



Direct Dial/Ext: 03000416892
e-mail: joel.cook@kent.gov.uk
Date: 17/12/2025

Dear Member

COUNTY COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2025

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the Full Council meeting on 18 December, an update report for Item 9 and the full reports for Item 10. These were not available when the main agenda was first published.

Agenda Item No

9 **Committees Review** (Pages 1 - 4)

10 **Proportionality and appointments to committees and other bodies** (Pages 5 - 16)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Watts', is written over a faint circular stamp.

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

By: Joel Cook – Democratic Services Manager

To: County Council – 18 December 2025

Subject: Committees Review – Update Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

This follow-up report updates the Council on the recommendations made by the Selection and Member Services Committee on 16 December to allow for decision-making.

1. Proposals for moving various Committee functions to deliver a more efficient approach to formal meetings were considered by the Selection and Member Services (SMS) Committee on 16 December. The published SMS report was included in the original County Council agenda pack.
2. The proposals involve the ‘merging’ of some of the Ordinary Committees of the Council and the disbanding of a sub-committee.
3. Following SMS – it is recommended that Full Council agrees to the following:
 - Planning Application Committee to take on all functions from the Regulation Committee, including the transfer of sub-committees and Panels.
 - Selection and Member Services Committee to take on all functions from the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee.
 - Delete Member Development Sub-Committee.
 - Delete the Regulation Committee and the Electoral Boundary Review Committee from the list of Committees.
4. The implications of the ‘mergers’ is that Planning Applications Committee would expand its remit to include all functions covered by the Regulation Committee. The Regulation Committee would then be disbanded. Similarly, Selection and Member Services Committee would expand to take on the functions of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee which would also be disbanded. The Terms of Reference for the continuing Committee would be updated to reflect the expanded remits and the Committee names would also be changed to reflect the updated arrangements.
5. As per the covering report included in the main County Council agenda pack, these changes would not require the formal establishment of entirely new committees. On that basis, the membership (subject to any seat number changes under the Proportionality decisions) and elected Chairs will remain in place.

6. In terms of Membership details for the committees, should the change be agreed, a slight increase in Committee seat numbers is proposed to account for the increased responsibilities. In addition, in the case of Panels and sub-committees presently operating under the Regulation Committee but in future would sit under the Planning Applications Committee, there is a need to maintain a reasonable pool of Members who are trained and able to meet as required to support the Panel decision making on a regular basis. The decision on the seat numbers is subject to the Proportionality item but for information, the proposal is to expand SMS to 13 Members (currently 9) and Planning Applications Committee to 15 (currently 13).
7. Selection and Member Services Committee also noted the Leader's proposals to change Cabinet Committee arrangements, specifically;
 - Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee to take on all functions from the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.
8. Cabinet Committee arrangements are not subject to Proportionality or the determination by Council of the number of Committees. They are therefore for decision by the Leader but are referenced here to ensure Members are sighted on the wider consideration of all Committee arrangements. Written confirmation of any decisions made on this issue will be communicated to all Members in accordance with the requirements in the Constitution.
9. The progression of these proposals has a direct impact on the Proportionality arrangements as the removal of Committees from the list of Committees reduces the overall number of Committee seats. The details of the Committee seat allocations in line with the Proportionality requirements are set out in the relevant reports for that item.
10. The financial implications of the proposals, as discussed with Selection and Member Services, include the potential for an approx. £75k saving. This is achieved through a combination of reduced staff costs arising from committee support resource reduction and increased efficiency through modernisation and increased use of technology (£45k), reduction in the number of payable Special Allowances (£21k) and a reduction in the full year budget for Member travel expenses, support and administrative costs (£9k).
11. Assurances were provided to Selection and Member Services Committee that the changes would not result in a reduction to the administrative and governance support provided by Democratic Services to ongoing Committees.
12. Having reviewed the proposals, Selection and Member Services resolved to recommend the changes to the Ordinary Committees and they are presented to Council for decision.

Recommendations:

County Council is asked to;

- a) Approve the proposed amendments to the Ordinary Committee arrangements:
- Planning Application Committee to add the functions of the Regulation Committee into its terms of reference and take on the latter's sub-committees and Panels in line with this change.
 - Selection and Member Services Committee to add the functions of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee into its terms of reference.
 - Delete the Regulation Committee and Electoral and Boundary Review Committee from the list of Committees.
 - Delete the Member Development Sub-Committee.
- b) Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to implement the above changes subject to appropriate Member training and transition arrangements.
- c) Request that the Monitoring Officer, at the point of implementation, make the required changes to the Constitution and current Committee Terms of Reference to reflect the transfer of functions and the deletion of obsolete Committees.
- d) Request that the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, undertake a review of the updated Ordinary Committees' Terms of Reference to improve and develop their arrangements on a longer term basis, with the outcome of the review to be considered by Selection and Member Services in due course.

