
(Pages 11 - 18)

To consider a report by the Democratic Services Manager (copy attached) regarding the resources available to each authority and examples of how they are deployed.

6 RESULTS OF TIMINGS OF MEETINGS SURVEY (Pages 19 - 30)

To consider a report by the Democratic Services Manager (copy attached) assessing the results of the survey.

7 UPDATE ON FINAL STATUTORY GUIDANCE:

(a) JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(b) ANNUAL REPORTS BY MEMBERS

To consider a verbal report by the Democratic Services Manager regarding an update on Joint Scrutiny issues and processes for supporting Annual Reports.

8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

To consider future items.

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Bill Cowie
Stuart Davies
Martyn Holland
Gwyneth Kensler
Barry Mellor
Win Mullen-James

Bob Murray
Peter Owen
Merfyn Parry
Arwel Roberts
Gareth Sandilands

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DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 13 December 2012 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Bill Cowie, Stuart Davies, Martyn Holland, Gwyneth Kensler and Arwel Roberts.

Councillor Colin Hughes attended as an observer.

ALSO PRESENT

Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer (RGW), Democratic Services Manager (SP) and Administrative Officer (CW).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barry Mellor, Win Mullen-James, Bob Murray, Peter Owen and Gareth Sandilands

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED – that Councillor S.A. Davies be appointed Vice Chair of the Democratic services Committee for the ensuing year.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Members declared any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items were raised which in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

5 DESIGNATION OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

A copy of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (HLDS) explained that the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 directed the Local Authority (LA) to have a Democratic Services Committee (DSC). The remit of the DSC being to review the adequacy of the resources to support the democratic function, with particular emphasis being placed on the scrutiny process. The Measure also required the DSC to designate one of the Council's officers to carry out a range of democratic

services functions. The designated officer would be known as the Head of Democratic Services (HDS).

County Council had resolved that membership of the new DSC would consist of eleven Councillors, politically balanced, which would not include a Cabinet Member. The HDS designation would be a statutory, politically restricted post whose role would be to undertake the functions set out section 9 of the Measure and details of the functions had been included in the report.

Section 8 (4) of the Measure stated that the Council may not designate any of the following as the (HDS):-

- Head of Paid Service
- Monitoring Officer
- Chief Finance Officer

Paragraph 3.18 of the Statutory Guidance for the 2011 Measure stated that ‘in many cases, there will be an obvious person who already fulfils much of the HDS function. One would expect the Head of Paid Service to make a recommendation to the DSC as to who would be a suitable candidate’.

Many LA’s had designated the officer directly responsible for managing democratic/committee services. This would avoid duplication and potential conflict between the service provision and statutory roles which were essentially the same. In addition any risk of duplication of roles, advice and lines of management of the service would be avoided. Although the Monitoring Officer could not be the HDS there was no restriction on having the HDS report directly to the Monitoring Officer.

The Committee were informed that consultations had been undertaken in accordance with the Statutory Guidance for the 2011 Measure, the Head of Paid Service and other Members of CET had been consulted. CET had recommended that the Democratic Services Manager be designated as the Head of Democratic Services.

The (HLDS) provided a brief outline of the role and remit of the HDS and following a brief discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – that the Democratic Services Committee agrees that the Council’s Democratic Services Manager be designated as the Council’s ‘Head of Democratic Services’ for the purposes of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

6 CONSULTATION ON JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND ANNUAL REPORTS BY MEMBERS

A copy of a report by the Democratic Services Manager had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Joint Scrutiny

The HDS explained that Section 58 of the Local Government Measure 2011 empowered Welsh Ministers to make regulations to permit two or more Local Authorities (LA's) to appoint a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to issue statutory guidance to which Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees must have regard when exercising its functions. Section 5 also empowered the Welsh Ministers to issue statutory guidance to which LA's must have regard when making arrangements for the production of annual reports under Section 5.

The Welsh Government was currently conducting a consultation exercise for views on the Joint Scrutiny Committees, Appendix 1, and the production of Annual Reports by Members, Appendix 2. Any views expressed by the Committee could be relayed to the Welsh Government. It was confirmed that a similar report would be submitted to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group on the 13th December, 2012 for comments on the joint Scrutiny arrangements.

