

To: **Council**
Date: 26 January 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy
Title of Report: Meetings Programme for May 2026 to May 2028

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	This report sets out a programme of Council, committee and other meetings for the whole of the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 Council years.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	A Well Run Council
Policy Framework:	None

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:

1. **Approve** the programme of Council, committee and other meetings from 1 May 2026 to 31 May 2028 attached at Appendix 1;
2. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, in consultation with the political Group Leaders, to make changes to this programme in the event that there is any decision by Council to change the committee structure or committee remits which impacts on the programme of meetings; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy to set dates for additional training and briefing sessions for Members.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Programme of Council and committee meetings in calendar	No

	format May 2026 to May 2028	
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Introduction and background

1. This report sets out the proposed schedule of Council and committee meetings for whole of the next two municipal years, from 1 May 2026 to 31 May 2028, for approval by Council.
2. Council agreed a programme of meetings on 27 January 2025 which included meetings in May 2026. There have been no changes to the meetings programmed for May 2026.
3. Appendix 1 provides the recommended programme of meetings of Council, committees, sub-committees, Scrutiny standing working group meetings and Member training and briefing sessions. Meeting dates for Cabinet and the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group are a matter for the Leader of the Council and are included in the programme for completeness.
4. Setting the programme for all main Council and committee meetings in advance allows for good governance, open and efficient decision making and helps Members and officers to plan their workloads and availability.

Programme of Meetings

5. This report assumes that the Council's decision-making arrangements and committee structure will be unchanged from current arrangements. Should Council decide to make changes to its committee structure at any point, a revised programme may need to be prepared and circulated. It is recommended that authority is delegated to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to the programme as required following any such decision.
6. The principle used in timetabling is that Council business must happen in a timely manner, but the broader needs of Members will be taken into account. Council has previously asked officers to as far as possible avoid scheduling meetings during school holidays, during certain religious festivals and on Fridays. The main Christian festivals coincide with public holidays. There are no significant clashes with major Sikh or Buddhist festivals. Major festivals for those of Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faiths taken into account are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Dates of major Muslim, Jewish and Hindu festivals

Festival	Dates in 2026-2027	Dates in 2027-2028
Eid-al-Adha	Tuesday, 26 May – Wednesday, 27 May 2026	Sunday, 16 May – Monday, 17 May 2025
Rosh Hashanah	Friday, 11 September – Sunday, 13 September 2026	Friday, 1 October – Sunday, 3 October 2027
Yom Kippur	Sunday, 20 September – Monday 21 September 2026	Sunday, 10 October – Monday 11 October 2027
Diwali	Friday, 6 November 2026	Friday, 29 October 2027

Festival	Dates in 2026-2027	Dates in 2027-2028
Ramadan	Sunday, 7 February – Monday, 8 March 2027	Thursday, 27 January – Friday, 25 February 2028
Eid-al-Fitr	Tuesday, 9 March – Wednesday 10 March 2027	Saturday, 26 February – Sunday, 27 February 2028

7. As far as practicable meetings have been scheduled to avoid school holidays and major religious festivals, where this does not adversely affect the overall programme. In some cases this has been unavoidable. Members of most committees are able to appoint a substitute if they cannot attend themselves.
8. The programme is very busy so there is limited scope for meetings to be moved or added without creating diary clashes for Members and officers. The Council's Constitution (Part 14.6) contains provisions for cancelling committee meetings where there is no business and scheduling further committee meetings if required. Part 11.5 of the Council's Constitution contains provisions for scheduling special meetings of Council.
9. As per the following sections of the Council's Constitution, 12.8 (Cabinet), 13.4 (Scrutiny Committee) and 14.6 (b) (all other Committees), Special Meetings can be convened following consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Chair of the Committee.

