

REPORT OF THE CABINET

A. DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2003/2004

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend the County Council to fix dates for Council meetings in 2003/2004.

Background

2. Standing Order 1(2) requires that in addition to the Annual Meeting of the Council and any meetings convened by the Chairman or members of the Council, meetings of the Council for the transaction of general business shall be held on such days as may be determined by the Council at its annual meeting on the recommendation of the Cabinet. A date so determined may be varied by the Cabinet. Standing Order 1(4) also makes it necessary for the Council to fix a date in February for the Council's budget meeting.
3. The recommendation in this report provides for 7 meetings including the budget meeting. This was the traditional pattern for many years. In 1999 when the Council first moved to a Cabinet system the number of Council meetings was increased to 9 per annum. This lasted for two years. In 2001 the Council decided to revert back to its previous 7 meeting pattern.
4. Given the problems experienced this year in regard to significant last minute changes by the Government and a constrained scrutiny period it is being suggested that the budget meeting be put back one week to 25th February, 2004. The County Council is obliged to issue its precept to the District Councils before 1st March.
5. In the last two years some doubts have been expressed about the need for successive meetings in each of the months of January, February and March and particularly the necessity of a meeting in January (where care has to be taken so as not to pre-empt debate and decisions meant for the budget meeting). At the moment there seems to be no alternative but to keep a meeting in January to approve plans which form part of the Policy Framework. In particular, the Early Years Development and Childcare Implementation Plan, falls to be determined at that time. However, the position will be kept under review, particularly having regard to the arrangements which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has said it is making to rationalise the number of plans which local authorities are required to produce.

6. The recommendation of the Cabinet on this matter is set out in the motion which appears below.

(Motion to be moved:

That Council meetings in 2003/2004 be held on the following dates:-

Wednesday	9th July, 2003
Wednesday	17th September, 2003
Wednesday	26th November, 2003
Wednesday	28th January, 2004
Wednesday	25th February, 2004 (Budget Meeting)
Wednesday	24th March, 2004
Wednesday	19th May, 2004 (Annual Meeting))

H. Barber
Leader of the Council

6th May, 2003

Background Papers

Report of the Chief Executive to the meeting of the Cabinet on 6th May, 2003.