The Measure gave two or more LA's the power to form Joint Scrutiny Committees to strengthen scrutiny arrangements through the promotion of collaboration and sharing of scrutiny expertise. Joint Committees would make it easier to scrutinise services or issues that cut across geographical boundaries. The draft Guidance provided examples of instances where a Joint Committee might be appropriate and these had been outlined in the report.

In response to a question from Councillor M.L. Holland, the HLDS provided an outline of the Measure which stated that LA's may appoint Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees but there would be no obligation to do so. He referred to the provision of regional and sub-regional services, which might benefit from joint scrutiny arrangements, and to the issue of designated persons. It was explained that there would be an Order which would identify other public bodies which could be subject to joint scrutiny. Matters which could be considered by the 'Crime and Disorder Committee', (the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in Denbighshire), under the Police and Justice Act 2006 could not be covered by a Joint Scrutiny Committee. These included the work of the Community Safety Partnership and various local crime and disorder matters.

Concerns were raised by Councillor W.L. Cowie regarding staffing resources, the possible duplication of work and the subsequent increase in costs. The HLDS referred to the legislative backup and the provision of the appropriate powers to ensure the effectiveness of the joint scrutiny process. Councillor G.M. Kensler explained that the level of scrutiny support provided by some other local authorities in North Wales was greater than that in Denbighshire, particular reference being made to staffing levels. She made reference to recent comments made by the Chief Executive regarding the need to moderate costs by reducing the number of meetings held, and in reply to a suggestion that the use video conferencing be introduced to minimise traveling expenses. The HDS explained that this facility was not currently available for meetings such as joint Scrutiny Committees but could be utilised for Working Groups or Sub-Committees. The HLDS explained that the North Wales Regional School Effectiveness Improvement Service was run by a Joint Committee, and Councillor Kensler felt the Regional Education Committee should be subject to scrutiny by Denbighshire and possibly joint scrutiny. The DSM

explained that the formation of such a Committee would be subject to consideration by the respective Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor M.L. Holland expressed concern regarding directives issued by the Welsh Government regarding collaboration. He highlighted the need to examine the management of internal Committees prior to scrutiny of outside bodies and organisations. However, Councillor Holland felt that the joint scrutiny of cross border issues would be beneficial and could be effective. The HLDS referred to the Draft Regulations which highlighted the necessity for agreement between all interested parties, particularly in respect of the Terms of Reference, prior to the creation of Joint Committees.

It was explained that due to the added complexity in establishing and running a Joint Scrutiny Committee the Guidance recommended outline scoping to help determine whether or not to establish a Joint Committee, and to determine whether an ad-hoc or standing committee was required. A project management approach had been strongly recommended to ensure that objectives were met.

The potential resource implications of establishing and supporting joint Scrutiny Committees would result in additional work for supporting officers, and would be considered as part of the Council's assessment process. This may be managed largely by process-driven support for annual reports but the impact of joint Scrutiny Committees would depend on the scale and scope of the activities. Supporting the annual reports process and approving content for publication would involve additional officer time, particularly in the first year. The cost should be contained within existing resources and be reviewed as the process developed. However, additional demands which may result from these activities would result in fewer resources being available elsewhere, particularly in respect of the scrutiny provisions.

Annual Reports

The HDS explained that the Measure required each LA to have arrangements for every Member to make an annual report on their activities in their role as Councillor, and to have an equal opportunity to publish all those reports. Denbighshire's website would be adapted to include information about the annual reports and where they could be accessed.

The draft Statutory Guidance allowed LA's to place restrictions on the contents of the reports which should be factual and likely to be centred on meetings, events, conferences, training and development. The production of a template for use in completing annual reports should assist Members in completing their report with appropriate information. Based on the Guidance the areas which could be used as the main headings of a template had been incorporated in the report, and the template could contain standard information on the Council's corporate priorities included for each Member's report. As there were certain limitations as to what could be included in an Annual Report a review or editing stage would be required prior to publication. This would ensure that the contents conform to Statutory Guidance and any restrictions placed by the Council.

