

**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

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### **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