

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Monday, 14th September, 2026

2.00 pm

Darent Room, Sessions House,
County Hall, Maidstone



AGENDA

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Monday, 14th September, 2026, at 2.00 pm Ask for: **Anna Taylor**
Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Telephone **03000 416478**
Maidstone

Membership (13)

Reform UK (7):	Ms L Kemkaran (Chair), Mr W Chapman, Mr B Collins, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Miss D Morton and Mr P Webb
Liberal Democrat (2):	Mr M Ellis and Mr A J Hook
Restore Britain (1):	Mr O Bradshaw
Green (1):	Mr S Jeffery
Conservative (1):	Mr H Rayner
Labour (1):	Ms C Nolan

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Apologies and Substitutes
- 2 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
- 3 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers Special Leave (Pages 1 - 12)

Motion to Exclude the press and public

EXEMPT ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to NOT be open to the public)

- 4 KCC Employee Probation Policy (Pages 13 - 16)

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive
03000 416814

Friday, 4 September 2026

By: Linden Kemkaran – Leader of the Council
Benjamin Watts – Deputy Chief Executive

To: Personnel Committee

Date: 14th September 2026

Subject: Cadet Force Adult Volunteers Special Leave – Revised Paper

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper sets out a proposal to introduce a formal special leave entitlement for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers who support the armed forces youth cadet organisations including: the Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force, Combined Cadet Force, and Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

Recommendation:

Personnel Committee is asked to:

- 1 **AGREE** the proposal at paragraph 5.2 to introduce a formal special leave entitlement of up to two weeks per leave year for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to support Kent County Council's Gold Employer Recognition Scheme award, effective from 1st October 2026.
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1. Background

- 1.1. Kent County Council has long championed the Armed Forces Covenant and is a Gold Employer Recognition Scheme award holder.
- 1.2. In preparation for the revalidation of KCC's Gold Award in late 2026, a review of current policies has identified an opportunity to strengthen support for employees who serve as Cadet Force Adult Volunteers by enhancing leave entitlements.
- 1.3. Cadet Force Adult Volunteers play a vital role in planning, delivering and supervising training for young people in the Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force, Combined Cadet Force, and Royal Air Force Air Cadets. Their contributions include annual camps, field training, first aid, STEM activities, leadership development, and community engagement.
- 1.4. At its meeting on 25th March 2026, Personnel Committee considered a proposal to introduce a special leave entitlement for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. Members requested further information regarding the financial implications of the proposal and the rationale for restricting eligibility to Cadet Force Adult Volunteers rather than extending the entitlement to a wider range of volunteer groups. This report provides that additional information and seeks a decision on the proposal.

2. Current Leave Entitlement

- 2.1. Currently employees who are members of the Reserve Forces, such as the Army Reserve, are entitled to take up to two weeks paid leave per leave year.

This entitlement is designed to support participation in activities including annual training camps.

- 2.2. Cadet Force Adult Volunteers do not have a dedicated special leave entitlement. However, they may use their general volunteering leave allowance, which provides two paid days per leave year.

3. Benchmarking

- 3.1. Benchmarking across the public sector indicates a growing trend towards dedicated special leave for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, typically in the range of 5 to 10 paid days per leave year, sometimes supplemented by unpaid or flexible working options.
- 3.2. National best practice includes Milton Keynes City Council (10 paid days) and West Northamptonshire Council (5 paid days), with several other councils offer similar or slightly lower entitlements.
- 3.3. Local authorities such as Medway, Essex, and East Sussex currently offer 0 to 2 paid days per leave year, some with no distinct policy or only general volunteering leave.
- 3.4. A full summary of benchmarking findings is provided in Appendix A.

4. Rationale for Change

- 4.1. Adopting a distinct leave allowance for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers will strengthen KCC's case for maintaining Employer Recognition Scheme Gold status at the 2026 re-validation, going above the requirement to "allow flexibility for employees who are Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to fit their working hours in with their volunteering" (Appendix B).
- 4.2. Officers have considered the potential impact on Kent County Council's Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award status. While the proposed entitlement is not a mandatory requirement of Gold accreditation, enhanced support for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers demonstrates a strong commitment to the Armed Forces community and would strengthen KCC's position during future Gold Award revalidation. Members are advised that the proposed provision goes beyond the recognition requirements of the covenant and any statutory duties of the council.
- 4.3. The Strategic Defence Review 2025 (Appendix C) and the Government's '30 by 30' campaign (Appendix D) set targets to increase Active Reserves by 20% and Cadets by 30% by 2030. Both initiatives highlight the role of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers as key engagement tools to connect Defence with the community. Increasing adult volunteers, including streamlined processes for new volunteers and fast-track opportunities for veterans, is central to these ambitions, with employer support through paid leave identified as a key enabler.
- 4.4. At the SERFCA Lord-Lieutenant Awards on 12th November 2025, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Kent highlighted the vital role of the Reserves in national security and the importance of community and employer support in enabling their service. The Lord-Lieutenant also emphasised the need to encourage more Adult Volunteers to support the Cadet Forces, ensuring more young people can benefit from the opportunities they offer (Appendix E).