In response to a question from Councillor W.L. Cowie regarding the requirement for a Councillor to produce an Annual Report, the HLDS provided details of the wording in the Measure as outlined in 4.5 of the report. Members of the Committee expressed their support for the provision of the Annual Reports. In reply to a question from Councillor G.M. Kensler regarding the provision of staffing Resources, the HDS referred to the Chief Finance Officers Statement which indicated that the processing and approving content for publication would involve additional officer time during the first year.

The HLDS explained that the consultation response would be required by the 21st December, 2012. He confirmed that the Lead Member had the delegated authority to submit a response and the views and concerns expressed by the Committee could be incorporated in to the response. Following further discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the Democratic Services Committee:-*

- (a) Notes the draft Statutory Guidance for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees,*
- (b) Notes the draft Statutory Guidance for Annual Reports by Members of a Local Authority; and*
- (c) The HDS to prepare a template with appropriate areas (e.g. attendance at meetings) pre-populated for use by Members in completing their Annual Reports.*

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Democratic Services Manager, which outlined the role of the Democratic Services Committee and requested consideration of future issues for deliberation by the Committee, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The HDS introduced the report and explained that as this was the Committee's first meeting it had been considered appropriate to discuss its remit and develop a forward work programme.

The HDS referred to the design and production of a template to assist Members when completing their annual reports, the template when completed could be presented to the Committee for comments and suggestions. It was also agreed that, following the consultation period, details relating to the final guidance for Joint scrutiny and annual reports be reported to the Committee.

The HLDS explained that the Measures required that a survey be undertaken every term of office to seek the views and requirements of elected Members with regard to the scheduling and flexibility of council meetings in terms of frequency, timing and location. He confirmed that approximately half the Members had provided responses to the survey and suggested that the Committee consider responses when received and the make recommendation to full Council. The Committee agreed that Group Leaders be provided with details of the Members who had not yet provided a response.

In reply to questions from Councillor M.L. Holland, the HLDS provided details of the Committee's Terms of Reference which included reviewing the adequacy and

provision by the Authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, particularly scrutiny support, committee administration and member services. The Committee would not make final decisions in respect of these matters but could negotiate with the HDS, Chief Finance Officer and appropriate Lead Members and submit formal reports on these issues to full Council.

Councillor C. Hughes explained that while scrutiny support in Denbighshire had been very good, the level of support and provision of resources had been considerably less than that provided by other Local Authorities. Members agreed that a report be submitted to the Democratic Services Committee detailing the resources and support provided for scrutiny in Denbighshire, together with, comparisons with other Local Authorities in North Wales.

In reply to concerns raised by Councillor A. Roberts and M.L. Holland, the HLDS provided details of the rules pertaining to Members attendance requirements, which stated a Councillor could not be disqualified for non attendance if they attended one meeting during a six month period. He confirmed that there were issues pertaining to the creation of a culture around Member attendance at Council meetings which could involve Group intervention regarding Membership on Committees.

Following a brief discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – that:-

- (a) *a report be submitted to the Democratic Services Committee detailing the resources and support provided for scrutiny in Denbighshire, together with, comparisons with other Local Authorities in North Wales.*
- (b) *following the consultation period, a report detailing the final guidance for Joint scrutiny and annual reports be presented to the Committee.*
- (c) *a copy of the template when completed be presented to the Committee for comments and suggestions.*
- (d) *a report detailing Members requirements regarding the scheduling and flexibility of council meetings in terms of frequency, timing and location, be presented to the Committee prior to a recommendation being made to full Council in respect of these issues, and*
- (e) *Group Leaders be provided with details of the Members who had not yet provided a response to the recent survey,*

Meeting ended at 11.10 a.m.

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Report To: Democratic Services Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 February 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Report Author: Democratic Services Manager

Title: Comparison of Resources for Scrutiny

1. What is the report about?

This report provides a brief overview of the resources each of the six north Wales local authorities provides to support their scrutiny committee functions.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

At the committee's last meeting members asked for a report back comparing resources for the scrutiny committees across north Wales. The committee's remit includes making recommendations on the resources required for scrutiny support.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Democratic Services Committee considers the information and comments accordingly.

4. Report details.

4.1 The Local Government Act 2000 does not specify how a local authority must organise its scrutiny arrangements. This is left for each council to decide which has led to wide variance in the number and remit of scrutiny committees and the type and quantity of support provided.

