

## CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 25 October 2017
<b>Report Subject</b>	Member Survey on Meeting Times
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Democratic Services Manager
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Annual Meeting of Council, on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May, the Schedule of Meetings for the current municipal year was considered and approved. This was based on the previous year's Schedule.

It was recognised that the 'new' Council should make its own decision on when meetings should be held, and it was agreed that a survey of Members would be conducted after the August recess.

A suggested survey form is attached: this is based on the one used during a similar exercise in 2015/16.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee consider and comment on the proposed approach to conducting a survey and the survey form to be used.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Explaining the Schedule of Meetings</b>
1.01	Following a decision which was made by Council in March 2010, the Schedule of Meetings of Council, Cabinet and committees has been based on an approximately 10 weeks' cycle.

1.02	In 2016 an electronic survey of Member opinion on the timings of meetings was conducted using 'Survey Monkey' computer software. A copy of the proposed survey form for 2017 is attached as appendix A. It allows both elected and co-opted Members to express opinions as to whether meetings should be held as currently, or in a number of combinations, which would include evening meetings. The results would be published anonymously, although names are requested at survey stage in case anything requires clarification.
1.03	It is intended, subject to comments and observations received at the meeting of the Constitution & Democratic services Committee meeting, to use the same survey 'Survey Monkey' approach this time. Paper copies will be provided for the small number of Members who do not use electronic communications.
1.04	The results of the survey will be reported back to a future meeting of the Constitution & Democratic Services committee, to allow any proposed changes to be incorporated into the Schedule of Meetings for 2018/19. That Schedule will then go to the next Annual Meeting which is to be held on 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2018 for consideration.

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

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	This report is being submitted to initiate consultation with Members.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	It has previously been acknowledged that expanding the 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 decide 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 already been carried out.
4.02	Our holding meetings in the evening may cause problems to current members because of clashes with community and town council meetings and other community based responsibilities as well as home life.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Proposed survey form

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Report to the 2017 Annual Meeting</p> <p><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></p>

<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 Welsh local authorities together with the three national park authorities and the three Fire & Rescue Authorities.