

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 May 2017
<b>Report Subject</b>	Schedule of Meetings
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Governance)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report sets out the calendar of meetings for 2017/2018 and explains the current arrangements for scheduling formal meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees.

In March 2016 Councillors were asked when they would prefer meetings to be held, and the majority favoured day time. However, it was recognised that the “new” Council should make its own decision on when meetings should be held, which suggests that a further survey should now be held.

However, in terms of our business planning, the Council needs to be able to plan for the whole year. Therefore, a draft schedule of meetings showing morning and evening meetings has been prepared and is attached for Member consideration.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1	That the attached draft schedule of meetings for 2017/18 be approved for the time being.
2	That the Democratic Services Manager survey Member preferences for when meetings are held. This would be conducted after the August recess, with a view to a report analysing the results being made to the Constitution Committee in October.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2017/18</b>
1.01	Following a decision which was made by the County Council in March 2010, the Schedule of Meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees has been based on an approximately 10 weeks' cycle.
1.02	Last year, in response to suggestions from some Members that we should broaden the span of when we hold our meetings, the Democratic Services Committee tasked the officers with carrying out a survey of Member opinion. This was carried out in March 2016, amongst the then elected and co-opted members. There was a majority in favour of keeping day time meetings. The schedule of meetings for last year was based on that approach. The dates for all meetings until the August recess this year have previously been agreed by Council.
1.03	It was recognised that the 'new' Council should be able to form its own opinion on this important issue. It is recommended that a further survey be held amongst all Members following the August recess. By then, Members will have an idea of their workload and meeting commitments.
1.04	That being so, a schedule of meetings for 2017/18 has been drafted following the previous model. In terms of planning, this is preferable than leaving things undone. This, if approved, will be used for meeting planning until the survey has been conducted. The Constitution Committee will then have an opportunity to consider the results and make an appropriate recommendation to Council.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The holding of evening meetings may increase costs as it will be necessary to keep County Hall, or other building where formal meetings are held, open later than the current 7pm close.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	None.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	It has previously been acknowledged that a greater range of meeting times may encourage a more diverse range of candidates to stand for election. Our conducting a survey fulfils our responsibility under the WLGA Member

	development Charter to seek Members' views on when we hold our meetings. Should the Welsh Ministers decided to issue guidance to local authorities under section 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 in the near future, Flintshire would be able to use the result of the proposed survey as evidence of appropriate consultation having been carried out.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Draft Schedule of Meetings for 2017/18.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Robert Robins, Democratic Services Manager. <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702320 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Robert.robins@flintshire.gov.uk">Robert.robins@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA):</b> body which represents the interests of the 22 local authorities in Wales, together with the three national park authorities and the three Fire & Rescue Authorities.  <b>Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011:</b> piece of legislation from before the Welsh Government achieved legislative competence. It can now make its own laws which are referred to as Acts instead of Measures.