

Agenda Item	16ii
Report No	HC/49/13

24 October 2013

**TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS FOR 2014**

**Report by the Chief Executive**

**Summary**

This report outlines proposals in relation to the Timetable of Meetings for the Full Council, Strategic Committees, City/Area Committees, etc in 2014.

**1. Current Arrangements**

1.1 Members will be aware that the current schedule of meetings provides for 6 meetings of the full Council and Strategic Committees throughout the year.

In addition, there is a Special Council Budget Meeting in February and quarterly meetings of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, Community Safety, Public Engagement & Equalities Committee, Pensions Committee and the Gaelic Implementation Group.

1.2 Following the introduction of the three new Area Committees this year, the opportunity has been taken to reflect on the transfer of business to the five City and Area Committees (included in the Scheme of Delegation) and the implications for business at Strategic Committees. Operational issues are now being considered at a more local level allowing Strategic Committees to focus on strategy, policy and resources.

1.3 Consideration has also been given to the impact on resources deployed to support the range of meetings. These resources have an opportunity cost to the Council.

**2. Proposed Arrangements**

2.1 In light of the above, and in view of the expectation that some of the business previously conducted through Strategic Committees will now be discussed at City/Area Committee level in future, it is proposed that Strategic Committee meetings be reduced from the current cycle of six meetings to **five** meetings per year. Four of these five Strategic Committees have been timed to facilitate quarterly reviews of budgets and performance. The fifth cycle in January may be cancelled in circumstances where the relevant Chair, Vice Chair and Director(s) agree that the level of business does not require a meeting to be called at that time.

The extent to which business has been transferred from Strategic to Area Committees should be reviewed again in 12 months' time.

The City of Inverness Area Committee would also move from a six Committee cycle to five Committees per year.

The Audit & Scrutiny Committee, the Community Safety, Public Engagement & Equalities Committee, the remaining Area Committees and the Gaelic Implementation Group would continue to meet on a quarterly basis as at present.

- 2.2 In this regard, specific details of the proposed new timetable have been attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.3 In line with these new arrangements, it is also proposed that the business of the Pensions Committee should be integrated with that of the Investment Sub Committee (with effect from 1 January 2014) and that there should be an annual review of Sub Committees and Working Groups to ensure that they remain relevant in terms of the conduct of business.
- 2.4 The proposed reduction in frequency of the Strategic Committee meetings allows the Committee timetable to be diaried for Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, which would leave Mondays and Fridays free for ward business and collaborative work with partners.
- 2.5 With regard to the attendance of Officers at meetings, it is confirmed that a review of current arrangements will be undertaken to ensure that there are facilities in place to allow Officers to make effective contributions to meetings (using the appropriate IT equipment) from remote locations as and when necessary.
- 2.6 It is surely time to consider the option of paperless Committee meetings and it is proposed that the Assistant Chief Executive is asked to consult with Members and bring forward a report setting out the logistics, benefits, risks and savings associated with this option.

### **3. Implications Arising from the Report**

- 3.1 There are no legal or material risk implications arising from these proposals.
- 3.2 A future move to paperless Committees would significantly enhance the Council's climate change/carbon clever credentials.
- 3.3 With regard to resource implications, these proposals will mitigate the pressure on the support arrangements required for both Strategic and Area Committees and at the same time enable the commitment to be maintained that this support should be provided from within existing resources.

### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Council is asked to approve the proposed Timetable of Meetings for 2014 as detailed and as attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.2 The Council is asked to agree that the cycle of meetings in January may be cancelled in circumstances where the relevant Chair, Vice Chair and Director(s) agree that the level of business does not require a meeting to be called at that time.
- 4.3 The Council is asked to agree that a review of the extent to which business has been transferred from Strategic to Area Committees should be undertaken in 12 months' time.
- 4.4 The Council is asked to agree that the business of the Pensions Committee should be integrated with that of the Investment Sub Committee from 1 January 2014 and that an annual review of Sub Committees and Working Groups should be undertaken as detailed in the report.

