



Council

22 January 2026

Allocation of Committee Seats and Committee Memberships, Selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor and Schedule of Meetings for 2026/2027

Report from: Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director Legal and Governance

Author: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

Summary

This report sets out the position regarding the overall allocation of seats on committees on receipt of a notice from the Reform UK Group requesting a review following notification that Councillor Lammas had joined the Reform UK Group in October 2025.

This report sets out the results of the calculations under Council Rule 20 to select the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

The report also seeks approval to membership changes on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and sets out the provisional programme of meetings for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

1. Recommendations

1.1. The Council is recommended to agree the following:

- 1.1.1. To note the review of the allocation of seats on the committees of the Council as set out in section 3 of the report.
- 1.1.2. To agree the allocation of seats on the committees of the Council as set out in Appendix B to the report.
- 1.1.3. To remove the following Conservative Group members from the following committees: Councillor Filmer from the membership of the Licensing and Safety Committee and Councillor Kemp from the membership of the Governor Ad-Hoc Committee.
- 1.1.4. To add the following Reform UK Group members to the following committees: Councillor Lammas to the membership of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Vye to the membership of the Licensing and Safety Committee.

- 1.1.5. To appoint Jessica Beer to the teacher position on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a two year term.
- 1.1.6. To appoint Jacqueline Rudden as the named teacher substitute on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a two year term.
- 1.2. The Council is asked to note the entitlement of the Labour and Co-operative Group to nominate a Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2026/2027 municipal year and that the entitlement is accepted or declined at the Council meeting on 25 February 2026.
- 1.3. The Council is asked to agree a provisional programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2026/2027 as set out in Appendix D to the report for recommendation to the Annual Meeting of the Council on 13 May 2026.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. The establishment of committees, the allocation of seats to political groups and the appointment of Members to serve on committees and outside bodies is a matter for decision by the Council.
- 2.2. Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to allocate committee seats to political groups. The circumstances in which a review of the allocation of Committee seats must take place is prescribed in Section 17 of The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, which includes the circumstances set out above.
- 2.3. The selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor is a matter for Full Council, as set out in section 20 of the Council Rules.
- 2.4. The programme of ordinary Council and Committee meetings is a matter for formal approval by the Council at its annual meeting in May each year.

3. Allocation of committee seats

- 3.1. At the Annual Council meeting on 14 May 2025 the Council agreed to establish Committees and allocate seats between political groups as set out in Appendix A.
- 3.2. Councillor Robbie Lammas advised the Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services on 7 October 2025 that he no longer wished to be treated as a member of the Conservative Group. Subsequently, on the same day, notices relating to Councillor Lammas joining the Reform UK Group and requesting a review of the allocation of committee seats were received by the Head of Democratic Services.
- 3.3. As a consequence, the current composition of the Council is now as follows:

Type	Number of Councillors	%
Labour and Co-operative Group	31	52.542
Conservative Group	19	32.203
Independent Group	5	8.475
Reform UK Group	3	5.085
Independent Member	1	1.695
Total	59	100%

3.4. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated regulations requires the Council to allocate seats on committees to political groups in accordance with the size of each group on the Council as a whole, unless alternative arrangements are notified to all Members five clear days in advance of this meeting and agreed without any Councillor voting against them. The Council is required to observe the following principles so far as is reasonably practicable.

- (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.

3.5. 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.

3.6. Any decision to waive the requirements of political balance will require a resolution of the Council with no member voting against.

3.7. Following the recent change to political balance, the entitlement of the Council's three political groups to Committee seats is now as follows:

Labour and Co-operative Group	Conservative Group	Independent Group	Reform UK Group	Unallocated	Total
70 (+3)	40	9	6	1	132

3.8. Following a review undertaken by the Head of Democratic Services, proposals for the allocation of seats to political groups were shared with the Group Whips in December 2025 as set out in Appendix B to this report, primarily based on the number and size of Committees established by the Council at its Annual meeting in May 2025. This proposal meets the overriding requirement to ensure the overall number of seats on ordinary committees are allocated in accordance with the changed political balance of the Council. No objections to the proposals were received by the Head Democratic Services.

3.9. In summary, the impact of an increase in the size of the Reform UK Group (and a decrease in the size of the Conservative Group) and the outcome of the subsequent review requires the Council to allocate two additional seats to the Reform UK Group whilst the Conservative Group loses two seats. The Reform UK Group will be allocated one seat on the Children and Young People O&S Committee and one seat on the Licensing and Safety Committee, whilst the Conservative Group will lose one seat on the Governor Ad-Hoc Committee and one seat on the Governor Ad-Hoc Committee.

3.10. The Labour and Co-operative Group retains an entitlement to 3 additional seats on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to preserve its majority, in view of the seats for statutory voting co-opted Members on that Committee.

3.11. There is one unallocated seat to which none of the four political groups are entitled to.

3.12. Separately, Members are advised that Schedule 1 to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 specifies which types of outside bodies should be reviewed in the case that the Council appoints at least three Members to the body. Therefore, the following outside bodies are covered by the review, but given that the Labour and Co-operative Group must retain a majority of places on each outside body, no changes are required:

3.12.1. Joint KCC/Medway NHS Overview and Scrutiny Committee (3:1)
 3.12.2. Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (3:1).

3.13. Noting that the Reform UK Group will be allocated a seat on the Licensing and Safety Committee, a report will be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee setting out the outcome of a review of political balance regarding its sub-committees.