Background documents:

Appendix 1 – [Report to Selection and Member Services Committee 16 December \(provided for information\)](#)

Report Author:

Joel Cook
Democratic Services Manager
03000 416892
Joel.cook@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

By: Joel Cook – Democratic Services Manager

To: County Council – 18 December 2025

Subject: Committees Review & Proportionality and Appointments to committees and other bodies

Classification: Unrestricted

Recommendation:

The County Council is asked to:

- (a) **DETERMINE** the total number of Committee places; the allocation of those places between the political groups; and the allocation of places on certain bodies (as per the appropriate appendix subject to Council decision on the Committees Review item);
- (b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Group leaders and the Monitoring Officer, to adjust and confirm the allocation of committee places as necessary in order to conform to overall proportionality requirements; and to confirm external Joint Committee appointments where required.

For Decision

Composition of the County Council

1. As a result of the changes to Group Membership and the establishment of new Political Groups since the election, the Council is now made up of the following Members.

Political Group	Number of seats	Proportion of seats (%)
Reform UK	48	59.25
Liberal Democrat	12	15
Conservative	5	6.25
Green	5	6.25
Independent	3	3.7
Labour	2	2.5
Independent Reformers	2	2.5
Non-Group aligned	4	5%
Total	81	100%

Note – Figures rounded for presentational purposes

Committee Appointments

2. The Council must determine the number of Members to serve on each committee and the allocation of committee places between the political groups.
3. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires committee places to be allocated between the political groups in accordance with the following principles:
 - (a) the group with the majority of seats on the Council must have a majority of seats on each committee¹.
 - (b) subject to (a) above, the number of seats on the total of all committees allocated to any political group must be proportional to the number of seats which that group holds on the Council;
 - (c) subject to (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on each committee allocated to any political group must be proportional to the number of seats which that group holds on the Council.
 - (d) Only political groups have an entitlement to seats on committees. A 'political group' is defined as two or more Members who inform the Monitoring Officer that they wish to be regarded as a political group.
4. Proposals for the size of each committee and the allocation of committee places between the political groups has been prepared for the County Council's approval. The proposals are based on calculations required to ensure the Council may adhere to the principles of the legislation.
5. Due to the parallel consideration of proposals for changes to the Committees, having a potential impact on the proportionality calculations, the detailed proposals are set out in appendices.
 - If the Committee Review recommendations are approved, Council is asked to consider and approve the Proportionality arrangements set out in Appendix 1.
 - If the Committees Review recommendations are not approved, Council is asked to consider and approve the Proportionality arrangements set out in appendix 2.
6. The Council must seek to achieve proportionality as far as is practicable, balancing the requirements set out in paragraph 3. To ensure reasonable representation across as many committees as possible while keeping the total allocations close to the proportionate entitlements, this commonly requires a small level of under-representation of the largest group. The small level of

underrepresentation is necessary to achieve the other balance requirements of Committees that reflect the total number of County Council seats held by each group, the total number of Committee seats available and the political balance on each individual committee.

7. Where split entitlements appear (where multiple groups have, for example 0.5 of a seat on the same committee) this means that these Groups must decide between each other (via discussion with Democratic Services) which seats they wish to take so that the seat entitlements add up correctly once confirmed. This will be resolved via the delegation set out in the recommendation and in consultation with the relevant Group Leaders.

Sub-committees / Panels

8. The proposals for Membership arrangements of the various sub-committees and Panels are set out in the relevant appendices, again subject to the decision-making on the Committees review. Sub-committees must align with proportionality in terms of the representation of Political Groups on each individual sub-committee.
9. As previously approved by Council, Members from Groups other than those allocated seats on the Panels undertaking Regulation matters may sit on Panels on such occasions when one of the allocated Groups gives up a seat. In addition, it is a requirement that Panels be chaired by a member of the Committee responsible for Regulation matters.
10. Transport Appeal Panels (conducted under Panel / Sub-committee arrangements within the Regulation functions) meet with such frequency that that Panel membership is determined by the availability of individual Members from all political groups subject only to the need for the largest Group to have a majority on each Panel. Membership of the Committee responsible for Regulation functions is not a requirement for its Panels for individual Members or political groups, although the Chair of each Panel must be member of the Committee responsible for Regulation matters. No change is proposed.
11. The Selection and Member Services Governor Appointments Panel will only meet on very rare occasions. The Corporate Director of Children, Education and Young People has delegated powers to make Local Authority appointments/nominations to governing bodies in consultation with the Chairman when they meet the County Council's guidelines. On those occasions when the guidelines are not met, the Panel Members' views are sought. The Panel meets on those occasions when there is either no unanimity amongst the Panel Members or if they unanimously disagree with the Corporate Director's recommendations. The Panel also meets if it needs to consider a request for the removal of a Local Authority Governor.
12. The Mental Health Guardianship Sub-Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Committee responsible for Regulation matters. The rest of its membership is drawn from volunteers from the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee. It meets once a year to oversee the Guardianship Register. In the

