

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 29 May 2014

PRESENT

Cllr R C Stay (Vice-Chairman)
(in the Chair)

Cllrs J G Jamieson
D Jones
D J Lawrence
Mrs J G Lawrence

Cllrs K C Matthews
J Murray
R B Pepworth
M A G Versallion

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs A L Dodwell
P Hollick
M R Jones

Substitutes: Cllrs D Bowater (In place of P Hollick)
A Shadbolt (In place of A L Dodwell)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
R D Berry

Officers in Attendance:	Ms D Clarke	– Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
	Mrs M Clay	– Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer
	Mrs C Jones	– Chief People Officer (Acting)
	Mr G Jones	– Assistant Director Children's Services Operations
	Mr R Gould	– Head of Financial Control
	Mr P Howard	– HR Business Partner – Children's Services
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer

GPC/14/2. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the General Purposes Committee held on 20 January 2014 and 1 May 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

GPC/14/3. **Members' Interests**

Item 7 – Local Government Pension Scheme Update

- a) The following Members declared an interest as members of the Local Government Pension Scheme:

D Bowater
J G Jamieson
A Shadbolt
R C Stay

(Note: The above declarations were made as a precautionary measure. A general dispensation has been approved for all members of the Council under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 allowing them to participate and vote at meetings when an item of business relating to an allowance, payment or indemnity given to all Members is under discussion. Schedule 1 of Part F1 of the Constitution refers);

- b) Councillor D J Lawrence declared an interest as the Deputy Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee (administered by Bedford Borough Council);
- c) Councillor D Jones declared an interest as a member of the Pension Fund Committee (administered by Bedford Borough Council);
- d) Councillor J G Jamieson declared an interest as a member of the of Local Government Pensions Committee (a body of the Local Government Association/Welsh Local Government Association/Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).

Item 8 – Local Government Pension Scheme – Discretions Policy

- a) The following Members declared an interest as members of the Local Government Pension Scheme:

D Bowater
J G Jamieson
A Shadbolt
R C Stay

(Note: The above declarations were made as a precautionary measure. A general dispensation has been approved for all members of the Council under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 allowing them to participate and vote at meetings when an item of business relating to an allowance, payment or indemnity given to all Members is under discussion. Schedule 1 of Part F1 of the Constitution refers);

- b) Councillor D J Lawrence declared an interest as the Deputy Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee (administered by Bedford Borough Council);
- c) Councillor D Jones declared an interest as a member of the Pension Fund Committee (administered by Bedford Borough Council);
- d) Councillor J G Jamieson declared an interest as a member of the of Local Government Pensions Committee (a body of the Local Government Association/Welsh Local Government Association/Convention of Scottish Local Authorities).

GPC/14/4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

GPC/14/5. **Petitions**

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

GPC/14/6. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

GPC/14/7. **Local Government Pension Scheme Update**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer which provided an update on recent developments in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme, explained the governance arrangements in place and outlined the latest financial position of the Fund.

Brief discussion followed.

NOTED

the Local Government Pension Scheme Update.

GPC/14/8. **Local Government Pension Scheme - Discretions Policy**

Members considered a report by the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services regarding the requirements of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations for each employer to issue a written policy statement on

how it would exercise the discretions provided by the Scheme as well as to keep them under review and to revise them as necessary.

Members were reminded that in 2012 the Committee had approved the discretions to be applied by Central Bedfordshire Council as a Scheme employer. However, the new Pension Scheme rules which applied from 1 April 2014 required the Council to publish an up to date statement by 30 June 2014 with regard to how it would respond to the discretionary aspects of the Scheme's rules and regulations. To this end the Employer Policy Statement attached at Appendix A to the Director's report set out all of those discretions where the Council was required to have a written policy as advised by Bedfordshire Pension Fund. The document reflected the current discretions which were still required and additional discretions not previously included in the Council's policy that also required a policy decision by the Council as a Scheme employer.

The Chief People Officer (Acting) drew Members attention to a proposed amendment to Appendix A with regard to Regulation R16 (2)(e) & R16 (4)(d).

