CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

Report to:-

CITY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting:-

17 JANUARY 2006

Agenda Item No:- 16(ii)

Public

Operational

Delegated: Yes

Accompanying Comments and Statements	Required	Included
Environmental Impact Statement:	No	No
Corporate Management Team Comments:	No	No
Financial Comments:	Yes	Yes
Legal Comments:	Yes	Yes
Personnel Comments:	No	No
Impact on Customers:	No	No

Title:-

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR 2006/07

Report of:-

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Report reference:-

LDS.03/06

Summary:-

A report which was submitted to the Executive on 21 November 2005 and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 15 December 2005, relating to the dates and times of meetings for 2006/07 is appended to this report for consideration.

The Schedule of Meetings attached as an Appendix has been amended to reflect the following recommendations of the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee:-

The Executive had no comments.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have asked for the following:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committees should be on a quarterly basis;
- All meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees should start at 10.00 am; and
- Executive have been asked to schedule JMT meetings so that there are no clashes for Portfolio Holders or Officers being able to attend Overview and Scrutiny Meetings, when appropriate.

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

Recommendations:-

- (1) The City Council are recommended to agree the Schedule of Dates and Times for Meetings in the 2006/07 Municipal Year as set out in the attached Schedule. It being noted that the Council are to consider a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee elsewhere on the agenda that the Constitution be amended to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to meet on a quarterly basis.
- (2) The date of times of meetings of the Executive, which have been chosen by the Leader, be noted.
- (3) That the position regarding the potential for additional meetings to be scheduled for the approval of the Final Accounts and the 2007/08 Budget Process be noted.
- (4) That the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Team be brought to the Executive's attention when setting the dates and times of JMT meetings for 2006/07.

Contact Officer:

Stephen Halstead

Ext: 7557

03 January 2006

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 Attached at Appendix A is a draft schedule of meeting dates for the City Council, the Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the regulatory Committees for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.
- 1.2 The current frequency of meetings is as follows:-

City Council (ordinary meetings)	8 weekly
*Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee	6 weekly
Overview and Scrutiny Committees	6 weekly
Executive (required to meet at least 13 times per year)	4 weekly
Development Control Committee	6 weekly
Regulatory Panel	5 weekly
Licensing Committee	Quarterly

Meetings of the Standards Committee, Appeals Panel, Employment Panel, Licensing Sub-Committees and other meetings are held as and when required.

(*See recommendation elsewhere on Council agenda that Constitution be amended to allow Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to meet on a quarterly basis).

1.3 Dates and times for meetings of the Executive are at the discretion of the Leader and are currently every 4 weeks.

CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date.

The dates and times for meetings have been circulated to the Leader and relevant Officers for comment.

The Head of Finance has advised that deadlines for approving the Council's Final Accounts and the operation of the Budget process may require special meetings of Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the City Council. The establishment of a free-standing Audit Committee to deal with corporate governance issues will also need to be re-considered following receipt of relevant legislation.

2.2 Consultation proposed.

This report has been submitted to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for consideration. Their views are reproduced on the covering sheet to this report.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

3.1 Subject to the Council agreeing a schedule of meetings for Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Regulatory Committees and the Leader arranging a schedule of meetings of the Executive which are broadly comparable with the schedule of meetings for the current Municipal Year, there are no additional staffing/resource requirements arising from this report.

4. FINANCIAL COMMENTS

- 4.1 The Head of Finance has advised that deadlines for approving the Council's Final Accounts and the operation of the Budget process may require special meetings of Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the City Council. These can be programmed into the Civic Calendar during the course of the forthcoming Municipal Year. The establishment of a free-standing Audit Committee to deal with corporate governance issues will also need to be re-considered following receipt of relevant legislation.
- 4.2 The scheduling of the budget meeting itself may also need revisiting as it is dependent on receiving relevant financial information from central Government. The meeting is currently scheduled for 6 February 2007 and any proposed amendments to the budget on the night would act as a reference back to the Executive on those amendments if that date is maintained.

LEGAL COMMENTS

5.0 These are incorporated in this report.

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

6.0 None

- RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT
- 7.0 Not applicable
- 8. EQUALITY ISSUES
- 8.0 Not applicable
- 9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS
- 9.0 Not applicable
- CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS
- 10.0 Not applicable
- 11. IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS
- 11.0 Not applicable

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The City Council are recommended to agree the Schedule of Dates and Times for Meetings in the 2006/07 Municipal Year as set out in the attached Schedule. It being noted that the Council are to consider a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee elsewhere on the agenda that the Constitution be amended to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to meet on a quarterly basis.
- (2) The date of times of meetings of the Executive, which have been chosen by the Leader, be noted.
- (3) That the position regarding the potential for additional meetings to be scheduled for the approval of the Final Accounts and the 2007/08 Budget Process be noted.
- (4) That the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Team be brought to the Executive's attention when setting the dates and times of JMT meetings for 2006/07.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.0 In order to recommend to the City Council a schedule of dates and times for meetings covering the 2006/07 Municipal Year as required by Procedure Rule 1.1(ix).

J M EGAN
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2005

EX.249/05 DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR 2006/07 (Non-Key Decision)

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted Report LDS.51/05 seeking consideration to be given to the dates and times of meetings of the City Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Regulatory Committees for 2006/07 in order to make a recommendation to the City Council. The dates and times of meetings of the Executive, as determined by the Leader, were included for information.

The report was being submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee so that their views could be reported directly to the City Council on 17 January 2006.

The Director of Corporate Services has advised that deadlines for approving the Council's Final Accounts and the operation of the Budget process may require special meetings of Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the City Council. These can be programmed into the Civic Calendar during the course of the forthcoming Municipal Year. The establishment of a free-standing Audit Committee to deal with corporate governance issues will need to be re-considered following the receipt of relevant legislation.