4.5 The Council is asked to agree that the Assistant Chief Executive should consult with Members and bring forward a report setting out the logistics, benefits and savings associated with the option of paperless Committee meetings.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 10 October 2013

# The Highland Council

# Headquarters Year Planner 2014

	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	M	T	W	TH							
Jan	1 HOL	2 HOL	3	4	5	6	7	8 PED	9 TEC	10	11	12	13	14 NPAC	15 ACS	16 PRB	17	18	19	20	21 SPAC	22 FHR	23	24	25	26	27	28 CIA	29	30	31						
Feb				1	2	3	4 HLC HLB	5 SRC	6 TEC	7	8	9	10	11 CS	12 PED	13 HC	14	15	16	17	18 NPAC	19 ACS	20 GIG	21 ●	22	23	24	25 SPAC	26 FHR	27 LA	28						
Mar				1	2	3	4 CIA	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 PRB	12	13 HC	14	15	16	17	18	19 NBS	20	21	22	23	24	25 NPAC	26 CPE	27 A&S	28	29	30	31			
Apr							1 HLC HLB	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 SPAC	9	10	11 ●	12	13	14	15	16	17 ●	18 HOL	19	20	21 HOL	22	23	24 PRB	25	26	27	28	29 NPAC	30 SRC	
May	1	2	3	4	5 HOL	6	7	8 HC	9	10	11	12	13 HLC HLB	14 PED	15 TEC	16	17	18	19	20 SPAC	21 ACS	22 LA	23	24	25	26	27 CS	28 FHR	29 GIG	30	31						
Jun				1	2	3 CIA	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 NPAC	11 NBS	12 CPE	13	14	15	16	17 HLC HLB	18 PRB	19 A&S	20	21	22	23	24 SPAC	25	26 HC	27	28	29	30				
Jul							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Aug			1	2	3	4	5 NPAC	6 SRC	7	8	9	10	11	12 HLC HLB	13 PRB	14 GIG	15	16	17	18	19 SPAC	20 PED	21 TEC	22	23	24	25	26 LA	27 FHR	28 ACS	29	30	31				
Sep						1	2 CIA	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 HC	12	13	14	15	16 NPAC	17 CS	18 PRB	19	20	21	22	23	24 A&S	25 NBS	26	27	28	29	30 SPAC		
Oct	1 CPE	2	3	4	5	6	7 HLC HLB	8	9	10	11	12	13	14 NPAC	15	16 ●	17 ●	18	19	20	21 SPAC	22	23	24 ●	25	26	27	28	29	30 HC	31						
Nov				1	2	3	4 HLC HLB	5 PED	6 TEC	7	8	9	10	11 NPAC	12 ACS	13 GIG	14	15	16	17	18 SPAC	19 SRC	20 A&S	21	22	23	24	25 LA	26 FHR	27 PRB	28	29	30				
Dec						1	2 CIA	3 CPE	4 NBS	5	6	7	8	9 CS	10	11 HLC HLB	12	13	14	15	16 NPAC	17	18 HC	19	20	21	22 ●	23 SPAC	24 ●	25 HOL	26 HOL	27	28	29 HOL	30 HOL	31 HOL	

**ACS** - Adult and Children's Services Committee  
**AS** - Audit and Scrutiny  
**CIA** - City of Inverness Area Committee  
**CPE** - Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee  
**CS** - Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee  
**FHR** - Finance, Housing and Resources Committee

**GIG** - Gaelic Implementation Group  
**HC** - Highland Council  
**HLC** - Highland Licensing Committee  
**HLB** - Highland Licensing Board  
**NPAC** - North Planning Applications Committee  
**PED** - Planning, Environment and Development

**LA** - Lochaber Area Committee  
**SRC** - Skye, Ross & Cromarty Area Committee

**PRB** - Planning Review Body  
**SPAC** - South Planning Applications Committee  
**TECS** - Transport, Environmental and Community Services  
**VJB** - Valuation Joint Board

● School Holidays

**NBS** - Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee