

Report To:	Council
Date of Meeting:	15 May 2018
Lead Member / Officer:	Councillor Mark Young / Democratic Services Manager
Report Author:	Steve Price and Kath Jones
Title:	Committee Timetable 2019, Annual Review of Political Balance and Appointment of Scrutiny Chairs

1. What is the report about?

This report contains information and requests decisions on committee-related issues.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

It is necessary for Council to approve a timetable for 2019 in line with Council's decision to maintain an 18 month timetable, to enable meeting venues and resources to be confirmed, to publicise the timetable and to populate the Members' diary. As the new municipal year starts in May it is also appropriate for Council to consider changes in political balance and be aware of how Scrutiny chairing arrangements work.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- (i) That Council approves the draft committee timetable for 2019;
- (ii) That Council re-appoints the existing chair and membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year, subject to any changes notified by the Groups; and
- (iii) That Council considers the political balance of the committees.

4. Report details

4.1 Committee Timetable

The new municipal year begins with the Annual Meeting of Council in May. The current timetable of committee meetings continues until the end of 2018 and will be extended until the end of 2019 in accordance with Council's request to maintain an 18 month timetable. The draft timetable for 2019 is attached as appendix 1 and also contains a committee-by-committee explanation of the factors behind the identification of suitable dates for each meeting.

4.2 Annual Review of Political Balance

The Council is required to consider at least annually how the membership of its committees relates to the political balance of the Groups. Changes to the membership of committees

and the strength of the political groups mean that not all committees are currently politically balanced, and these are shown in appendix 2.

At the time of writing this report the actions recommended in the tables in appendix 2 are relevant. The actual membership of each of the committees is shown in appendix 3 for information.

4.3 Democratic Services Committee

Section 11 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to appoint a committee to review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, and to make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.

The members of the Democratic Services Committee must be appointed by Full Council. There are to be no co-opted members. Under the Measure there may be no more than one member of the Cabinet on the Committee (who cannot be the Leader), but Council in May 2012 decided that the membership would be 11 councillors and would not include members of the Cabinet.

The Committee must be politically balanced and Council must appoint its chair who must not be a member of any of the political groups represented on the Cabinet. For Denbighshire, this means that the chair will be a member of the Labour or Plaid Cymru groups. The existing chair is Councillor Alan James.

The existing members of the Democratic Services Committee are shown in appendix 3.

4.4 Appointment of Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

According to the principles for allocating Scrutiny chairs in the 2011 Local Government (Wales) Measure the Groups represented in the Cabinet (Independents and Conservatives) will be entitled to 1 of the 3 scrutiny chairs, and it will be for those groups to decide amongst themselves which of their eligible members will be a chair. The Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups are entitled to appoint 1 scrutiny chair each.

Neither the Measure nor the associated statutory guidance make provisions for changing or re-appointing scrutiny chairs, except where the political make-up of Cabinet changes or where a scrutiny chair is vacated for some reason. The appointment of chairs for the new municipal year is therefore a matter for the political groups to consider and to report any changes.

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

The decisions and information arising from this report are central to the functioning of the democratic and committee systems which are essential elements of the Council's governance arrangements 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 but the Council in 2015 made a commitment through its *Freedom and Flexibilities* process to reduce the number of committee meetings being held to save the associated costs. 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 Well-being Impact Assessment?

A Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

The annual timetable of meetings is an established process and meets the aims of well-being and equality legislation. 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 or view webcast meetings online. The level of interest or engagement of individuals or groups is likely in large part to depend on the topic under consideration.

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

Council and the political groups within the Council are being consulted on the issues raised in this report. Officers supporting the work of the different committees have been consulted on the committee timetable to identify viable dates for meetings.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no additional costs arising from the recommendations in this report.

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

Failure to confirm councillors' roles and membership of committees would be detrimental to the Council's governance arrangements.

11. Power to make the Decision

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972; Local Government and Housing Act 1989; Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.