4.5. There are an estimated 1,120 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers in Kent across the Cadet Forces (Combined Cadet Force adults 259; Sea Cadet Corps 319; Army Cadet Force 250; Royal Air Force Air Cadets 291). While only a fraction will be KCC employees, this scale demonstrates the county-wide reliance on adult volunteers. Even a modest uptake among KCC employees can have a significant positive effect on youth cadet activities and community engagement.

5. Proposal

5.1. It is proposed that KCC introduces a special leave entitlement for employees who serve as Cadet Force Adult Volunteers supporting recognised armed forces youth organisations, including the Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force, Combined Cadet Force, and Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

5.2. The recommended entitlement is up to two weeks (10 working days) paid special leave per leave year, matching the provision currently available to members of the Reserve Forces. This leave would be specifically for participation in cadet-related activities such as annual camps, training, leadership development, and community engagement.

5.3. The policy would apply to employees volunteering with armed forces cadet organisations only (Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force, Combined Cadet Force, and Royal Air Force Air Cadets), not to non-military youth groups.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. The 2025 Kent County Council Armed Forces Survey identified two respondents who described themselves as Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. As participation in the survey was voluntary and respondents self-identified their connection to the Armed Forces, this figure should be treated as an indication of currently known eligibility rather than a definitive measure of the total number of eligible employees.

6.2. Based on the employees identified through the survey, the proposed entitlement of up to two weeks (10 working days) special leave per leave year would equate to a maximum of 20 working days leave annually if both employees utilised the full entitlement. Using current average salary costs, the maximum estimated annual value of the leave entitlement is therefore approximately £2,900 per annum. This estimate is based on the currently known level of eligibility identified through the 2025 Armed Forces Survey and would be subject to future uptake should additional eligible employees come forward.

6.3. The proposal would not result in a direct additional salary cost, as employees would remain in receipt of their normal contractual pay whilst undertaking approved Cadet Force Adult Volunteer activities. There may, however, be an indirect impact on service capacity during periods of absence. Any additional costs associated with providing cover would be dependent on the role undertaken, operational requirements and the duration of the leave requested.

6.4. Actual take up is likely to be lower than the maximum entitlement, as eligible employees may not require the full allocation of leave in any given year, particularly as some Cadet Force Adult Volunteer activities are likely to take place outside normal working hours. Requests would also remain subject to the

normal process for agreeing leave and consideration of operational service requirements.

- 6.5. Given the small number of employees currently known to be undertaking Cadet Force Adult Volunteer duties, the financial impact of the proposal is expected to be minimal and manageable within existing service budgets.

7. Consideration of Wider Volunteering Groups

- 7.1. Personnel Committee requested that officers consider whether a future scheme should include arrangements for other youth-related volunteer groups.
- 7.2. Officers have considered the potential benefits of extending the proposed entitlement more broadly, and there has been representation from The Scout Association (Appendix F).
- 7.3. KCC do not collect information that would allow us to fully estimate the number of staff likely to be in scope for a further extension to other youth-related volunteer groups. Similarly, existing access to leave provision for volunteering is managed on a local basis with managers and not recorded to consistently include the type of volunteering.
- 7.4. To achieve information to inform further proposals for other youth-related volunteer groups, a survey would need to be developed and sent to all staff. Given additional resourcing pressures, such a step has not been taken yet and officers can discuss this further with Members at Committee, if desired.
- 7.5. This proposal has been developed specifically to support Cadet Force Adult Volunteers in recognition of Kent County Council's commitments under the Armed Forces Covenant and the contribution made by cadet forces to developing young people and supporting national defence objectives.
- 7.6. The proposal also aligns with Kent County Council's Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award status and complements the support already provided to members of the Armed Forces community through existing employment policies.
- 7.7. Extending a separate leave entitlement to other volunteering groups would significantly broaden the scope of the proposal and is likely to increase the number of employees potentially eligible for additional paid leave. Such an approach would require further consideration of eligibility criteria, operational impacts and financial implications.
- 7.8. Employees who volunteer with other organisations continue to be able to access the Council's existing volunteering and leave arrangements, subject to the requirements of those policies and further guidance and support can be given to managers to promote these policies and guidance to staff.

Personnel Committee is asked to:

AGREE the proposal at paragraph 5.2 to introduce a formal special leave entitlement of up to two weeks per leave year for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to support Kent County Council's Gold Employer Recognition Scheme award, effective from 1st October 2026.