event that a decision is needed on the discharge of persons who are subject to guardianship, a Panel of 3 of its Members will meet. Due to the urgent need for a decision, membership of the Panel would be determined by the availability of Members to serve at very short notice.

13. The Scrutiny Committee is responsible for managing the Topic Review programme and may set up Short Focused Inquiries as required, which are time limited and task specific, carrying out reviews and making recommendations. It is convention to apply political proportionality to these groups.

Other Authorities, Joint Committees and Partnership Bodies

14. The proportionality principles in the 1989 Act also apply to the appointments which the Council makes to various other authorities, joint committees and partnership bodies. Details of the allocations are in the appendices.

Recommendations

The County Council is asked to:

- (a) **DETERMINE** the total number of Committee places; the allocation of those places between the political groups; and the allocation of places on certain bodies (as per the appropriate appendix subject to Council decision on the Committees Review item);
- (b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Group leaders and the Monitoring Officer, to adjust and confirm the allocation of committee places as necessary in order to conform to overall proportionality requirements; and to confirm external Joint Committee appointments where required.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proportionality Proposals incorporating Committees Review changes

Appendix 2 – Proportionality Proposals without Committees Review changes

Joel Cook
Democratic Services Manager
03000 416892
Joel.cook@kent.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Proportionality arrangements including Committees Review Changes – County Council December 2025

Proportionality Summary – For approval if Council resolves to approve the recommendations on Item 9 – Committees review

Committee	Reform	LD	Con	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	No group	Total
<i>Scrutiny Committee</i> +5*	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee</i> +4\$	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Governance and Audit Committee</i>	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Personnel Committee</i>	8	2	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Planning Applications Committee</i>	8	3	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	15
<i>Selection and Member Services Committee</i>	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Pension Fund Committee</i> +3# (1/1/1)	7	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	11
<i>Kent Flood Risk Management Committee</i>	4	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	7
<i>Standards Committee</i>	4	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	7
TOTAL	59	17	8	8	5	4	4	0	105
Proportionate Share of Total	62	15.5	6.5	6.5	4	2.5	2.5	5.5	105
Difference	-3	+1.5	+1.5	+1.5	1	+1.5	+1.5	-5.5	105

Appendix 1 – Proportionality arrangements including Committees Review Changes – County Council December 2025

- * The Scrutiny Committee also has 3 diocesan representatives and 2 parent governor representatives with voting powers on education issues only. See paragraph
- \$ The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel also has 4 District Council representatives with voting powers.
- # The Pension Fund Committee also has 3 District Council representatives with voting powers.

Sub-Committee arrangements (non-group aligned not included as no entitlement):

Sub-Committees	Reform	LD	Cons	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	Total
Member Panels (enforcement, public rights of way, marriage premises, village/town greens)	3	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	5
Transport Appeal Panels (school-related appeals - mainly transport)	3	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	5
Selection and Member Services Committee Governor Appointments Panel	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
Personnel Committee Member Appointment Panel	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	8
Scrutiny Committee Sub-Committees or SFI Groups	6	2	1	1	1	0	0	11

Other Authorities, Joint Committees and Partnership Bodies

The proportionality principles in the 1989 Act also apply to the appointments which the Council makes to various other authorities, joint committees and partnership bodies, as listed below:

- (a) Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (21 KCC Members);
- (b) Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (4 KCC Members);
- (c) Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (3 KCC Members);
- (d) Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (4 KCC Members)
- (e) Pension Board (2 KCC Members who are not Members of the Superannuation Fund Committee)
- (f) Adoption Panels (6 Area Panels with 2 KCC Members serving on each), in respect of which the following provisions apply:
 - (i) *The 1989 Act does not apply but the Council's convention is that the 12 appointments overall should be proportional;*
 - (ii) *Members should have a knowledge or interest in Social Care or adoption issues;*
 - (iii) *To avoid the situation where Members frequently have to withdraw because, for example, they know prospective adopters, Members should not serve on the Panel covering their home area. It is therefore recommended that Members be nominated by the political groups for service on the Adoption Panels generally and the allocation of individual Members to particular Panels be left to the Adoption Panel Manager in discussion with the Members concerned.*

