



Full Council (AGM)	Tuesday, 10 May 2022	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: **Schedule of Council and Allied Meetings (2022/23)**

Report Author(s): **Samuel Ball (Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer)**
Sebastian Wheeliker (Democratic & Electoral Services Officer)

Purpose of Report:	This report seeks Council's approval of the Schedule of Council and Allied Meetings ("the Schedule") for the municipal year 2022/23.
Report Summary:	The Schedule has been prepared following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Senior Leadership Team subject to the below-mentioned guidelines (set out at paragraph 3.2. of this report).
Recommendation(s):	That the Schedule of Council and Allied Meetings for the municipal year 2022/23 (as set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to this report) be approved and adopted.
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	David Gill (Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Samuel Ball (Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2643 samuel.ball@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Sebastian Wheeliker (Democratic & Electoral Services Officer) (0116) 288 896 sebastian.wheeliker@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Not applicable.
Vision and Values:	Not applicable.
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	The implications specifically relating to remote/hybrid meeting arrangements are as set out at paragraphs 5.1 - 5.5 of this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Regulatory Governance (CR6)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.

Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor John W Boyce (Leader of the Council) • Senior Leadership Team
Background Papers:	Letter from the Minister for Local Government to Councils in England on the High Court's Judgment Regarding Remote Meetings (Published 29 April 2021)
Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule of Council and Allied Meetings (2022/23) (Calendar) 2. Schedule of Council and Allied Meetings (2022/23) (Table)

1. Background

- 1.1 Most local authorities fix their schedule of meetings for a period of one-year in advance (at or about the time of the annual general meeting) compiled, as a rule, by an updating of the programme of the preceding year. By doing so, it sets the pattern for the transaction of Council business at both a policy and operational level and, moreover, allows Members, Officers and other stakeholders to enter dates in their diaries before other commitments arise.
- 1.2 As required by the Council's Constitution, a function reserved to Full Council is the approval and adoption of the Schedule of Council and Allied Meetings ("the Schedule") for each municipal year at its Annual General Meeting (AGM).

2. The Schedule for 2022/23

- 2.1 The Schedule sets out the proposed dates, times and venues of meetings for the municipal year 2022/23. The Schedule also includes other outside and partnership meetings, training sessions, events, and useful dates (including school and bank holidays) allied to the Council.
- 2.2 The Appendices to this report provide the proposed dates, times, and venues in both a calendar (at **Appendix 1**) and table (at **Appendix 2**) format. The table at **Appendix 2** further groups and organises the meetings/events etc. by type and chronology.
- 2.3 Any venues for meetings currently marked as 'TBC' will be confirmed at a later date.
- 2.4 Any venues for meetings currently marked as 'Remote Audio-Video Conference' is a reference to the hosting of that meeting on a remote audio-video hosting platform, further information relating to which is set out at paragraphs 5.4. and 5.6 of this report.
- 2.5 Meetings of the Brocks Hill/Office Relocation Sub-Committee and the Former Oadby Pool Site Sub-Committee will be inserted into the Schedule on an ad-hoc basis at the direction of the appointed Chair, in/following consultation with the relevant Officers.
- 2.6 Pre-meetings with the relevant Chair/Mayor and/or Vice-Chair/Deputy Mayor of the Council's decision and non-decision-making bodies have been included in the Schedule accordingly.
- 2.7 All festivals, holy days and other events etc. observed and/or facilitated by the Council have been added to the Schedule under the heading 'Events and Festival Days'.

3. Information

3.1 Quarterly Performance Reporting

3.1.2 The following committees are subject to quarterly reporting requirements:

- Policy, Finance and Development Committee;
- Service Delivery Committee;
- Licensing and Regulatory Committee;
- Audit Committee; and
- People Committee.

3.1.3. In order to allow adequate time for the required data to be collated from the quarter-end and for fully inclusive reports to be prepared, the Schedule has been programmed to meet the timeframes as set out in the table below, with other meetings/events etc. evenly spaced around the "core bloc" as far as possible.

Quarter	Covers	Data Collection	Finish Reports	Meeting Dates
4 (2021/22)	Jan-Feb-Mar	April 2021	May 2022	Third to fifth week in June 2022
1 (2022/23)	Apr-May-June	July 2022	August 2022	Second week of September to first week in October 2022
2 (2022/23)	July-Aug-Sep	October 2022	November 2022	*Fourth week of November to second week of December
3 (2022/23)	Oct-Nov-Dec	January 2023	February 2023	Second week of March to second week in April 2023

* Timetabling constraints due to the closures over the Christmas and New Year period.

