

MEETING: 9 JUNE 2022

REPORT BY: SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING ARRANGEMENTS 2023

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to propose meeting arrangements for the Commission for 2023.

Background

2. The Commission has in its Strategy a commitment to continuously improve how it does its business and to consider how it can manage better its business. It is customary in June of each year for the Commission to agree its meeting arrangements for the subsequent calendar year.
3. At its meeting in June 2020, the Commission agreed a way forward for planning Commission business and considering its strategy in the light of the pandemic. This has been adapted in the period since then, so that currently the features of meeting arrangements include:
 - Meeting by video conference, in the offices of Audit Scotland and via public livestream, with a pre-meeting on the day of the formal monthly meeting.
 - Meeting virtually for the quarterly committee meetings.
 - Considering other business at a private informal member meeting at the conclusion of the monthly Commission meeting. Such business includes the Commission Change Programme.
 - Livestreaming formal Commission meetings (since late 2020 such meetings were recorded and made publicly available).

Commission business

4. This paper reflects a working assumption that the Commission will continue to wish to operate on the basis of the principles in paragraph 3, principally meeting monthly.

Commission meeting arrangements

5. The main features of the proposal are:
 - Commission members are asked to commit to one Commission meeting per month, along with a meeting of committees quarterly.
 - These slots will be used for a combination of:
 - Formal meetings of the Commission.
 - Commission member forum (see under 'member forum' below)
 - For meetings of the Commission and its committees, the following assumptions are made:

- On business days, all Commission business will start at 9.30am and finish at 4pm at the latest, with suitable breaks included to ensure around six hours being devoted to Commission business.
 - Quarterly committees both meet on the same day with meetings lasting for 90 to 105 minutes, with normally the Financial Audit and Assurance Committee meeting at 9.15am and the Performance Audit Committee starting at 11.15am. There is also the option of joint meetings of the committees if worthy for certain business.
- Commission pre-meetings will take place – lasting 15 minutes – before the formal meeting commences.
 - We will continue to use July as a ‘recess’ month. This recognises the benefits of the Commission having some ‘downtime’ in the summer months and also of most Audit Scotland colleagues taking annual holidays during July (and thus reflecting, for example, school holidays).
 - Two strategy seminar slots are included – the first is an overnight event in the Spring and the second ‘mid-year’ event in an afternoon in Autumn (see below).
 - In recent years we have used one committee meeting slot to meet in Audit Scotland’s Glasgow office. It is proposed to commit to continuing this practice, depending on the arrangements in place in response to Covid-19.
6. **Appendix 1** proposes a schedule of meetings for 2023. The schedule is explained under ‘strategic planning’ below.

Strategic planning

7. The Commission most recently in 2019 refined its approach to planning its business throughout the year. Most notably, it has agreed to retain two strategy events in the year, in Spring and Autumn.
8. The Spring event is longstanding and is customarily an overnight event to review progress in the past year and agree broad themes for an annual refresh of the Commission strategy. The Autumn event has been used variously for progress reporting and for more ‘internal’ facing matters such as Commission development.
9. The introduction last year of the dynamic work programme, which the Commission agreed for the first time in May, allows scope for revisiting the purposes of the strategy seminars. It is therefore proposed that the main purpose of the Spring event – to review progress as a Commission and to find some ‘space’ to think about its strategic messages – be retained. Outputs from the event will feed directly into the work programme update in subsequent months, but also allow the Commission to publish its strategy if it chooses to do so annually (the current approach is two-yearly). With work programme updates taking place quarterly, it allows the Commission to make more flexible use of the Autumn seminar, for example to focus more on ‘internal’ facing matters, as was originally intended.
10. How this looks in an overall meeting schedule and planning cycle for the Commission is set out in **Appendix 2**. To make best fit with the approach to dynamic work programme, and accommodating a role for the Commission’s committees in the work programme as well as for the Commission itself, it is proposed that the schedule for meetings of the committees is slightly revised, as follows:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|-------|--------|----------|
| Current | February | May | August | November |
| Proposed | January | April | August | November |

Commission member forum

11. Commission members have made use of the private member forums for different purposes, notably in liaising with external stakeholders (formerly in the form of a Commission 'insight programme'. It is proposed that this approach be retained, albeit with the important addition of regularly monitoring progress of the Commission Change Programme. To this end, members' views are sought on areas to be covered in our forum meeting schedule.

Conclusion

12. The Commission is invited to consider:
 - a) The proposed schedule and arrangements for meetings of the Commission and its committees in 2023.
 - b) Specifically, any areas of interest for member forum meetings.

Paul Reilly
Secretary to the Accounts Commission
1 June 2022

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION**MEETING SCHEDULE 2023**

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 12 January | Accounts Commission |
| 26 January | Committees |
| 9 February | Accounts Commission |
| 9 March | Accounts Commission |
| 21/22 March (Tue/Wed) | Spring Strategy Seminar |
| 13 April | Accounts Commission |
| 27 April | Committees |
| 11 May | Accounts Commission |
| 8 or 15 June | Accounts Commission |
| 10 August | Accounts Commission |
| 24 August | Committees |
| 13 September (Wed) | Autumn Strategy Seminar |
| 14 September | Accounts Commission |
| 12 October | Accounts Commission |
| 9 November | Accounts Commission |
| 23 November | Committees |
| 14 December | Accounts Commission |

Key:

All Thursdays except where notified

Notable dates:

- Easter Sunday: 9 April
- Easter school holidays: Edinburgh/Glasgow/Highland 3 – 14 April
- Summer school holidays: Edinburgh 28 June - 16 August; Glasgow 23 June – 14 August; Highland 30 June – 15 August
- October school holidays: Highland 9 – 23 October; Edinburgh & Glasgow 16 – 20 October

PROPOSED COMMISSION ANNUAL PLANNING AND REPORTING CYCLE

| | Commission meeting | Other meetings |
|------------|---|---|
| Jan | | Committee meetings: contribute to quarterly work programme update |
| Feb | Annual Assurance and Risks Report | |
| Mar | Work programme consultation results (early Jan to late Feb) Draft overview report Quarterly work programme update | Spring Strategy Seminar: Reviews themes from overviews and AARR Agrees content for Annual Report Agrees themes for draft Strategy |
| Apr | Draft annual report Draft Commission Strategy (high level messages from Strategy Seminar) | Committee meetings: contribute to quarterly work programme update |
| May | Draft Commission Strategy | |
| Jun | Quarterly work programme update (reflecting any revised Strategy) | |
| Jul | Recess | |
| Aug | | Committee meetings: contribute to quarterly work programme update |
| Sep | Quarterly work programme update | Autumn Strategy Seminar: Team development etc. |
| Oct | | |
| Nov | Annual planning guidance | Committee meetings: contribute to quarterly work programme update |
| Dec | Quarterly work programme update Draft consultation themes | |