Report Author: Susie Hunter-Jones

People Policy Manager

Email address: Susie.Hunter-Jones@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Ben Watts

Deputy Chief Executive

Email address: Benjamin.Watts@kent.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A - Benchmarking Findings

Appendix B - MOD Employer Recognition Scheme – Gold Award Criteria:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme>

Appendix C – The Strategic Defence Review 2025: [The Strategic Review 2025 - Full Document](#)

Appendix D - The Government's '30 by 30' campaign: ['30 by 30' - New funding to boost cadet force by over 40,000 by 2030 - GOV.UK](#)

Appendix E - SERFCA Lord-Lieutenant Awards: <https://kent-lieutenancy.org.uk/kent-county-events/serfca-lord-lieutenant-awards/>

Appendix F – Representation from The Scout Association

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Appendix A: Benchmarking: Cadet Force Adult Volunteers Special Leave Entitlement

Authority Name	Leave Days
Brighton & Hove City Council	Reservists only – 5 days
Buckinghamshire Council	3 days
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service	Reservists only – 10 days
Canterbury City Council	<i>Gold ERS; Cadet Force Adult Volunteers days not published</i>
Colchester City Council	<i>Gold ERS; Cadet Force Adult Volunteers days not published</i>
Derbyshire County Council	Up to 2 weeks
East Sussex County Council	Reservists only – 18 days
Essex County Council	2 paid volunteering days
Havant Borough Council	Reservists only – 15 days
Kent Fire & Rescue Service	Reservists only – 10 days
Kent Police (HQ)	5 days
Maldon District Council	1 paid volunteering day
Medway Council	0
Milton Keynes City Council	10 days
Portsmouth City Council	<i>Cadet Force Adult Volunteers days not published</i>
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	<i>Cadet Force Adult Volunteers days not published</i>
Runnymede Borough Council	5 paid (+ up to 3 planning days)
West Northamptonshire Council	5 days
West Sussex County Council	<i>Gold ERS; Cadet Force Adult Volunteers days not published</i>

Benchmarking caveat: Findings are based on Korn Ferry User Group and publicly available sources as of December 2025. Many local authorities did not respond or do not publish detailed policies, so the trend is indicative rather than definitive.

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Ms Amanda Beer
Kent County Council
Sessions House, County Hall
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ

6th June 2026

Dear Amanda,

I am writing to you on behalf of Kent Scouts regarding the proposal recently considered by the Personnel Committee on 25th March 2026, concerning the provision of 10 days of additional annual leave for staff who serve as adult leaders in the Cadet Forces.

While we applaud Kent County Council's recognition of the immense value provided by volunteer leaders in uniformed youth organisations, I would like to formally request that this proposal be broadened to include KCC staff who volunteer with the Scouts, Guides, and other recognised organized youth work.

Kent Scouts performs vital work across the entire county, providing a place of belonging and skill-building for over 16,000 young people. Our impact is driven by a dedicated network of volunteers who operate as part of a charity that receives no direct government funding. These leaders give up significant amounts of their personal time, often using their own annual leave to facilitate summer camps, expeditions, and residential experiences that are life-changing for Kent's youth.

As the Personnel Committee prepares to reconsider this proposal on 9th July, we would appreciate it if the council looked favourably upon including Scouting volunteers in this policy. Such a move would not only be a powerful gesture of equality across the youth sector but would directly support the sustainability of local Scouting groups that provide an essential service to the community.

We recognise the financial pressures on the authority and understand that the total number of days granted may need to be balanced across a wider group of volunteers. However, even a modest allocation of special leave would significantly alleviate the burden on our volunteers and demonstrate KCC's commitment to all forms of youth empowerment.

We would be very happy to provide further details on the number of young people and volunteers within the county who would benefit from this support, or to discuss how we can work together to make this proposal a success.

Yours sincerely,

Nirav Patel
County Lead Volunteer
Kent Scouts



Kent County Scout Council

County Office, Kent Scouts Activity Centre, Lower Grange Farm, Grange Lane, Sandling, Maidstone, ME14 3DA

T: +44 (0)1622 397070 **E:** support@kentscouts.org.uk **W:** www.kentscouts.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 303471

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Nirav Patel
Kent County Scout Council
County Office
Kent Scouts Activity Centre
Lower Grange Farm
Grange Lane
Sandling
Maidstone, ME14 3DA

Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ
Email:

Date: 23 June 2026

Dear Nirav

Scouting Volunteers

Thank you for your letter of 06 June, I am responding on behalf of Amanda Beer.

Personnel Committee on 09 July has been postponed, and I am not able to confirm when the item relating to volunteer time will be reconsidered.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to share the contribution Kent Scouting makes to the lives of children and young people across the County.

I am pleased to confirm that our leave provision was amended in 2024 to accommodate additional leave for volunteering. KCC staff, in agreement with their line manager, can already access a range of special leave which includes two days in support of volunteering.

At their last meeting Elected Members asked for additional consideration to be given to extending this provision for Cadet Force Volunteers. Rather than focus on one group exclusively, officers have been asked to consider whether the existing provision and ability to seek support for volunteering needs to be reviewed again.

I will share your insights with the Human Resources Team who are exploring what is feasible for KCC in terms of affordability and business continuity.

Again, my thanks for your time and for sharing the work you do as an organisation.

Yours Sincerely

Ben Watts
Deputy Chief Executive

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item 4

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