

Change of Time of Full Council Meetings

Report of the Corporate Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

That from the date of Annual Council on 13 May 2019, ordinary meetings of Full Council will begin at 5.30pm.

SUMMARY:

This report recommends changing the start time of meetings of Full Council from 4.00pm to 5.30pm

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Currently meetings of Full Council take place on an alternating rotation between Andover (Guildhall or Beech Hurst) and Crosfield Hall, Romsey with a start time of 4.00pm.
- 1.2 In October 2018 Test Valley Borough Council underwent a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Review culminating in the Peer Review Team's Feedback Report. Having considered the findings and recommendations of the Feedback Report, an Action Plan was formulated.
- 1.3 The Peer Review Team considered the issue of the time of meetings at Test Valley Borough Council and commented as follows:

"The current timings of committee and council meetings are uncommon rather than unique. Full Council meetings begin at 4pm for example and other committee meetings typically commence at 5.30pm. While the council is best placed to determine when its meetings take place, meetings that begin later in the evening may make serving on the council a more realistic option for those residents that work full-time outside of the borough."
- 1.4 On 16 January 2019 Cabinet resolved:-
 - (a) To note the LGA Peer Challenge Team's findings, as set out in the Feedback Report attached in Annex 1 to the report.
 - (b) To approve the proposed Action Plan in Annex 2 to the report which addresses the recommendations highlighted in the Feedback Report.
 - (c) That the Feedback Report and Action Plan are published on the Council's website.
- 1.5 The Action Plan produced pursuant to the report identified that options around the future timings of the Council's committee meetings should be explored.

- 1.6 This report recommends that meetings of Full Council should (after the meeting of Annual Council on 13 May 2019) start at 5.30pm, bringing them in line with the times of the majority of other Council meetings.
- 1.7 Of our fellow District Councils in Hampshire, four start their Full Council meetings at 7pm, three at 6.30pm, two at 6.00pm and one at 5.00pm.
- 1.8 A calendar of dates and times for the ordinary meetings of Full Council for the upcoming year is approved annually at Annual Council. If this recommendation is approved, the start time for full Council meetings for 2019/2020 presented to Annual Council for approval on 13 May 2019 will be 5.30pm.

2 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 2.1 Enhancing access to Council meetings supports the corporate objective of enabling contribution to a strong community.

3 Options and Appraisal

- 3.1 This report proposes that after the date of Annual Council on 13 May 2019 that Full Council meetings commence at 5.30pm.
- 3.2 To have Council meetings commence after or at the end of the working day would make it easier and more convenient for members of the public who wish to attend Council meetings to do so. This is of course equally applicable to Councillors who are otherwise committed during the working day.
- 3.3 Changing the start time of Full Council would bring the meeting in line with the general start time of 5.30pm for meetings of Committees of the Council.
- 3.4 Also as the Peer Review Report identifies, a later start time for Council and Committee meetings may make the prospect of serving as an elected representative a more realistic option for those working outside of the Borough.
- 3.5 It is for the above reasons of greater access to Council meetings and assimilation with the times of the majority of other meetings that the new start time of 5.30pm is recommended.

4 Risk Management

- 4.1 A risk assessment has been carried out and an evaluation of the risks indicate that the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks have been identified at this time.

5 Resource Implications None identified

6 Legal Implications None identified

7 Equality Issues

- 7.1 This report does not identify any issues affecting or relating to equality.

8 Other Issues None

9 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the time of Full Council meetings be changed from 4.00pm to 5.30pm to enhance access to those meetings and to bring the time in line with other meetings of the Council.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

Local Government Peer Challenge Test Valley Borough Council Feedback Report 3-5 October 2018.

Test Valley Borough Council LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan.

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	0	File Ref:	N/A
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(Portfolio: Corporate) Councillor Flood

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Report to:	Council	Date:	10 April 2019
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