

Team/Directorate	Democracy Services / Corporate Services
Approved by	
Effective date	
Next review	October 2025 ¹

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- > Confirm Council’s commitment to provide access to, and ability to participate in, Council decision making by holding Council meetings in all wards in the district at regular intervals.

2 SCOPE

The scope of this policy includes meetings of:

- > Council
- > Standing committees
- > Hearings

¹ Review of this policy should align with the start of each electoral term to reflect the intent of the incoming Council.

3 PRINCIPLES

The following principles underlie this policy:

- > The Council is committed to transparent and accountable decision making and providing access to all members of the community to participate in that decision making.
- > The Council is elected by wards (based on geographic location and communities of interest) being the Arrowtown-Kawarau Ward, Queenstown-Whakatipu Ward, and the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Ward.
- > All three wards are of reasonably equal size in population, reflected in the number of elected members for each ward being three for Arrowtown-Kawarau, four for Queenstown-Whakatipu, and four for Wānaka-Upper Clutha.
- > Queenstown is the legislatively designated administration headquarters of the Queenstown Lakes District.²
- > Queenstown is the principal location for Council offices and staff. As such, it is the optimal location for Council meetings in terms of a venue that is cost-effective and fit-for-purpose (i.e. Council Chambers). The advantages of holding meetings in other wards – e.g. to promote greater access for members of the community to participate in at least one Council meeting per year in person – must be weighed against the disadvantages associated with utilising a different venue in terms of operational and cost-effectiveness as well as fit-for-purpose facilities.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES
Democracy Services Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the Annual Meeting Schedule consistent with 5.2.1 • Ensure that amendments to meetings specified in the Annual Meeting Schedule are made consistent with 5.2.2 • Ensure that hearings are scheduled consistent with 5.2.3
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve the Annual Meeting Schedule to be presented to Council
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the Annual Meeting Schedule
Democracy Services Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all meetings are booked in locations consistent with the adopted Annual Meeting Schedule, and – in consultation with the Democracy Services Team Leader – that any rescheduled meetings are booked consistent with 5.2.2

5 POLICY

5.1 DEFINITION

² As per the Local Government (Otago Region) Reorganisation Order 1989, [New Zealand Gazette 1989](#), p 2419, “The administration headquarters of the Queenstown-Lakes District Council shall be located in Queenstown.”

Council Meetings Across the District

A meeting for the purposes of this policy means any first, inaugural, ordinary, urgent, emergency or extraordinary meeting of a local authority and subordinate decision-making bodies (e.g. standing committees) convened under the provisions of LGOIMA.

The Annual Meeting Schedule is the schedule of ordinary meetings of the Full Council, Standing Committees and the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Community Board that is adopted by Council (typically at the start of a Council term and thereafter in the latter half of the calendar year for the subsequent calendar year).

5.2 POLICY

5.2.1 Consistent with the need for operational and cost-effectiveness as well as fit-for-purpose venues within the district, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the Annual Meeting Schedule adheres to the following criteria:

- > For Full Council ordinary meetings, at least one meeting to be held in the Arrowtown-Kawarau Ward, at least three meetings to be held in the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Ward, with the remainder to be held in the Queenstown-Whakatipu Ward (i.e. Council Chambers).
- > For Standing Committee ordinary meetings, at least one meeting to be held in the Arrowtown-Kawarau Ward, at least three meetings to be held in the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Ward, with the default location for the majority being the Queenstown-Whakatipu Ward (i.e. Council Chambers).
- > The location of Full Council extraordinary and emergency meetings is at the discretion of the Mayor and Chief Executive with the default being the Queenstown-Whakatipu Ward (i.e. Council Chambers).

5.2.2 Where modifications to the Annual Meeting Schedule are necessary, reasonable efforts will be made – consistent with venue availability – to ensure that the criteria in 5.2.1 are satisfied and, where this is not practically possible, that deviation from criteria in 5.2.1 is minimised.

5.2.3 Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the scheduling of Council hearings adheres to the following criteria:

- > For multiday Hearings of Submissions on the Annual Plan or Long Term Plan, one day to be scheduled in the Wānaka-Upper Clutha Ward, with the remaining days to be held in the Queenstown-Whakatipu Ward.
- > For hearings related to matters of particular significance to a specific ward, or where the majority of submitters are from a specific ward, due consideration will be given to holding the meeting at a venue within that ward.

5.2.4 Remote access for members of the public presenting a petition or speaking at a hearing, public forum or as a deputation will be facilitated according to the following criteria:

- > With the approval of the chair and where the technology in the venue enables it, a link will be provided for members of the public to join remotely for the purposes of making their presentation.
- > Where such members of the public do not have access to join remotely using their personal device and resources, access to a facility in a suitable Council venue will be arranged.