Meetings of Council

10. In a year of ordinary elections of councillors to the Council, the annual meeting of Council must be held between the 8th and 21st day after the retirement of councillors¹. In any other year, the annual meeting of Council may be on any such day in the month of March, April, or May as the Council may fix².
11. Holding the annual meeting of Council on an early date allows the election of the Lord Mayor, the appointment of committees and the start of the decision-making cycle. A later meeting date would create a longer gap in the decision-making cycle which would have implications for dealing with the Council's business in a timely manner.
12. The Council's budget meeting is scheduled for 22 February 2027, which falls during the week of half-term. This has been difficult to avoid. Council must set the Council Tax at a meeting once the other precepting authorities have set their budgets and in time for some 60,000 Council Tax bills to be produced before the start of the new financial year.
13. A second Council budget meeting has been reserved for 3rd March in case Council or another precepting authority is unable to agree a budget meaning Council is unable to set the Council Tax at its meeting on 22 February 2027.
14. The same principles have been applied to the scheduling of Council meetings in 2027/2028.

¹ Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 S1 (2) (a).

² Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 S1 (2) (b).

Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee

15. The regular cycle of Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet meetings is intended to provide for efficient Executive decision making and to allow sufficient time for effective pre-decision scrutiny. Scrutiny Committee is generally scheduled to meet on a Tuesday and Cabinet on the following Wednesday.
16. The Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meetings scheduled for August 2026 and August 2027 are reserved only for any decisions which must be taken then, and pre-scrutiny of those decisions. If there are no such decisions these meetings may be cancelled.
17. Dates for meetings of the Scrutiny Committee's Climate and Environment Working Group, Finance and Performance Working Group, Housing and Homelessness Working Group and the Budget Review Group have been included in the programme, should they be reconstituted in the 2026/2027 municipal year.
18. Should the Scrutiny Committee establish other standing Working Groups and/or Review Groups for the 2026/2027 municipal year, those Working Groups and/or Review Groups will be set by the Scrutiny Committee when those groups have been convened.

Shareholder and Joint Venture Group (SJVG) Meetings

19. The Shareholder and Joint Venture Groups (SJVG) are responsible for acting as owner of the Council's companies and for safeguarding and furthering the Council's interests and investments in its companies and joint ventures. The SJVG is scheduled to meet six times per year in total, with two meetings being held every four months, one for Oxford Direct Services Limited and Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited and one for Oxford City Housing Limited (and its subsidiaries) and the Joint Ventures.
20. The Chairs of the Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Performance Working Group will continue to be invited to attend and present their recommendations at SJVG meetings, as a means of providing more effective and efficient Scrutiny oversight of the shareholder function.

Planning Committees

21. The Oxford City Planning Committee will continue to meet on Tuesdays each month. Overspill Meetings have been removed from the calendar, and to ensure improved governance, special meetings of Planning Committees during periods of high workloads can be organised in line with the provision in the Constitution.
22. Planning Review Committee will no longer be scheduled in the calendar but will be called as and when required by the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, as per the provision in the Constitution.

Licensing Committees and Sub-Committees

23. The General Purposes Licensing Committee and the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee are scheduled to meet three times per year with meetings of the two committees held back-to-back. At its' Annual Meeting, Council will be recommended to appoint the same Members to both licensing committees at its annual meetings.

24. Meetings of the General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub-Committee and Licensing and Gambling Acts Casework Sub-Committee have been scheduled monthly throughout the year.

Audit and Governance Committee

25. The Audit and Governance Committee is scheduled to meet quarterly to receive audit and risk reports and undertake its other responsibilities. The scheduled meeting for October will be for the Committee to consider and approve the annual statement of accounts.

Standards Committee

26. The Standards Committee is scheduled to meet three times per year to receive reports from the Monitoring Officer on the number of Code of Conduct complaints received, updates on developments in ethical governance, requests for individual dispensations and proposals for Member training.

Appointments Committee

27. The Committee will only meet when the Chief Executive must report any changes to the Council's senior management arrangements, as required by the Council's Constitution (Part 9.3(a)(iii)).

28. The Appointments Committee is also responsible for recommending to Council any appointment to the position of Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) and the designation of Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, and for appointing to the positions of executive director or posts of similar seniority. All meetings can be scheduled by the Chief Executive or the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy after consulting the Chair of the Appointments Committee, should the need arise.