The 2008 Policy Statement on Employing Authority Discretions, attached at Appendix B to the report, had been annotated to reflect the 2014 amendments.

RESOLVED

that the Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 Employer Policy Statement, attached at Appendix A to the report of the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services, and the Policy Statement on Employing Authority Discretions (with 2014 Amendments), as attached at Appendix B to the report, be approved and adopted subject to the following amendment to Appendix A:

Regulation R16 (2)(e) & R16 (4)(d) - the Council's policy to be amended by adding the words 'or an administrative body requirement to do so' to the end of the sentence 'Central Bedfordshire Council will contribute to a shared cost Additional Pension Contribution contract where there is a statutory duty to do so.'

GPC/14/9. Children's Social Worker Recruitment

The Committee considered a presentation by the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations entitled 'Children's Social Worker Recruitment'. The presentation provided essential background on the issues surrounding the recruitment of social workers by local authorities, including the attractions offered by agency employment, and the local efforts being made to increase the in-house recruitment and retention of social workers by Central Bedfordshire Council. The slide pack for the presentation was circulated at the meeting.

A copy of the slide pack is attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

Full discussion followed. Whilst some confidence was expressed at the measures being implemented by the Council to recruit and develop newly qualified social workers it was also suggested that a monitoring report be submitted to the Committee in six months so that Members were aware of whether or not the aspirations set out within the presentation had been met. In view of the October recruitment intake the Assistant Director suggested that the report be submitted to the December meeting.

NOTED

the presentation by the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations entitled 'Children's Social Worker Recruitment'.

RESOLVED

that a monitoring report be submitted to the General Purposes Committee on 4 December 2014 to enable a comparison between the level of progress made on the recruitment and retention of children's social workers and that envisaged in the presentation made by the Assistant Director Children's Services Operations.

GPC/14/10. Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers

The Assistant Director Children's Services Operations informed the Committee that this item had been withdrawn.

GPC/14/11. Market Rate Supplement Payments - Annual Update

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services which set out an update on the current application of Market Rate Supplements (MRS) to posts across Central Bedfordshire Council. The report provided information covering:

- The percentage of cost of market rate supplements against the total salary bill by directorate
- The number of MRS payments against salary bands
- Staff turnover in the service areas in receipt of MRS.

The meeting was reminded of the difficulties that arose in recruiting experienced, skilled professionals in certain service areas and how MRS payments were required to bridge the gap between the Council's salary levels and the current 'market' rate of pay. In particular Members were aware from a previous item (minute GPC/14/9 refers) of the important role played by MRS payments in social worker recruitment and this was mirrored by the main area for MRS payments being Children's Services.

The meeting noted that the majority of MRS payments were made to front line staff in the middle range and very few were made to those at a managerial level.

RESOLVED

that the annual update on the current application of market rate supplements to posts across Central Bedfordshire Council be received and endorsed.

GPC/14/12. Constitution Update

Members considered a report by the Executive Member for Corporate Resources regarding a number of proposed minor amendments to the Constitution. The meeting noted that the amendments were required to reflect recent internal changes in the internal structure of the Council, to provide greater clarity on certain matters and to reflect changes in the law. In addition there were some typographical errors which required correction.

The meeting was advised of errors that had occurred in Appendix A to the report, which set out the proposed changes referred to above. A replacement second page for the Appendix, which corrected the errors, was circulated for Members' information.

Members were aware that paragraph 2.3 of Part A5 of the Constitution provided that the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the General Purposes Committee, make any urgent amendments to give effect to any decision of the Council, or changes in the law, and minor amendments such as to correct errors or to ensure that the Constitution was up to date. All of the proposed changes fell within the criteria described in the Constitution so there was no requirement for the Committee to approve them.

NOTED

that, following consultation with the General Purposes Committee as required under paragraph 2.3 of Part A5 of the Constitution, the minor changes to the Constitution as set out in the schedule attached at Appendix A to the report, as amended, will be made.

GPC/14/13. Revised Calendar of Meetings - Eight Week Cycle

The General Purposes Committee considered a report by the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer which set out the proposed revisions to the Council's adopted Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2014-15.

