

ANGUS COUNCIL

ANGUS COUNCIL – 19 OCTOBER 2017

MEMBER OFFICER GROUP ON THE TIMINGS OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEE MEETINGS

REPORT BY SHEONA C HUNTER, HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report informs members of the findings of the Members Officer Group established to review the timings of Council/Committee meetings.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) notes the findings of the Member Officer Group in relation to meetings of the regulatory committees;
- (ii) gives consideration to the options as detailed in para 4 of the Report (ie: 2.00pm; 4.00pm or 5.00pm); and
- (iii) approves one of these options as the basis for the timetabling of Council and Committee meetings.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- 5. Individuals are involved in decisions which affect them.

3. BACKGROUND

Reference is made to Article 11 of the minute of the statutory meeting of Angus Council on 16 May 2017 when it was agreed to establish a Member /Officer Group to review the timings of Council and Committee meetings. The membership of the MOG was agreed at the meeting of Angus Council on 7 September 2017 as the Leader, Cllr Myles, Cllr Cheape and the Leader of the Opposition, Cllr Devine, with officer input from the Democratic Services Manager.

4. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

Whilst it is acknowledged that elected members are involved in a whole range of meetings such as Sub Committees/ Member/Officer Groups/Boards/Partnerships and other ad hoc meetings, the scope of the review focussed solely on the meetings of Council and Committees, as detailed in the Timetable of Meetings.

Meetings of service committees currently take place at 2.00pm with meetings of the Regulatory Committees (Civic Licensing and Development Standards) taking place at 10am. The basis for having the regulatory committee meetings at 10am was that it assisted licensees to attend prior to their premises requiring to be staffed and for taxi drivers to attend during that part of the day when trade was quiet. In terms of planning applications, it was identified that having meetings in the evening carried a premium for paying agents to represent clients.

The Member Officer Group concluded that meetings of the regulatory committees should remain at 10am as the reasons stated above remained valid.

The meetings that remained in scope were the Children and Learning Committee, Communities Committee, Scrutiny and Audit Committee, Policy and Resources Committee and Angus Council. These meetings are all currently timetabled to commence at 2.00pm.

Elected members were canvassed for their views and asked to rank their preferences for either the status quo, holding meetings at 4.00pm or at 5.00pm. Members' views were also canvassed on whether they would wish to have committee meetings on the same day in the committee cycle.

In addition, the Teacher and Church representatives on the Children and Learning Committee were also contacted to obtain their views.

23 responses were received as follows:

15 elected members and 3 church/teacher reps whose first preference was in favour of the status quo (ie: 2.00pm)

1 elected member whose first preference was in favour of moving to 4.00pm meetings.

7 elected members whose first preference was in favour of moving to 5.00pm meetings.

10 responses stated a preference for holding committee meetings on a specific day each week in the committee cycle.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From elected members responses and also the three non elected members on the Children and Learning Committee there is a clear majority in favour of continuing with the current practice of holding committee meetings at 2.00pm.

However, should members be minded to move the start times of meetings to either 4.00pm or 5.00pm then it would be reasonable to have an implementation date of 1 January 2018 to allow time for diaries to be adjusted and any potential meetings clashes rescheduled.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this Report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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