Authority, Joint Committee or Partnership Body	Reform	LD	Cons	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	Total
Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority	13	3	1	1	1	1	1	21
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3

Appendix 1 – Proportionality arrangements including Committees Review Changes – County Council December 2025

Authority, Joint Committee or Partnership Body	Reform	LD	Cons	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	Total
Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	4
Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education	2	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	4
Pension Board	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Adoption Panels	7	2	1	1	1	0	0	12

Note – the proportionality of KCC appointments applies only to the seats allocated to KCC, not the full membership of the relevant authorities or partnership body.

Appendix 2 – Proportionality arrangements without any Committee Review Changes–
County Council December 2025

Proportionality Summary – for decision if the Council does not approve
recommendations on Item 9 – Committees Review

Committee	Reform	LD	Con	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	No group	Total
<i>Scrutiny Committee +5*</i>	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee +4\$</i>	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Governance and Audit Committee</i>	7	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Electoral & Boundary Review Committee</i>	6	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	11
<i>Personnel Committee</i>	8	2	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Planning Applications Committee</i>	8	2	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	13
<i>Regulation Committee</i>	8	3	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	15
<i>Selection and Member Services Committee</i>	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
<i>Pension Fund Committee +3# (1/1/1)</i>	7	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	11
<i>Kent Flood Risk Management Committee</i>	4	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	7
<i>Standards Committee</i>	4	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	7

Appendix 2 – Proportionality arrangements without any Committee Review Changes–
County Council December 2025

TOTAL	71	21	10	10	5	4	4	0	125
Proportionate Share of Total	56.8	16.8	8.0	8.0	4.0	3.2	3.2	0	125
Difference	-3	+2.5	+2.25	+2.25	+0.5	+1	+1	-6	125

* The Scrutiny Committee also has 3 diocesan representatives and 2 parent governor representatives with voting powers on education issues only. See paragraph

\$ The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel also has 4 District Council representatives with voting powers.

The Pension Fund Committee also has 3 District Council representatives with voting powers.

Sub-Committee arrangements (non-group aligned not included as no entitlement):

Sub-Committees	Reform	LD	Cons	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	Total
Regulation Committee Member Panels (enforcement, public rights of way, marriage premises, village/town greens)	3	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	5
Regulation Committee Transport Appeal Panels (school-related appeals - mainly transport)	3	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	5
Selection and Member Services Committee Governor Appointments Panel	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
Selection & Member Services Training & Development	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	8
Personnel Committee Member Appointment	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	8

Sub-Committees	Reform	LD	Cons	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	Total
Panel								
Scrutiny Committee Sub-Committees or SFI Groups	6	2	1	1	1	0	0	11

Other Authorities, Joint Committees and Partnership Bodies

The proportionality principles in the 1989 Act also apply to the appointments which the Council makes to various other authorities, joint committees and partnership bodies, as listed below:

- (a) Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (21 KCC Members);
- (b) Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (4 KCC Members);
- (c) Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (3 KCC Members);
- (d) Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (4 KCC Members)
- (e) Pension Board (2 KCC Members who are not Members of the Superannuation Fund Committee)
- (f) Adoption Panels (6 Area Panels with 2 KCC Members serving on each), in respect of which the following provisions apply:
 - (i) *The 1989 Act does not apply but the Council's convention is that the 12 appointments overall should be proportional;*
 - (ii) *Members should have a knowledge or interest in Social Care or adoption issues;*
 - (iii) *To avoid the situation where Members frequently have to withdraw because, for example, they know prospective adopters, Members should not serve on the Panel covering their home area. It is therefore recommended that Members be nominated by the political groups for service on the Adoption Panels generally and the allocation of individual Members to particular Panels be left to the Adoption Panel Manager in discussion with the Members concerned.*

Appendix 2 – Proportionality arrangements without any Committee Review Changes–
County Council December 2025

Authority, Joint Committee or Partnership Body	Reform	LD	Cons	Green	Ind Group	Lab	Ind Ref	Total
Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority	13	3	1	1	1	1	1	21
Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	4
Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education	2	1	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	4
Pension Board	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Adoption Panels	7	2	1	1	1	0	0	12

Note – the proportionality of KCC appointments applies only to the seats allocated to KCC, not the full membership of the relevant authorities or partnership body.