The Committee noted that the revisions would introduce an eight week cycle for the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees with the aim of reducing the overall number of meetings without giving rise to a negative impact on effectiveness or efficiency. Discussions on the proposed eight week cycle had been held with senior officers and Members and by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel and support for the proposal had been given.

If adopted, the proposed revisions would be introduced from September 2014. This would allow the full range of changes arising from an eight week cycle to

take effect from the beginning of the September/October cycle of meetings. Members were advised that, as a result of adopting the new cycle, it would also be necessary to reschedule meetings of the Audit and the General Purposes Committees (22 September from the morning to the afternoon, . and 12 March to 5 March respectively). In addition a second meeting of the General Purposes Committee would need to be rescheduled (from 4 December to 20 November) to enable the Chairman to attend in view of his commitments in the December period. A draft revised Calendar of Meetings showing the proposed new meeting dates and those dates previously agreed by Council in January 2014 was attached at Appendix A to the report.

During discussion on the impact of the proposed revisions, reference was made to the presumption that all members of the Development Management Committee, together with nominated substitutes, would attend that Committee's site visits. Concern was expressed that, despite recent amendment to the site visit schedule, clashes remained in the revised Calendar between the site visit dates and those dates proposed for some Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. A request was made that officers ensure that such clashes did not arise when drafting the Calendar of Meetings for 2015-16. Further discussion then took place on the possible impact of the revised meeting cycle on the management of the Council's business.

In response to the concerns raised the Chairman assured Members that their comments had been noted and would be fully considered.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that the proposed revisions to the 2014-15 Calendar of Meetings, as set out at Appendix B to these minutes, be approved and adopted.

GPC/14/14. General Purposes Committee - Work Programme for 2014/15

Members considered a report by the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer setting out the Committee's proposed work programme for the 2014/15 municipal year.

The meeting noted that a report on revisions to the Constitution would be submitted to the next meeting on 17 July.

In response to Members' queries the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer, in her role as the Council's Monitoring Officer, briefly outlined aspects of the content of her forthcoming report on standards complaints to the Committee in July. She referred to the challenges being experienced at some local parish councils and the constraints imposed by the Localism legislation on the sanctions available.

Members were aware that they had recommended the adoption of a revised Calendar of Meetings (minute GPC/14/13 above refers) and that, if the revised dates were approved by Council the Committee's meeting dates in December 2014 and March 2015 would be changed.

RESOLVED

that the proposed General Purposes Work Programme for the 2014/15 municipal year, as attached at Appendix B to the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Services and, be approved subject to the following amendments:

17 July 2014 – add Revisions to Constitution

4 December 2014 – add Children’s Social Worker Recruitment Update.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.37 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated



APPENDIX A

Children's Social Worker Recruitment

Gerard Jones Assistant Director Children's
Services - May 2014

Social Workers



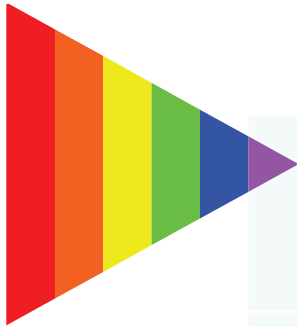
- Since 2005 Social Workers must have Degree/Masters & be registered with Health & Care Professionals Council (HCPC)
- Social Worker is a 'Protected Title'
- Specialisms working with Adults or Children
- Children's sub specialisms:
 - Child Protection
 - Looked After Children
 - Fostering
 - Adoption
 - Children with Disabilities

The National Picture for Social Work Recruitment



- There is a national skills shortage for Social Workers
- There is increasing demand for Social Workers in all sectors but particularly LA Children's Services
- We need 'qualified and experienced' Social Workers to meet our statutory responsibilities to children in need in CBC.
- Many LA's are struggling to recruit Social Workers

A Mixed Picture of Vacancies



	Assessment Teams	Family Support Teams	Children in Care 0-12 Teams	Disabled Children Teams	Fostering Teams	Adoption Teams
Establishment	20	33	27	11	11	6
Agency	13	18	17	3	1	0
Employed	7	15	10	8	10	6
Vacancy rate	65%	55%	63%	27%	10%	0