4.2 The level and effectiveness of Scrutiny members' own contribution has a big influence on the overall effectiveness of scrutiny, and this will naturally vary between committees and over councils. However, the support that an authority provides scrutiny is very important to achieving the four core roles of scrutiny and accountability:¹

- constructive 'critical friend' challenge
- amplifies the voices and concerns of the public
- led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drives improvement in public services. Find out more about these four principles in our Good Scrutiny Guide.

¹ Centre for Public Scrutiny www.cfps.org.uk

4.3 For this report, I have identified key support as scrutiny staff; discretionary budgets, and training. Scrutiny staff may undertake a variety of different roles including organisational and administrative support, providing advice and information, and undertaking research. The officers themselves may work entirely or primarily for scrutiny (dedicated officers) or have a percentage of their work involving scrutiny. Some council's may give scrutiny a budget in addition to staff costs (discretionary budgets) to pay for costs arising from scrutiny activities.

4.4 The number of standing scrutiny committees and meetings will be a factor in evaluating how much support is likely to be left after the basic organisational and administrative tasks that enable a committee to meet and plan future meetings. The appendix gives a brief overview of the structures and support in the 6 counties.

4.5 More detailed information on the scrutiny functions of each council is available in their annual reports.

Anglesey's Annual Report:

<http://www.anglesey.gov.uk/Journals/2012/05/11/Overview-Scrutiny--Annual-Report-2011-2012.pdf>

Conwy's Annual Report:

<http://modgoveng.conwy.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=207&MId=3231&Ver=4>

Denbighshire's Annual Report:

<https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=4477&Ver=4&LLL=0>

Flintshire's Annual Report:

http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/english/services?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/web+content/flintshire/english/services/100004/200033/1031

Gwynedd's Annual Report:

http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_doc.asp?cat=4255&doc=21639&Language=1&p=1&c=1

Wrexham's Annual Report:

<http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/MinutesData/Council/cl26092012a.htm>

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

No decision required at this stage.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

This report is intended to provide information for a debate and there is no direct impact on any other services.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

Not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Scrutiny units in the other north Wales authorities have contributed information for this report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not obtained for this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

N/A

11. Power to make the Decision

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 enables the Democratic Services Committee to review and make recommendations on the level of resources available to the scrutiny function.

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Council	Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Support Staff	No. of Meetings	Discretionary Budgets	Scrutiny Training
Anglesey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate - Economic Development, Tourism & Property - Education & Leisure - Environment & Technical Services - Housing & Social Services 	3 dedicated support staff	36 (May 2012 to May 2013)	No	The scrutiny unit does provide training e.g. how to conduct a review, what is meant by commissioning.
Conwy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities - Customers - Partnerships - Principal 	1 dedicated support officer Some scrutiny administration support from a Member Services Officer (Scrutiny) Support from scrutiny coordinators ¹	39	No direct provision but requests can be made if required.	Member Training & Development events provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Chairing Skills, 2) Questioning Skill, 3) Local Gov. Finance, 4) Standards, 5) Education Services, 6) Member Mentors.

¹ To aid the work of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees in developing prioritised and timely Forward Work Programmes, Conwy Council agreed (to utilise existing staff resources), to nominate Scrutiny Support link Co-ordinators, one for each of the four committees. Following the introduction of the additional realigned officer support, this has enabled Overview and Scrutiny Committees to have a greater focus on priority agenda topics.