The scheduling of the City Council's budget meeting itself may also need revisiting as it is dependent on receiving relevant financial information from central Government. The meeting is currently scheduled for 6 February 2007 and any proposed amendments to the budget on the night would act as a reference back to the Executive on those amendments if that date is maintained.

Summary of options rejected

None

DECISION

- 1. That the schedule of dates and times for meetings in the 2006/07 Municipal Year be recommended to the City Council for approval.
- 2. That the dates and times for meetings of the Executive, which have been chosen by the Leader, be noted.
- 3. That the position regarding the potential for additional meetings to be scheduled for the approval of the Final Accounts and the 2007/08 Budget process be noted.

Reasons for Decision

To make recommendations to the City Council on the arrangements for the dates and times of meetings in 2006/07.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2005

OSM.51/05 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(a) Meetings of overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager reported that following the joint workshop with the Executive it was being proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should meet on a quarterly basis and that the Constitution should be amended to reflect this. If there was a requirement to hold a meeting between the quarterly dates then meetings could be arranged as necessary.

RESOLVED – That the City Council be asked to approve a change to the Council's Constitution to the effect that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would now meet on a quarterly basis.

OSM.52/05 DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS 2006/07

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services presented report LDS.51/05 relating to the dates and times of meetings for 2006/07. The Executive on 21 November 2005 (Minute Reference EX.249/05) had recommended the schedule of dates and times of meetings to the City Council for approval.

In addition, the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2005 (Minute Reference CROS.117/05) had advised this Committee that it was their wish that (as from February 2006 cycle of meetings) future meetings of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee should commence at 10.00am.

In considering the report on proposed dates and times the meetings for 2006/07 Members made the following comments and observations:

(a) It was the opinion of Members that all Overview and Scrutiny meetings scheduled in the Council diary should commence at 10.00am. It was recognised that 10.00am starts sometimes clash with Joint Management Team meetings, but Members suggested that joint Management Team meetings should be scheduled into the Council diary. Officers and Executive Members should give consideration to the timing of these meetings to avoid clashes which cause difficulties for Officers and Portfolio Holders attending Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

- (b) In response to a query as to whether the proposed schedule of meetings had been checked against County Council meetings, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services commented that the scheduling had been geared primarily to the City Council cycle of meetings. Other Members commented that meetings should be scheduled to fit in with City Council cycle of meetings and not with meetings of other Authorities.
- (c) A Member commented that when special meetings are arranged efforts should be made to consult with all Members on preferred dates.
- (d) Members were concerned that the recent Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider budget reports had been moved from a start time of 10.00am to 11.30am which meant that some Members could not attend and others could only attend for a limited time. They were disappointed that the time of this meeting had been re-arranged to accommodate an Officer Management Briefing.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive apologised that she had asked for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be rescheduled and stated that in future she would reschedule Management Briefings if necessary.

(e) The Chairmen of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees had recently attended the Executive Committee which had considered the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on the Budget. The Chairmen had each made a special effort to attend the meeting and were extremely disappointed at the attitude of Executive Members to Overview and Scrutiny's involvement in the budget process. Each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees has spent some considerable time scrutinising the budget papers and detailed minutes had been submitted to the Executive. Members believed that Overview and Scrutiny had a legitimate and proper role in the budget process and were extremely concerned at being told that this was viewed as a waste of time or inappropriate.

A Member also commented that it should not be necessary for the Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees to attend each Executive meeting when there are full and detailed minutes of the Committee submitted to Executive Members. Chairmen should not be expected to summarise two hours of consideration of Budget items when the detailed minutes set out the Committee's comments.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager explained that the Community and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committees had focused on scrutinising the savings and bids in the context of their own work in different service areas. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a different role in the process and as well as looking at their own services/operational issues they were also looking at the Budget Strategy. The way that the budget information had been presented and delivered made it difficult for them to scrutinise this and the Overview and Scrutiny Manager would meet with the Director of Corporate Services to discuss future budget reports.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager added that this was one of the issues which could be worked on through the development of the joint protocol and also through the joint meetings which would be held with the Executive.

Members suggested that the Chairman of this Management Committee should write to the Executive on behalf of the Committee regarding the comments of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees not being treated appropriately and their involvement in the process being questioned.

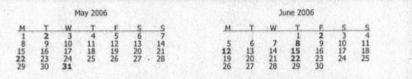
(f) In response to a Member's question about the role of the Audit Committee, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services advised that he and the Director of Corporate Resources were awaiting final Audit Commission guidance, which was clear and legally sound, regarding the role and formation of an Audit Committee. Currently an Accounts Committee had been constituted with the same Membership as the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sign off the Statement of Accounts. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager added that Overview and Scrutiny practitioners had advised the Audit Commission that they should clearly set out the respective roles of the Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That scheduled meetings of each of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee should commence at 10.00 am and the Joint Management Team be asked to look at the time of meetings to avoid any potential clashes.

(2) That the Chairman of this Committee write to the Leader and the Executive setting out the concerns of the Committee, as outlined above, particularly in relation to their attitude to the Overview and Scrutiny's role in the budget process and the comments which were made when the Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees attended the Executive meeting.

(The meeting ended at 2.45 pm)

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Stephen Halstead

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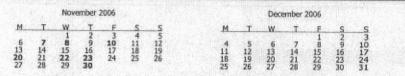
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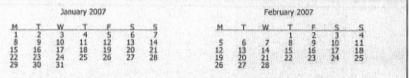
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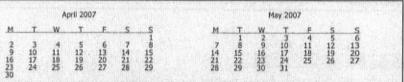
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Stephen Halstead

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Stephen Halstead

May 2007 -June 2007



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