3.2 Other Considerations

The following guidelines have also been applied in the preparation of the Schedule:

- As far as possible, the order of meetings within the committee cycle is related to the character of business. Council meetings at which recommendations may need to be referred to, or committees which regularly or periodically have to consider the outcomes or recommendations of other committees, therefore meet at the end of the cycle, but in sufficient time before the relevant meeting to enable reports to be prepared and incorporated within the relevant agenda and management timetable.
- As far as possible, clashes of meetings and events have been avoided. However, inevitably, given the constraints of avoiding school/public/religious holidays etc. and

the number of meetings to be accommodated on specific days of the week, there are unavoidable occasions where there are overlaps of meetings and events.

- As far as possible, school/religious holidays etc. and party conference, weeks have been avoided. Although it has not been possible to keep those weeks completely clear, particularly if certain scheduled meetings are required to take place within statutory or other prescribed timeframes (e.g. Council Tax and Budget Setting).
- As far as possible, meetings have not been scheduled on Mondays or Fridays.
- What may appear at the moment to be “free” days may be filled, for example, by sub-committee meetings, certain quasi-judicial hearings and political group meetings etc.

4. Publication of the Schedule

The proposed dates, times and venues of meetings of the Schedule will be published and updated whenever and wherever necessary through the Council’s meeting management application and will be publically-viewable via the ‘Meeting Dates, Agendas and Minutes’ section of the Council’s website and on the ‘Modern.Gov’ iPad, Android or Windows app.

5. Remote/Hybrid Meeting Arrangements Update

- 5.1 As Members will be aware, the ability to hold fully remote meetings under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“the 2020 Act”) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) expired on 7 May 2021.
- 5.2 Following an unsuccessful High Court action in 2021, all councils in England had to revert back to holding meetings in person due to the court’s ruling that the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (“the 1972 Act”) requires council meetings to take place in person at a single, specified, geographical location and being “present” at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location. The Government launched a consultation calling for evidence from all relevant stakeholders to inform potential provision to allow fully remote meetings. This ran from 25 March to 17 June 2021 but has yet to reach a final decision.
- 5.3 In January 2022, the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Local Lawyers in Government (LLG) launched a petition on change.org calling on the government to allow councils in England the freedom to hold remote meetings. This petition reached 10,000 signatures in February 2022 and therefore the government is required to respond to it: however, the petition is still awaiting a response as of the date of this report’s publication. Democratic Services will monitor the outcomes of both the government consultation and the Change.Org petition, with a view to updating the Council as and when responses are made public, and the resulting impact on its meeting arrangements as may be agreed.
- 5.4 Meetings of the Council’s non-decision-making bodies, such as its Appointed Working Groups and Outside and Partnership Bodies were not affected, and continue to not be affected, by the High Court’s ruling on the 1972 Act and, as such, will continue to be held remotely. This has proven successful and a mutually efficient way of meeting during/after the COVID-19 pandemic, and its continuation is consistent with and furthers the Council’s adopted Agile Working Policy and Arrangements going forward, particularly in light of the Council Offices relocation to Brocks Hill Country Park address at paragraph 6.1. below.
- 5.5 Meetings of the Council’s decision-making bodies, such as its Committees and Sub-Committees, whilst affected by the High Court’s ruling on the 1972 Act, will continue to capitalise on the efficiency, flexibility and greater opportunity for participation afforded by hybrid arrangements to Members, Officers, and other stakeholders (i.e. public speakers, petitioners) so long as meetings remain quorate in terms of “present and voting” Members.

- 5.6 As of the date of publication of this report, the necessary IT equipment and requirements are substantially in place, targeted training to Members on using Microsoft Teams has been delivered and a relevant User Guide (including a Meeting Etiquette Protocol) has been developed, to permanently migrate all hybrid meetings and remote meetings over from ZOOM to Microsoft Teams from the start of the 2022/23 municipal year (i.e. the AGM onwards). This migration has aligned with the Council's adoption of Microsoft Teams as its standard software solution for unified communications as part of its general IT migration and has realised a cost saving in terms of no longer requiring a ZOOM licence subscription.

6. Council Offices Relocation to Brocks Hill Country Park

- 6.1 As Members will be aware, it is anticipated that the relocation of the Council Offices to Brocks Hill Country Park is scheduled for October 2022. As such, the Council's decision-making bodies, which still require Members' physical attendance at quorum, have been scheduled to take place at this new location in/from October 2022. Should there be a delay for any reason in the Council's relocation from Bushloe House to Brocks Hill Country Park, the Schedule will be amended and updated and all participants notified accordingly.