Council	Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Support Staff	No. of Meetings	Discretionary Budgets	Scrutiny Training
Denbighshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities - Partnerships - Performance <p>Also a co-ordinating Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs Group</p>	<p>1 dedicated support officer</p> <p>Up to 50% of the Democratic Services Officer's time</p> <p>10% of the Democratic Services Manager's time</p>	<p>24 scheduled meetings plus approximately 5 special meetings. 7/8 meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs Group.</p> <p>A number of supported task & finish meetings are held each year</p> <p>Regular briefing meetings are held between committee chairs & vice chairs and the support officer</p>	No	<p>Yes, training on scrutiny related chairing, questioning skills and general overview and scrutiny is offered.</p> <p>Other courses can be arranged.</p>
Flintshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing - Corporate Resources - Environment - Lifelong Learning - Community Profile & Partnerships - Social and Health Care 	<p>2 dedicated support officers</p> <p>1 dedicated administration officer</p> <p>80% of section manager's time</p>	<p>66 meetings plus some task and finish meetings.</p>	No	<p>Yes, scrutiny training sessions available.</p>
Gwynedd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate - Communities - Services <p>Also a Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs Forum meets quarterly plus additional meetings as required.</p>	<p>1 dedicated support officer</p> <p>Up to 75% (1.5 FTE) of the 2 Performance and Efficiency Improvement Officers (Scrutiny) time on Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups.</p>	<p>21 scheduled meetings (7 meetings per Committee a year. The number of meetings per Committee might go down to 5 next year)</p> <p>21 preparatory meetings</p>	Tbc	<p>Yes, training on scrutiny related chairing, questioning skills and general overview and scrutiny is offered.</p> <p>Other courses can be arranged.</p>

Council	Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Support Staff	No. of Meetings	Discretionary Budgets	Scrutiny Training
		<p>Up to 50% of the Democratic Services Officer's time</p> <p>5% of the Head of Service's time</p>	<p>21 briefing meetings are held between committee chairs & vice chairs and the support officer.</p> <p>A number of task & finish meetings are held each year</p>		
Wrexham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment, Business & Investment - Education, Safeguarding & Well-being - Homes, Environment & Communities - Customers, Performance & Resources - Partnerships & Collaboration 	<p>2 (full time equivalent – from 3 officers) dedicated support officers</p> <p>20% of section manager's time</p>	55 scheduled plus additional meetings or workshops as required.	No	<p>Yes, training on scrutiny related chairing, questioning skills and general overview and scrutiny is offered.</p> <p>Other courses can be arranged.</p>

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Report To: Democratic Services Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 February 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Report Author: Democratic Services Manager

Title: Committee Timetable 2013 / 14

1. What is the report about?

The report contains a draft timetable for meetings for the municipal year (May 2013 to April 2014 plus the start of the following year, May 2014). Appendix 1 contains timetabling information on the committees, appendix 2 refers to the results of a survey of councillors and co-opted members on the timing and location of meetings, and appendix 3 is the draft timetable.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The Council requires a planned timetable to support the business undertaken by its various committees during the year. The attached draft is for consideration by members prior to confirmation of the final draft by County Council in April.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Democratic Services Committee considers and comments on the:

- (i) draft timetable of committee meetings, and
- (ii) the appropriate timing of meetings (based on the responses from the survey of members and co-opted members)

4. Report details.

4.1 No meetings have been scheduled for the summer recess in August. This allows members the opportunity to take leave and avoids lower attendance and inquorate meetings during this period. Officers supporting committees are also encouraged to take leave during the recess so that the maximum levels of support are available when the committees are in session. This year, some officers reported that meetings held close to Christmas or at the beginning of the new year were difficult to prepare for (producing reports, etc.) because a large number of people take leave over this peak holiday period.

4.2 The draft timetable (appendix 3) includes meetings in May 2014, which is the start of the following year's timetable. This allows the Annual Meeting of Council to be shown.

Timing of Meetings

4.3 A survey was conducted during the second part of 2012 for councillors' and co-opted members' opinions on when and where they would like to hold their meetings. The survey was a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Council is obliged to have regard to the results of the survey when planning meetings. A summary of the results of the survey are attached as appendix 2.

4.4 Based on the views of members it is proposed to retain the current mix of mostly morning meetings but with some committees or panels meeting in the afternoon. The Council does arrange a small number of evening meetings (for some of the Member Area Groups, for example). Most meetings would be held County Hall but some meetings could be arranged for other venues in the county.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The committee timetable allows the democratic processes in Denbighshire to be organised and contribute to the Council's corporate priorities.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The costs of maintaining a committee system are covered within existing budgets. Services throughout the Council may contribute to the meetings included in the timetable, usually by contributing information, reports and officer time.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

The annual timetable of meetings is an established process and meets the aims of the Equality Act. The principal 'service users' are the members of the committees and supporting officers although the press and public are also able to attend most meetings the interest of individuals or groups is likely to depend on the topic under consideration.