Investigations and Disciplinary Committee

29. This Committee would only meet to decide on disciplinary hearings involving a Statutory Officer, Director or Deputy Chief Executive. The Committee and Member Services Manager has delegated authority within the Council's Constitution (7.6(d)) to convene meetings of this committee should the need arise.

Training and Briefings

30. Training and briefing sessions are offered to assist with Members' learning and development. Dates for training and briefing sessions are included to allow Members to plan ahead. Members are advised to note these dates in their diaries.

31. Compulsory training will always be offered on a choice of dates and times. Non-compulsory training and Member briefing sessions will typically start at 6.00pm. A later start time would have an impact on the employment arrangements of officers.

32. Members have previously been asked to provide feedback on the topics, timings and delivery of member briefings. Responses from previous surveys have suggested there is a clear preference for briefings to be held in the evening and if applicable, delivered remotely over Microsoft Teams, with the sessions being recorded for the benefit of Members who are unable to attend where possible.

33. Some training sessions will be held in-person at the Town Hall, at the request of the Officers delivering the training.

34. It is recommended that the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy is authorised to arrange additional training and briefing as requested by officers or Members.

Meeting Start Times

35. The default start time for all meetings is 6.00pm with the exception of Council meetings which start at 5.00pm; committees and sub-committees are able to vary this start time. The two licensing committees may set the start times for their sub-committees, or these sub-committees may set their own start times on a case-by-case basis.
36. As per the following sections of the Council's Constitution, 11.6 (Council), 12.2 (Cabinet), 13.4 (Scrutiny Committee) and 14.6 (c) (all other Committees), meetings must conclude no more than four hours after the published start time.
37. Any committees wishing to vary the start time to later than 6.00pm must first consult the Committee and Member Services Manager to ensure that these meetings can be suitably resourced and supported by officers.

Meeting Locations

38. All Committees and Sub-Committees are subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires Members to be physically present together in a set location. Within this calendar, the exceptions to this are meetings of standing Working Groups and Review Groups established by the Scrutiny Committee and Member training and briefing sessions, which may be held remotely. The Long Room at Oxford Town Hall is the venue for all meetings held in a physical location and Microsoft Teams are the default platforms for meetings held remotely. The Council Chamber will be used for full Council meetings.
39. Following the installation of a hybrid meetings solution in the Long Room, some meeting attendees may join meetings remotely via Zoom (e.g. Cabinet Members when summoned by the Scrutiny Committee), however Committee and Sub-Committee Members are not permitted to attend remotely and must be physically present at the Town Hall.

Publicising Meeting Dates

40. Meeting dates will be available online via the Council's website and intranet once agreed by Council. The online calendar is the most effective way to view accurate and up-to-date meeting dates. In addition, the meeting details can be downloaded into individual Members' calendars. Where meetings are cancelled or rescheduled during the year, the meeting details in Members' calendars will not update automatically and Members will need to update their calendars manually.

Alternative Options Considered

41. To not set or agree the calendar of meetings ahead of the next municipal year, however this would be considered to not be appropriate. The calendar of meetings allows Officers and Councillors to plan for the year ahead and gives the political groups enough time to organise nominations ahead of the Annual Council in May.

Financial implications

42. The programme of meetings can be delivered within existing resources. There are no financial issues arising from this report.

Legal issues

43. Meetings which the Council is required by legislation to hold have been included in the programme. There are no other legal issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

44. The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy can cancel or reschedule meetings where there is insufficient business in consultation with the Chair of the Committee. If the agenda has already been published, but is required to be cancelled, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy must consult with the chair, group leaders and Chief Executive, set out in Part 14.6 of the Council's Constitution.

45. For the arrangement of additional special meetings, the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy has authority to schedule these after consulting with the relevant Committee Chair, as set out in Parts 12.8 (Cabinet), 13.4 (Scrutiny Committee) and 14.6 (all other Committees) of the Council's Constitution.

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Background Papers: None

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