

# **KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2006-01-20**

### **COMMITTEE TIMETABLE**

#### **Report by the Solicitor to the Council**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Board with background information about the statutory and practical reasons for the timetabling of Council and Executive Committees, so that the Board can consider whether it wishes to recommend any changes to the traditional cycle of meetings.

##### **2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are none.

##### **3. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

There are none.

##### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are none.

##### **5. INTRODUCTION**

At the meeting in December the Board requested information about the committee cycle at Kennet so that the Board could consider whether to recommend any changes to the cycle. This report sets out the statutory and practical considerations that need to be taken into account in setting the timetable in any year.

At present Kennet holds five cycles of meetings a year at fairly regular intervals. The current system means that most committees have a 3 month break in the summer, and has been in place at Kennet as long as any staff can remember.

A draft programme of meetings for 2006/2007 is attached for reference. Resources Executive Committee on 7 February will adopt or amend this programme. Members should be aware that any recommendations they make, if adopted by Council, would not be able to take effect until the 2007/2008 municipal year.

## **6. STATUTORY AND PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1. COUNCIL MEETING**

The date of the annual meeting of the Council is regulated by the Local Government Act 1972. In election year it has to be held between 4 and 25 days of the date of the election. In non-election years it may be held on any date in March, April or May, but it seems sensible that the annual meeting should be in the same month each year.

### **6.2. RESOURCES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Resources Executive Committee is subject to a number of restrictions regarding the timing of its meetings.

It is necessary that the Resources Executive Committee meets in early February to set the Council Tax. This cannot be done earlier, as the Council is inevitably waiting for precept information from other bodies. It cannot be later or there is not enough time to print all of the billing information.

It is also necessary for this Committee to meet at the end of June, to approve the Statement of Accounts for submission to District Audit.

### **6.3. OTHER RESTRICTIONS**

It is necessary to hold a joint meeting of the executive committees in February to set the budget for the following municipal year.

The timing of Planning Policies Executive Committee meetings has become increasingly difficult to successfully programme, owing to the demands of responding to various Government directives and consultations.

### **6.4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

It has been the practice at Kennet for the Overview and Scrutiny meeting to be the last meeting of any cycle, to give the board the opportunity to scrutinise any decisions taken by other committees earlier in the cycle. The terms of the Call-in procedure mean that, if any decision were to be called in, it would be almost certainly be necessary schedule an additional meeting of the Board.

Members of the Board have expressed a desire to more closely align the timing of meetings with the publication of quarterly performance indicators. Members might wish to consider whether it is actually necessary to schedule a meeting of the Board in each cycle of

meetings. Having 4, more evenly spaced meetings of the Board each year would mean that performance indicators could be scrutinised promptly each quarter, and may make it easier for Board members to become involved in Task Group work.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

The timing of the Annual Council Meeting and restrictions upon the timing of Resources Executive Committee at certain times of year, leave little flexibility for the setting of the rest of the committee timetable. Officers welcome the existing frequency of meetings – none of the cycles are so far apart as to make it difficult to bring matters before Members for decision. The Committee with most potential flexibility is the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board itself.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to consider the above report, and make any recommendations that they wish to Council regarding the Committee Cycle at Kennet.