A recent survey of councillors has been conducted on the timing and location of meetings and the results have been taken into consideration. The Council uses the most suitable meeting rooms whenever possible (in terms of access, parking, toilet facilities, public transport).

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

A wide range of officers involved in providing support and advice for the committees shown in appendix 1 have been consulted and members have been consulted on their preferences for the timing and location of meetings.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

To be completed prior to submission to full Council.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Administrative arrangements to support the timetable will start immediately to avoid the risk that a delay could cause to booking suitable meeting venues and for making the timetable available to members and officers for diary purposes

11. Power to make the Decision

Section 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972

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APPENDIX 1

Timetabling Information

Council

Monthly meetings have been scheduled to follow the Annual Meeting on the 7 May 2013. No meeting has been scheduled for January on the basis that (a) preparations for meetings in early January are affected by the Christmas and new year holidays, and (b) Cabinet in January needs to meet to make recommendations to Council on the following year's budget,

There are 2 Council meetings scheduled for February, particularly to agree the Council's budget and then to set the level of council tax.

Two dates in June and October have been reserved for Council to meet if there is sufficient business to transact.

Cabinet

Dates for Cabinet meetings have been moved towards the end of a month where possible. The reason for this is that Cabinet considers an important budget monitoring report at each meeting, which covers the previous month. Collection of the budget information, report preparation, and publication can result in these reports being 'late'. Holding the Cabinet meetings at the end of a month will allow these reports to be circulated on time. As a consequence, some Cabinet meetings do fall during school holidays.

There will be two meetings in September as a result of the August recess.

Mid-month meetings will be held in:

- December - a meeting the following week would fall on Christmas Eve;
- January - Cabinet needs to meet early enough to make recommendations on the budget to Council at the beginning of February, with Council's agenda being published at the beginning of the last week in January
- February – Affected by the position of Council meetings at the beginning of the month (to agree the budget) and at the end of the month (to set Council Tax levels).

Scrutiny Committees

The 3 scrutiny committees have 5 co-opted voting members whenever they discuss education matters. For this reason none of their meetings have been scheduled during school holidays.

The previous timetable included a meeting for the Performance Scrutiny Committee on the 23 May 2013. It is proposed to move that meeting to the 16 May and hold a Communities Scrutiny meeting on the 23 May instead. The reason for this change is to allow each of the scrutiny committees to meet twice before the recess and for the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to meet in July to avoid having to call a special meeting to deal with known business on its forward work programme.

A June meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Monday 10 June to meet with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

Part of the Performance Scrutiny Committee's role is to scrutinise the Council's performance using the information gathered through the quarterly performance reports. Some of the committee's meetings are based on when those quarterly reports will be available to ensure the committee has access to the latest performance information.

Planning Committee

Planning officers have identified the proposed schedule for Planning Committee meetings which is thought to ensure that the committee meetings and associated post-committee work (issuing decision certificated, etc.) are complementary.

Corporate Governance Committee

The Corporate Governance Committee is also the Council's Audit Committee and the proposed schedule takes into account when the committee will be required to consider treasury management performance and the statement of accounts.

Standards Committee

The number of scheduled meetings has been reduced from 8 to 5 (May 2013 – April 2014) to reflect the workload experienced over recent years. However, if the workload indicates that other meetings are required, these will be arranged accordingly.

Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee

Meetings of the CHSW Committee have been scheduled for approximately 1 month after the end of the previous quarter to allow the committee to review quarterly health and safety reports.

Local Joint Consultative Committee (LJCC)

4 quarterly meetings have been scheduled on Wednesday afternoons.

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

The membership of this statutory committee includes representatives from Denbighshire County Council, religious denominations and teacher associations. This year, the draft schedule proposes to hold their 3 termly meetings on different days of the week (a Monday, Wednesday and Friday) to lessen the impact on teacher representatives caused by taking time out of school on the same week-day for each meeting.

Democratic Services Committee

This committee must meet at least once every calendar year and is able to review the level of support for democratic services, committees, etc. Two Friday meetings have been scheduled at the beginning of the municipal year (24 May) and on the 7 February. Extra meetings can be added if necessary.

