

Council

24 April 2025

Establishment of Committees, Appointments and Schedule of Meetings 2025/2026

Report from: Richard Hicks, Chief Executive

Author: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

Summary

This report asks the Council to make a number of recommendations to the Annual meeting of the Council on 14 May 2025 regarding the committees and other bodies to be appointed for 2025/2026 and also a programme of meetings.

1. Recommendations

1.1. The Council is asked to agree to recommend to Annual Council on 14 May 2025:

1.1.1. the establishment of committees, sub committees and task groups, their size and the allocation of seats to political groups as set out in Appendices A and B to this report, together with terms of reference as set out in the Council's constitution;

1.1.2. that appointments should be made to Joint Committees, outside bodies and other bodies as set out in Appendix C (with nominees to be reported at the Annual Council meeting);

1.1.3. the timetable of meetings for the 2025/2026 municipal year as set out in Appendix D and;

1.1.4. to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Whips, to vary the schedule of meetings during the 2025/2026 municipal year as required, on the basis set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report.

2. Budget and policy framework

2.1. The establishment of committees and the appointment of Members to serve on committees and outside bodies is a matter for decision by the Annual Meeting of the Council together with approval of the annual schedule of meetings.

- 2.2. The appointment of Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of some committees, the establishment of sub-committees, and the appointment of Members to serve on them is a matter for decision at a Joint meeting of Committees, which will take place immediately after the Annual Council meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1. In April each year the Council considers the position regarding the overall allocation of seats on committees and makes recommendations for decision at the Annual Council meeting in May.
- 3.2. There are 59 Councillors representing 24 Wards. The current composition of the Council is as follows:

Political Group	Number of councillors	Proportionality %
Labour and Co-operative Group	29	49.153%
Conservative	20	33.898%
Independent Group	5	8.475%
Independent Members (not a political group)	3	5.085%
Reform UK Group	2	3.390%
Total	59	100%

- 3.3. The current composition set out above takes account of the most recent changes to political balance, with regards to the by-elections held on 6 February 2025 and the subsequent report to full Council on 27 February 2025, where Members agreed changes to the allocation of committee seats (and some outside bodies) in light of the change of political balance and the creation of a new political group (Reform UK).

4. Establishment of Committees and allocation of seats plus other appointments for 2025/2026

- 4.1. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated regulations (The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990) require the Council to review the allocation of seats on committees to political groups in specified circumstances including annually at the Annual Council meeting. Committee seats must be allocated in accordance with the following principles so far as is reasonably practicable, unless alternative arrangements are notified to all Members five clear days in advance of this meeting and agreed without any Councillor voting against them.

- (a) that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
- (b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;

(c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority;

(d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

4.2. Principles (a), (b) and (d) apply to all appointments to the authority's own bodies and to certain outside bodies. However, principle (c) only relates to appointments to the 'ordinary committees' of the Council.

4.3. Discussions took place with Group Whips in early March and a proposal for the allocation of seats to political groups has been agreed with them as set out in Appendix A to this report, this is as per the position agreed at full Council on 27 February 2025. The overall number of committee seats (132) are set out below, allocated to each political group. There are 7 seats to which none of the political groups are entitled to, and to which the three independent Members have no entitlement to.

Labour and Co-operative Group	Conservative Group	Independent Group	Reform UK Group	Unallocated	Total
65	45	11	4	7	132

4.4. The Health and Wellbeing Board is listed as a Committee of the Council in Appendix B. This Committee is not subject to the rules on political balance and the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board are appointed by the Board at its first ordinary meeting after each Annual Council meeting.

4.5. The proposed list of committees, joint committees and sub-committees to be established in 2025/2026 are set out at Appendices B and C with recommended sizes and allocation of places. No changes are proposed in respect of the number and size of sub-committees, these having been reviewed and agreed at the most recent meetings of the Licensing and Safety Committee and Employment Matters Committee.

4.6. Details of other bodies, often referred to as outside bodies, are set out in Appendix C to the report. This reflects the outcome of discussions with Group Whips taking into account the requirement to comply with legal requirements for a small number of these bodies and aligning with established practice for the remainder of the bodies.

4.7. Committee Terms of Reference are set out in the [Constitution](#) as follows:

4.7.1. Chapter 3, Part 2 (Responsibility for Council Functions) – Committees and Sub-Committees;

4.7.2. Chapter 4, Part 5 (Overview and Scrutiny Rules) – Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

5. Timetable of meetings

5.1. On 23 January 2025 full Council agreed a draft schedule of meetings for 2025/2026.

5.2. As reported to Cabinet on 11 March 2025, when it received a report on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution, it is necessary to add a special Council meeting on Thursday 13 November 2025 to the meetings schedule for the purpose of submitting comments to Cabinet on 21 November 2025 regarding the proposed final submission to Government on LGR, ahead of the deadline of 28 November 2025.

5.3. At the Group Whips meeting in early March, the Group Whips were advised that meetings of the Audit Committee have started at 6.30pm for the past few years. One meeting was incorrectly listed as starting at 7pm, and this has been corrected.

5.4. It has also been necessary to move a meeting of the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Kyndi), from 20 November 2025 to 18 November 2025 to facilitate a Corporate Management Team and Cabinet informal meeting taking place on 20 November 2025. The setting of Cabinet meetings and its sub-committees is of course a matter reserved to the Leader of the Council.

5.5. Finally, Appointments Committee meetings have been arranged for 4 June 2025 (10am) and 16 June (9.30am) for the purpose of shortlisting and interviewing for the appointment of the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care.

5.6. It is recommended that the Chief Executive is given authority, in consultation with Group Whips, to vary the schedule of meetings for the 2025/2026 municipal year. This will provide flexibility to change things like dates and start times of meeting, and to cancel meetings, if required.

6. Financial, legal and risk management implications

6.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.2. The proposals in this report relating to the allocation of Committee seats comply with the relevant legal requirements set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

- 6.3. Schedule 12 to The Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to hold an Annual meeting each year on any day in March, April or May fixed by the Council. In addition to the Annual Council meeting, other meetings may be held at times and on dates fixed by the Council.

Lead officer contact

Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services, Telephone: 01634 332509 and email: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A – Review of allocation of committee seats
Appendix B – List of committees, sub-committees and task groups
Appendix C – List of joint committees and outside and other bodies
Appendix D – Timetable of meetings

Background papers

None