- Different pressures
- Will be similar differences in all Councils

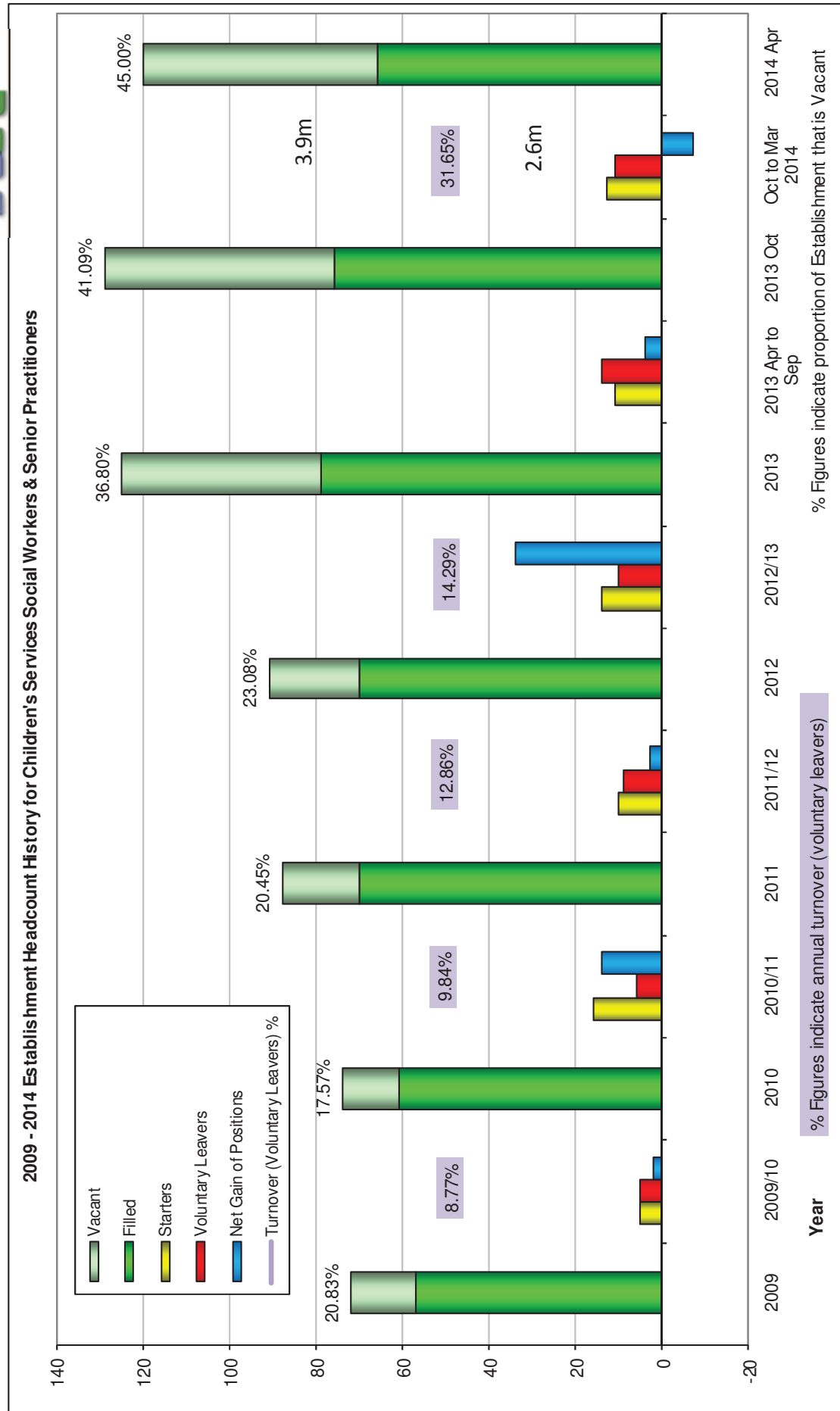
Attractions of Agency Employment for Social Workers



