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| Meeting: | CABINET |
| Date: | 10 November 2005 |
| Subject: | THE COUNCIL'S CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2006/07 |
| Responsible Officer: | Director of Corporate Governance |
| Contact Officer: | Senior Professional, Corporate Governance |
| Portfolio Holder: | The Leader of the Council |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Status: | Part I |

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To approve the Calendar of Meetings for the Authority for the Municipal Year 2006/07.

Reason for report

The Calendar of Meetings is approved on an annual basis and at approximately this time of the year, for the succeeding Municipal Year. Advance approval facilitates the planning of forward commitments both by Members and officers.

Benefits

The Calendar of Meetings provides the framework for the Council's democratic processes (Member level meetings) and affords due notice to all relevant parties and interests of the dates on which particular meetings are to be held.

Cost of Proposals

N/A

Risks

A Calendar of Meetings will require to be approved prior to the commencement of the 2006/07 Municipal Year so as to provide certainty on the conduct of the Authority's business. Delaying approval to later in the current Municipal Year is likely to cause increasing difficulties for the efficient administration of that business and to inconvenience elected Members who require to plan their availability for meetings. However, the Borough Election is in May 2006 and as is the case for every Election Year the new Council's wishes cannot be known and subsequent changes in the Calendar may be sought.

Implications if recommendations rejected

If the proposed scheduling were not accepted the Calendar of Meetings may be varied as necessary. However, significant changes would be likely to require that the Calendar draft be re-worked and presented to a later Cabinet. The risks associated with a delayed consideration (as set out under the previous section of this report) would apply.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

- 2.1.1. It is established practice for the Authority's Calendar of Meetings for the succeeding Municipal Year to be the subject of consideration and agreement at approximately this time.
- 2.1.2. The draft Calendar for 2006/07 follows the pattern established for 2005/06 other than those changes occasioned primarily by the actual incidence in 2006-07 of public holidays, school terms and religious festivals. (See also, section on Variations, below).
- 2.1.3. Currently the draft Calendar makes no specific allowance for Members' commitments at the annual national Party conferences or the Local Government Association General Assembly and Conference. However, the relevant dates in 2006 as indicated in the Calendar are:-

- (i) Local Government Association General Assembly/Conference - 4 July (Conference 4 - 7 July) and December*

* *[Note: The December 2006 Assembly/Conference is not due to be confirmed until January 2006 but is likely to commence on 13 December 2006].*

- (ii) Liberal Democrat Party Conference - 16 – 21 September
- (iii) Labour Party Conference - 24 – 28 September
- (iv) Conservative Party Conference - 2 – 5 October

[Note: The Spring national Party conference dates have not been included].

By reference to the actual meetings indicated for those dates, Cabinet may wish to consider whether any of these are to be amended.

Rescheduling those meetings gives rise to some implications.

2.2 Variations from Calendar of 2004/05

Members are asked to note the most notable variations.

- (i) the Borough Elections on 4 May 2006 have the following effects:-
- Annual Council is set back to 25 May
 - An Extraordinary Council is to be held on 31 May
 - The first meetings of many other bodies are marginally displaced to later dates through June and July
 - Only 3 (instead of 4) Development Control Committee meetings are accommodated between Annual Council and the August recess.
- (ii) Previously ad-hoc meetings have now been scheduled where this is considered to be of assistance:-
- Audit Committee
 - Town Centre Project Panel
 - Standards Committee
- (iii) The Cabinet meeting in September, which was cancelled in 2005, has been reinstated for 2006, in this draft. To secure a later meeting than currently provided for would suggest the option of deleting either the September or the October Cabinet meeting.

- (iv) A Council meeting in January 2007 is omitted (consequent on agreement at the Council Meeting on 20 October to allocate responsibility for approving the Council Tax Taxbase to the Cabinet and to delete provision for a January Council in favour of a Council Meeting in July). *[NB: Please see Section 2.3 below]*. This allows both the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum and the Cabinet each to slip to the following week from that usually scheduled.
- (v) The Constitution Review Working Group recommended that the Calendar should include a July Council. This has been included in the draft. The combination of the late start in May, following the Borough Election, and accommodating a July Council, gives rise to some "congestion" of meetings in that first cycle.
- (vi) Further to consideration given to the issue by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, provision is made for two special meetings of the Committee in June and November 2006, for the purpose of the Question and Answer sessions attended by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive (O and S, Procedure Rules 19 and 20).
- (vii) Additionally, arising from discussions between members of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees it has been sought that combined meetings of Health and Social Care and of Lifelong Learning should be scheduled as well as additional ordinary meetings of the Health and Social Care Sub due to the amount of business. Two meetings in each category have been included.

2.3 July 2006 Cabinet Meeting

- (i) Further to paragraph 2.2(iv) above, the draft Calendar makes provision for a July 2006 Cabinet Meeting (with the intention that this would also be a standard inclusion for future years).
- (ii) The originally drafted options located the Council Meeting on 27 July, the last Thursday of the month, with the intentions of maximising the time gap from the late May 2006 Council Meetings (Annual and Extraordinary) and minimising that until the October Council date. It also provides an accessible Council for any Recommendations arising from the July Cabinet.
- (iii) Through consultation (see Section 2.4 below) it has however been proposed that the July Council should not fall in the School holidays (which is a draw-back of the 27th) but rather be scheduled for one of the earlier weeks.
- (iv) Accordingly, the draft Calendar provides for an alternative arrangement, whereby the associated Group Meetings are held on

10 July, the Council Meeting on 15 July; and “displaced” meetings are held as follows:-

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| School Organisation Committee on 19 July | (to stay within the School Term) (from 10 July) |
| Joint Scrutiny Sub-Committees on 12 July | (from 13 July) |

(v) It may be noted, in considering the date for the July Council Meeting, that it is not required to be held on a Thursday (although the associated Group Meetings also need to be taken into account) and its location in relation to Cabinet meetings is flexible.

(vi) Cabinet is requested to determine the preferred arrangements.

2.4 Proposed Special Council

2.4.1. An indicative provision is made on 31 May 2005 for a Special Council meeting to be held to precede the Extraordinary Council Meeting.

2.4.2. This allows for a decision which the Council may adopt later this Municipal Year to convene a Special Meeting in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purpose of conferring the Title of Honorary Aldermen on a former Councillor or Councillors.

2.5 Consultation

2.5.1. A draft of the proposed Calendar for the Municipal Year 2006-07 was provided to the political Groups in advance of this meeting by way of consultation. Prior to that, all Members of Council have been consulted on their observance of religious festivals in order that allowance could be made for such commitments through 2006-07.

2.5.2. UNISON have been provided with the draft dates for meetings of the Employees’ Consultative Forum and invited to offer any comments for consideration by this Cabinet meeting. No comments have been received to date.

2.6 Financial Implications

N/A.

2.7 Legal Implications

N/A.

2.8 Equalities Impact

N/A.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

The Council Calendar of Meetings 2006/7 has been circulated in the Cabinet Supporting Documents Pack

Background Papers

Calendar of Meetings 2005/06, information on School Term dates and religious festivals 2006/07, together with responses from Members on the latter.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8424 1284