Council Briefing

Afternoon sessions of this informal gathering of Council have been proposed for June, January and April.

Three budget workshops have also been included in the Council Briefing schedule to support members' involvement in developing the draft budget for the following year.

Cabinet Briefing

This is an informal but important meeting for Cabinet members and meetings are proposed for the first Monday of a month. This is expected to complement the cycle of Cabinet meetings which will usually be at the end of the month. Please note that meetings have not been scheduled for May (the first available Monday would be mid-month, and 1 day before Cabinet) and September (there are Cabinet meetings at the beginning and the end of the month).

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Results of a Survey on the Timing and Location of Meetings

Question 1 – Would you prefer morning, afternoon or evening meetings?

Responses:

Morning = 26 Afternoon = 7 Evening = 6

Question 2 – Would you apply your preferences to all committees, only committees you are a member of, or only certain committees?

Responses:

All committees = 13

Only committees (the respondent) is a member of = 13

Only certain committees = 5

(The comments received were: satisfied with current arrangements = 2; should be flexible on timings = 2; too many meetings are held in Ruthin = 1; some evening meetings should be held = 1; committees which the public regularly attend e.g. Planning should be in the evening = 1; like to see a balanced mix of morning, afternoon and evening meetings for Planning, Licensing and some scrutiny meetings = 1; would not like to dictate to members of other committees on their timings = 1)

Question 3 – Would you prefer to see the timing of meetings rotate?

Responses:

Yes, for all committees = 7

Yes, for some committees = 4

No = 19

(Comments: satisfied with the current arrangements = 2; Meetings should rotate (except for Council & Planning which should be in Ruthin at 10 a.m.) = 1; Hold meetings at various times according to the wishes of members = 1; Full Council & Planning should remain the same but others could rotate = 1; Afternoon meetings could be easier to support / attend = 1; One committee could meet in the evening to allow members who prefer evening meetings to attend = 1; Rotating times (of specific) committees could cause difficulties for working members because of the irregular pattern when booking time off to attend = 1)

Question 4 – Are there particular times that would cause you difficulties?

Responses:

Yes = 20 No = 9

(Comments: the responses to this question clearly require clarification. Evening meetings were the most commonly cited difficulty mentioned by 15 respondents. Having too many meetings in a week was cited by 4 respondents as being a problem).

Question 5 – Do you have a preferred location(s) for meeting venues?

Responses:

Yes = 21 No = 9

(Comments: Ruthin = 11; Ruthin or Denbigh = 4; Rhyl = 2; Depends on locations of officers or committee members = 2; Rhyl or Prestatyn = 1; Rhyl, Prestatyn or Denbigh = 1; Rhyl, Prestatyn or Ruthin = 1; Rotate throughout the county = 1)

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2013 / 2014

APPENDIX 3

Committee	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	
COUNTY COUNCIL 10 a.m.	7 Annual Meeting	4*	9	SUMMER RECESS	10	8*	5	3		4 25		8	13 Annual Meeting	
COUNCIL BRIEFING 2 p.m.		24	15 (budget)				21 (budget)		9 (budget)	27			28	
CABINET 10 a.m.	14	25	30			3 24	29	26	17	14	18	25	29	27
CABINET BRIEFING 2p.m.		3	1				7	4	2	6	3	3	7	
PLANNING 9.30 a.m.	15	19	24			11	16	13	11	22	19	19	16	14
PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY 9.30 a.m.	16	20				19	24		12	16	20	20		1
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY 9.30 a.m.	23		4			12	17	28		23		6	3	15
PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY 9.30 a.m.		10 (2 p.m.)	18			26		7	19		6	13	10	
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 9.30 a.m.	22		3			4 25		6	18	29		26		21
LICENSING 9.30 a.m.		12				18			4			5		
LICC 2.p.m.			10				9				12		2	

Committee	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	
SACRE 10 a.m.		10				2				14				
STANDARDS 10 a.m.		7				6		22		31		14		9
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 10 a.m.	24										7			
CORPORATE HEALTH, S & W 10 a.m.			26				25			24				2

*The 4 June and 8 October are additional dates reserved for full Council but will only be used if there is sufficient business to consider.