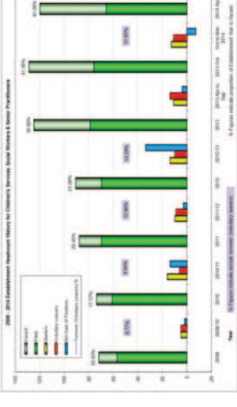
- Earn £57-69K vs employees £34-38K
- Cost us £70-83K vs employee £45-50K
- Advantages for Social Workers;
 - freedom of movement
 - earn more for the same work
 - choice of long term or short term contracts
 - opportunity to broaden experience
 - Pay differential compensates for lack of pension & sick pay



Our Progress



Background



- A low base and poor performance from the legacy authority Beds.CC
- Increased statutory responsibilities – care leavers, children in care, safeguarding children.
- Public concern about high profile cases such as Baby P.
- The Munro Review of Children's Social Work
- Rising public expectations about service standards
- A new demanding OFSTED framework and a name and shame approach

Context & Impact in CBC

- Significant increase in the Social Work establishment since 2012 to ensure safe caseload levels.
- Rising demand for Social Workers nationally is heating up an already difficult recruitment market.
- Some of our neighbours have encountered performance difficulties leading them to launch competitive recruitment campaigns.
- A focus on performance in 2013 led to a period of increased staff turnover.

What We Are Trying To Achieve



- Increase the % of experienced Social Workers to manage complex cases.
- Promote more professional practice opportunities for Social Workers.
- Reduced our vacancy rate
- Improve the stability of our Social Care Workforce
- Provide safe caseloads and good standards of practice
- We need to improve our position because of the impact of too many temporary staff upon the most vulnerable children and families.
- It is a performance issue for the Council with Central Govnt.

Recruitment Sources



- **Experienced People**
 - ✓ Other Councils – local, national
 - ✓ Other partners e.g. Children and Family Court Advisory & Support Services (CAFCASS)
 - ✓ From Agencies – conversion.
- **Inexperienced People - ASYE year (Assessed & Supported Year in Employment)**
 - ✓ Direct from Universities
 - ✓ Step Up to Social Work Programme
 - ✓ Grow our own

~~✗ Overseas~~

Current Campaign



- *'Love Your Job Again'* [Microsite](#)
- Concept – Authentic messages about what it's like to work here
- Continuous advertising
- Monthly pre-scheduled recruitment panels
- Two national recruitment awards
- Equal 11th most successful campaign
- Dedicated HR support

Developing our Newly Qualified Social Workers (ASWE's)



Recruit & Develop:

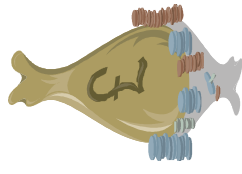
- Spring 2014 – 10 recruits (67 applicants)
- Autumn 2014 – 20 recruits
- These in addition to recruiting
 - 5 x Step Up Graduates
 - 3 x Grow your own
- Phase out Agency Staff safely.
- Provide dedicated support from two Practice Educators within the Social Work Academy

Inspire! - The Social Work & Early Intervention Academy

- Recruitment to our 'Step Up' Scheme
- Recruitment to our 'Tier' Scheme
- Provide Practice Placements for students
- Delivery of our ambitious ASYE Programme
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for experienced staff
- Masters Qualification
- Practice Excellence & Research
- Management Development



CBC – A Competitive Offer



- Paying a Market Rate Supplement (MRS) in key teams until the vacancy rate drops
- Being 'Best in Class' Recruiters.
- Making CBC a great place to be a Social Worker.
- Having a Great Reputation
 - Improving our national and regional profile as an employer.
 - Letting our front line staff 'sell' our service
 - Giving great professional development opportunities