3.14. Members will be aware that the Cabinet approved a revised Education Travel Assistance Policy in August 2025 (decision no. 120/2025 refers). This included changes to the appeals process, in particular amending stage 2 appeals such that they are now heard by senior officers. This means that the School Transport and Curriculum Appeals Committee will be decommissioned once all appeals under the previous policy have been exhausted. Following discussions with the service, it is proposed that the Committee be decommissioned at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2026.

4. Selection of Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2026/2027

- 4.1. Council Rule 20 sets out the procedure for the selection of a Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Members' attention is drawn to paragraph 20.1 which states that each political group as constituted in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 shall be credited on 1 January every year with a number of points equivalent to the number of members of the Council within that group.
- 4.2. To qualify as a political group, a group must comprise of at least two members. Council Rule 20.8 states that any group that is not represented on the Council for a continuous period of 15 months or more, shall be eliminated from the points system. There are three political groups that currently qualify under both the regulations and Council Rules: the Labour and Co-operative, Conservative and Independent Groups. The Reform UK Group was created in February 2025, therefore, does not qualify for inclusion at the current time.
- 4.3. Council Rule 20.2 requires that a report setting out the outcome of the calculations in accordance with the scheme is submitted to the first meeting of the Council scheduled after 1 January each year. The calculations for 2026/2027 are set out at appendix C.
- 4.4. In accordance with the calculations set out in appendix C, the Labour and Co-operative Group has the highest number of points and is invited to nominate a candidate for the Mayoralty in the 2026/2027 municipal year and shall also have the right to nominate a candidate for Deputy Mayor. Council Rule 20.3 provides for the group to accept or decline the nomination at the first ordinary Council meeting following qualification, which will take place on 26 February 2026.
- 4.5. The formal election of Mayor and appointment of the Deputy Mayor will take place at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 13 May 2026.

5. Appointments to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1. On 21 January 2016, Full Council agreed that the Committee membership should continue to comprise of two seats in total for headteacher/teacher members, each for a two year term. It also agreed that, where practicable, one place should be for a primary school and one for a secondary school. Depending on the expressions of interest received, the Council would then

decide to, for example, designate one seat for a Medway local authority maintained school and one for an academy in Medway. The headteacher and teacher co-opted members are appointed (rather than elected) as individuals who are invited to contribute their professional knowledge and perspective to the work of the Committee.

- 5.2. All Medway Schools were sent information, inviting teachers to submit expressions of interest by Friday 21 November 2025. Democratic Services received a total of two expressions of interest for the teacher post by the deadline. There were no applications received for the headteacher post and all schools will be contacted again inviting submission of expressions of interest for the vacant post
- 5.3. As there were more expressions of interest than vacant positions the Director of People, along with the Assistant Director, Education and SEND and in consultation with the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Opposition Spokesperson, considered each of the applications against the criteria set out at appendix E to the report.
- 5.4. The outcome of these considerations resulted in the following recommendations being agreed on:
 - 5.4.1. That Jessica Beer from Oaklands School be recommended to be appointed to the teacher position on the Committee for a two year term.
 - 5.4.2. That Jacqueline Rudden from Abbey Court School be recommended to be appointed as the named substitute for the teacher position on the Committee for a two year term.
- 5.5. Jessica Beer has been a teacher in Kent and Medway for 14 years across different schools. She is part of the senior leadership team at Oaklands and is the Assistant Headteacher for curriculum and learning. She thrives on finding different ways to inspire children to find joy in learning. At Oaklands, she has overseen and has been part of transformational changes such as improvement to SEND provision and changes to the curriculum.
- 5.6. Jacqueline Rudden has been teaching for 23 years across mainstream, grammar and specialist schools across Medway. She has held the role of Deputy Headteacher at Abbey Court for 7 years. She is deputy safeguarding lead and has extensive experience of safeguarding, she is also the designated teacher for children in care at the school. She thrives on working collaboratively with other professionals, as well as parents and carers to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.
- 5.7. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered these recommendations at its meeting on 8 January 2026 and have recommended the nominee and substitute to Full Council for formal appointment to the Committee for a two year term.

6. Schedule of meetings 2026/2027

- 6.1. The Council is also asked to consider a draft programme of Council and Committee meetings for the 2026/2027 municipal year in advance of a final decision being made at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May, in order to provide some certainty for Members on the schedule of dates for meetings during 2026/2027.
- 6.2. The proposed schedule of meetings for is attached at Appendix D and is broadly consistent with the pattern and frequency of meetings in 2025/2026, taking account of any comments following consultation (see paragraph 6.3 below). In particular, the schedule takes account of key activities during the year including party conferences and the LGA conference. Members will note that the Schedule takes account of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in so far as the Government are due to make a decision on the next steps for LGR by around July 2026, this will include whether Medway Council elections will take place (or not) in May 2027, and/or whether shadow elections for the new unitary authority will take place (May 2027).
- 6.3. Group Whips, Directors, and other lead officers from each Directorate have been consulted on the proposed meetings schedule. Group Leaders have also been kept informed as the schedule has been developed.

7. Financial, legal and risk management implications

- 7.1. The current number and pattern of member level meetings and activity reflects the staffing capacity within the existing Democratic Services structure. Any increase in the overall number of meetings could not be achieved without a commensurate increase in staffing resources in Democratic Services.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Lead officer contact

Wayne Hemingway
Head of Democratic Services
T: 01634 332509
E: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A – Allocation of committee seats agreed by Annual Council in May 2025

Appendix B – Allocation of committee seats January 2026

Appendix C – Mayoralty points calculations for 2026/2027

Appendix D – Draft schedule of meetings 2026/2027

Appendix E – Selection criteria for teacher representative

Background papers

None