

Commission meeting arrangements 2024

Interim Secretary to the Commission

Item 6
Meeting date: 15 June 2023

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to propose meeting arrangements for the Commission for 2024.

Recommendations

2. The Commission is invited to consider:
 - The proposed schedule and arrangements for meetings of the Commission and its committees in 2024.
 - Specifically, any areas of interest for member forum meetings.

Background

3. The Commission has in its Strategy a commitment to continuously improve how it conducts and manages its business. It is customary in June of each year for the Commission to agree its meeting arrangements for the subsequent calendar year.

Commission meeting arrangements

4. 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 the Financial Audit and Assurance Committee normally 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).
5. **Appendix 1** proposes a schedule of meetings for 2024. The schedule is explained under ‘strategic planning’ below.

Strategic planning

6. In 2019, the Commission refined its approach to planning its business throughout the year. Most notably, it agreed to retain two strategy events in the year, in Spring and Autumn.
7. The Spring event is longstanding and is normally 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.
8. The introduction in 2021 of the dynamic work programme, which the Commission agreed for the first time in May 2022, allows scope for revisiting the purposes of the strategy seminars. It is therefore proposed that the main purpose of the Spring 2024 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. 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.
9. 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 as follows:
- February
 - May
 - August
 - November

Commission member forum

10. During 2022/23, Commission members have made use of the private member forums for different purposes. It is proposed that this approach be retained to protect space for members to discuss emerging issues or developments as a group.

APPENDIX 1**MEETING SCHEDULE 2024**

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 11 January | Accounts Commission |
| 8 February | Accounts Commission |
| 22 February | Committees |
| 7 March | Accounts Commission |
| 12/13 March (Tue/Wed) | Spring Strategy Seminar |
| 18 April | Accounts Commission |
| 9 May | Accounts Commission |
| 23 May | Committees |
| 13 June | Accounts Commission |
| 8 August | Accounts Commission |
| 22 August | Committees |
| 11 September (Wed) | Autumn Strategy Seminar |
| 12 September | Accounts Commission |
| 10 October | Accounts Commission |
| 7 November | Accounts Commission |
| 21 November | Committees |
| 12 December | Accounts Commission |

All Thursdays except where notified**Notable dates:**

- Easter Sunday: 31 March
- Easter school holidays: Edinburgh/Glasgow/Highland 28 March - 16 April
- Summer school holidays: Edinburgh 28 June – 13 August; Glasgow 27 June – 14 August; Highland 27 June – 20 August
- October school holidays: Highland 14 – 28 October; Edinburgh & Glasgow 14 – 21 October

APPENDIX 2**PROPOSED COMMISSION ANNUAL PLANNING AND REPORTING CYCLE**

| | Commission meeting | Other meetings |
|-----|--|---|
| Jan | | |
| Feb | Annual Assurance and Risks Report | Committee meetings: contribute to quarterly work programme update |
| Mar | Work programme consultation results (early Jan to late Feb) 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 overview report Draft Commission Strategy (high level messages from Strategy Seminar) | |
| May | Draft Commission Strategy | Committee meetings: contribute to quarterly work programme update |
| Jun | Draft annual report 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 | |