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2014 – 2015 (PART)**

PROPOSED EIGHT WEEK CYCLE

Thur	11 Sep	Council	6.30pm	Mon	2 Feb	CPP	10.30am
Tues	16 Sep	CS OSC (was 02/09)	10.00am	Thur	5 Feb	HWB	1.00pm
Thur	18 Sep	SC OSC (was 04/09)	10.00am	Tues	10 Feb	Executive (budget)	9.30am
Mon	22 Sep	SCHH OSC		Wed	11 Feb	DMC	10.00am
		(was 08/09)	10.00am	Thur	26 Feb	Council (budget)	6.30pm
Mon	22 Sep	Audit (was 10.00am)	14.30pm	Mon	2 Mar	Council (R)	
Tues	23 Sep	CR OSC (was 09/09)	10.00am			(Police precept)	5.00pm
Wed	24 Sep	DMC	10.00am	Wed	4 Mar	Licensing	10.00am
Thur	2 Oct	General Purposes	10.00am	Thur	5 Mar	Gen Purp (was 12/03)	10.00am
Thur	2 Oct	HWB	1.00pm	Tues	10 Mar	CS OSC (was 17/02)	10.00am
Mon	13 Oct	CPP	10.30am	Wed	11 Mar	DMC	10.00am
Tues	14 Oct	Executive (was 23/09)	9.30am	Thur	12 Mar	SC OSC (was 19/02)	10.00am
Tues	21 Oct	CR OSC	10.00am	Mon	16 Mar	SCHH OSC (was 02/03)	10.00am
Wed	22 Oct	DMC	10.00am	Tues	17 Mar	CR OSC (was 03/03)	10.00am
				Mon	23 Mar	CPP	10.30am
				Mon	30 Mar	Audit	10.00am
(Tues	4 Nov	Executive deleted – not required under 8 week cycle)		Tues	31 Mar	Executive (was 17/03)	9.30am
Tues	11 Nov	CS OSC (was 14/10)	10.00am	(Tues	31 Mar	CS OCS deleted – not required under 8 week cycle)	
Wed	12 Nov	Licensing	10.00am				
Thur	13 Nov	SC OSC (was 16/10)	10.00am	(Thur	2 Apr	SC OSC deleted – not required under 8 week cycle)	
Mon	17 Nov	SCHH OSC					
		(was 20/10)	10.00am	Thur	2 Apr	HWB	1.00pm
Wed	19 Nov	DMC	10.00am	Wed	8 Apr	DMC	10.00am
Thur	20 Nov	Gen Purp (was 04/12)	10.00am	Thur	9 Apr	Council	6.30pm
Thur	27 Nov	Council	6.30pm	(Mon	13 Apr	SCHH OSC deleted – not required under 8 week cycle)	
Mon	1 Dec	CPP	10.30am	(Tues	14 Apr	CR OSC deleted – not required under 8 week cycle)	
Thur	4 Dec	HWB	1.00pm	(Tues	21 Apr	Executive deleted – not required under 8 week cycle)	
Tues	9 Dec	Executive	9.30am				
Thur	11 Dec	SC OSC	10.00am	Thur	7 May	ELECTIONS	
Fri	12 Dec	CS OSC	10.00am	Thur	14 May	Induction Event	
Mon	15 Dec	SCHH OSC	10.00am	Thur	21 May	Council	
Tues	16 Dec	CR OSC	10.00am			(Annual Meeting)	6.30pm
Wed	17 Dec	DMC	10.00am	Wed	27 May	DMC	10.00am
Mon	12 Jan	Audit	10.00am				
Tues	13 Jan	Executive					
		(draft budget)	9.30am				
Wed	14 Jan	DMC	10.00am				
Thur	15 Jan	General Purposes	10.00am				
Tues	20 Jan	CS OSC	10.00am				
Thur	22 Jan	SC OSC	10.00am				
Mon	26 Jan	SCHH OSC	10.00am				
Tues	27 Jan	CR OSC	10.00am				
Thur	29 Jan	Council	6.30pm				

GP – per cycle if needed

DMC – 4 weekly

Licensing – quarterly

Audit - quarterly

HWB – quarterly or as needed

Key:

CPP – Corporate Parenting Panel
CR OSC – Corporate Resources OSC
CS OSC – Children's Services OSC
DMC - Development Management Committee
HWB – Health & Wellbeing Board
SCHH OSC – Social Care, Health & Housing OSC
SC OSC – Sustainable Communities OSC

(R) - Reserve

Venues:

Licensing Sub-Committees will be arranged at local venues as and when required. All other meetings will normally be at Priory House unless otherwise agreed by the committee or body concerned.