



Democratic Services Committee

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 27 April 2016
Report Subject	Timing of Council and Committee Meetings Survey
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Report Author	Member Engagement Manager
Type of report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report details the recent holding of a survey amongst both elected and co-opted members of the Council to determine their preferences for when we should hold formal meetings. There was a significant majority in favour of not making changes to the current approach, so the recommendation is that we will continue to hold a mixture of morning and afternoon meetings, with a four week recess during the month of August for the life of this Council. The new Council, elected in 2017, will then be invited to review the meetings arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the committee acknowledges the results of the survey detailed in the report and recommends to the Council that there be no change in our arrangements for the times and frequency for holding meetings for the life of this Council.
2	That the practice of holding a four week recess from scheduled meetings during the month of August be continued for 2016.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	The Timing of Meetings Survey																				
1.01	Members will recall that at the previous meeting, a report on the Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17 was submitted. One of the recommendations which was made in that report was that a survey be conducted amongst Members, to enable preferences to be expressed about when we hold meetings.																				
1.02	Arising from the January meeting, it was resolved that a survey be undertaken and that, in addition, a recommendation be made to the Council that Council meetings should be held at 5pm. At the meeting of the County Council which was held on 1 st March, that recommendation was not approved.																				
1.03	<p>The survey of both the elected and co-opted members was conducted in March. We received 33 responses. The results of the survey are attached as appendix 1. From that survey, it is apparent that there is a majority in support of maintaining the status quo for meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and committees. As some Members have also expressed a preference for the specific time when committees currently meet, these could also be added to the status quo figure in many cases, as follows:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="311 989 1385 1388"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="311 989 617 1024">Meeting</th> <th data-bbox="646 989 1385 1024">Aggregated % in favour of current meeting time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1062 617 1098">Cabinet</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1062 1385 1098">70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1104 617 1140">Community & Enterprise O&SC</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1104 1385 1140">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1146 617 1182">Constitution Committee</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1146 1385 1182">57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1188 617 1224">Corporate Resources O&SC</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1188 1385 1224">57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1230 617 1266">County Council</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1230 1385 1266">73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1272 617 1308">Democratic services</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1272 1385 1308">70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1314 617 1350">Education & Youth O&SC</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1314 1385 1350">61%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1356 617 1392">Planning & Development Control</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1356 1385 1392">63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="311 1398 617 1434">Standards</td> <td data-bbox="1016 1398 1385 1434">71%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Meeting	Aggregated % in favour of current meeting time	Cabinet	70%	Community & Enterprise O&SC	60%	Constitution Committee	57%	Corporate Resources O&SC	57%	County Council	73%	Democratic services	70%	Education & Youth O&SC	61%	Planning & Development Control	63%	Standards	71%
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1.04	In Flintshire, along with the majority of local authorities, we have a four weeks August recess. Some Members have suggested that this is no longer required, so we asked whether we should hold meetings in August. The responses to this were Yes, 11 (33%) and No, 22 (66%).																				
1.05	We also asked whether Members thought that the frequency of our meetings is about right. 31 (93%) respondents said yes, whilst 2 (6%) said no.																				
1.06	Having regard to the above, the recommendation of this report is that the committee acknowledges the results of the survey detailed in the report and recommends to the Council that there be no change in our arrangements for the times and frequency for holding meetings. However, it is proper that the new Council, elected in May 2017 should be invited to review arrangements for their meetings.																				

1.07	The schedule of meetings for 2016/17 will be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 10 th May 2016 for approval and will include the August recess.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	As the recommendation from this report is to continue with our current arrangements for meetings, there are no additional resource implications.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The survey, upon which this report is based is part of our consultation with Members on meeting arrangements.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	It was previously acknowledged that a greater range of meeting times may have encouraged a more diverse range of candidates to stand for election. Our conducting the 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, we will be able to use the result of the survey as evidence of appropriate consultation having been carried out.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Report Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17 from the Member Engagement Manager to the Democratic Services Committee on 27th January 2016 and subsequent minute.</p> <p>Report Timing of Council Meetings from the Chief Officer (Governance) to the County Council on 1st March 2016 and subsequent minute.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robert Robins, Member Engagement Manager Telephone: (01352) 702320 E-mail: Robert.robins@flintshire.gov.</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) body which represents the interest of the 22 local authorities in Wales, together with the three National Park Authorities and the three Fire & Rescue Authorities. Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011</p> <p>WLGA Member Development Charter: accreditation for good practice.</p>

Appendix 1, Analysis of Survey Results

	Status Quo	Static 9.30 am	Static 10 am	Static 2 pm	Static 6 pm	Alternating 10am / 2pm	Rotational 10am/2pm /6pm	Total
Audit Committee	8 53%	2 14%	0	2 14%	2 14%	0	1 7%	15
Cabinet	10 59%	2 12%	0	1 6%	3 18%	1 6%	0	17
Community & Enterprise O&S Committee	8 40%	0	4 21%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	20
Constitution Committee	9 47%	0	1 6%	2 11%	3 17%	3 17%	1 6%	19
Corporate Resources O&S Committee	7 50%	0	1 8%	3 23%	2 16%	0	1 8%	14
County Council	11 42%	0	2 8%	8 32%	3 12%	1 4%	1 4%	26
Democratic Services	10 59%	1 6%	0	2 12%	3 18%	0	1 6%	17
Education & Youth O & S Committee	10 38%	1 4%	2 8%	6 23%	2 8%	4 16%	1 4%	26
Environment O & S Committee	8 40%	1 5%	3 15%	2 10%	2 10%	1 5%	3 15%	20
Licencing Committee	8 47%	1 6%	1 6%	3 18%	3 18%	0	0	17
Licensing Sub Committee	9 60%	1 7%	0	2 14%	3 21%	0	0	15

	Status Quo	Static 9.30 am	Static 10 am	Static 2 pm	Static 6 pm	Alternating 10am / 2pm	Rotational 10am/2pm /6pm	Total
Organisational Change O & S Committee	8 42%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	2 11%	1 5%	19
Planning & Development Control Committee	11 50%	3 14%	2 10%	3 14%	3 14%	0	0	22
Social & Health Care O & S Committee	8 40%	1 5%	0	3 15%	2 10%	4 20%	2 10%	20
Standards Committee	6 42%	1 7%	1 7%	1 7%	4 29%	0	1 7%	14