

**SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, 5th March, 2026**

**2:30pm**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,  
Maidstone**









## AGENDA

### SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Thursday, 5th March, 2026 at 2:30pm**  
**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County**  
**Hall, Maidstone**

Ask for: **Ruth Emberley**  
Telephone: **03000 410690**

#### **Membership (13)**

Reform UK (7): Ms L Kemkaran, Mr B Collins (Chair), Mr M Harrison, Mr W Chapman, Mr M Paul, Ms G Foster and Mr M Brown

Liberal Democrat (2): Mr T Prater, Mr J Moreland

Conservative(1): Mr A Kennedy

Green (1): Rich Lehmann

Vacancy x2

#### **Webcasting Notice**

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site or by any member of the public or press present. The Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed by the Council.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed. If you do not wish to have your image captured please let the Clerk know immediately.

#### **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 Minutes of the Meeting held on the 16 December 2025 (Pages 1 - 4)
- 4 2026-27 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses (Pages 5 - 12)
- 5 2025 Election Review - To Follow
- 6 Outside Bodies Update - To Follow

### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
Deputy Chief Executive  
03000 416814

**Wednesday, 25 February 2026**

*Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.*

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**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**SELECTION AND MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Selection and Member Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 16 December 2025.

PRESENT: Mr B Collins (Chair), Ms C Nolan, Mr T Prater, Mr A Kennedy, Mr B Collins, Mr M Harrison, Mrs G Foster, Mr M Brown, Mr M A J Hood and Mr W Chapman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Mr B Watts (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr T Godfrey (Senior Governance Manager), Ms L Adam (Operations and Client Relationships Manager), Ms S Connelly (Operational Delivery Team Manager) and Mr O Unthank (Member Hub Supervisor)

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS****19. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item 1)*

Apologies had been received from Mr Lehmann for whom Mr Hood was present as substitute and Ms Kemkaran for whom Mr Chapman was present as substitute.

**20. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the agenda for this meeting**

*(Item 2)*

There were no declarations of interest.

**21. Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 September 2025**

*(Item 3)*

1. The Clerk identified an error in the draft minutes, Mr Lehmann's apologies had not been recorded.
2. Mr Watts, Deputy Chief Executive, reassured the Committee that feedback from the previous meeting on improving the Member Development programme had guided work on future Member training.
3. RESOLVED, that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2025 were a correct record.

## **22. Committee Review**

*(Item 4)*

1. The item was introduced by Mr Watts explained that the Interim arrangements for the vacant Head of Governance role required certain responsibilities to be delegated to the Democratic Services Manager.
2. The report was introduced by Mr Joel Cook, Democratic Services Manager, who provided an overview of the proposals for consideration in relation to changing the number of Committees, adjusting relevant terms of reference and confirming the arrangements for managing the transition of all the required activity.
3. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussions covered the following:
  - a) The proposed savings would be achieved through a combination of measures. These included a reduction in the number of meetings, modernisation and efficiency improvements through better use of technology and a reduction in the number of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) due to fewer Committee chairing roles being required. A reduction in meetings would have direct resource implications for the service with the frequency of meetings varying according to wider business needs. Cabinet Committees were the most frequent and represented the largest resource implication.
  - b) Mr Watts provided assurance that Democratic Services Officers would continue to give procedural advice and support to Chairs during Committee meetings.
  - c) It was confirmed that a further breakdown of the proposed savings could be provided, subject to the proposal progressing to Full Council. The projected £75 annual savings was an approximate figure as it comprised of both fixed and estimated savings.
  - d) A Member-led governance review was undertaken towards the end of 2024, resulting in a range of recommendations being presented subsequently to County Council. These included changes to constitutional arrangements and reductions in the number of Cabinet Committees, some elements of which were approved by County Council, and others rejected.
  - e) Mr Watts explained that the appointment of Cabinet Members fell within the remit of the Leader, who could choose up to 9 Cabinet Members and 11 Deputy Cabinet Members. Confirmation could be sought on whether these posts had historically always been filled. Various Members suggested a review of the current Executive structure as a means of achieving future savings.
  - f) Mr Tristan Godfrey, Senior Governance Manager, explained that the independent Member Remuneration Panel was preparing a report and recommendations for the next 4-year Member Allowances Scheme, which would also consider the new Committee structure. While the Panel would

make recommendations, the final decision on allowances and the number of SRAs would rest with Full Council and this could be expected within the next 3- 6 months.

- g) Mr Cook explained that if the Committee recommended the proposals to County Council and they were subsequently approved, the Committees with newly transferred functions would continue as currently diarised. He also highlighted that the proposal would have a material impact on proportionality figures due to the resulting reduction in the number of Committees and total seats to be allocated. Therefore, final proportionality arrangements were subject to the recommendations of both the Committee and County Council.
- h) Decisions regarding Cabinet Committees were made solely by the Leader, independent of both County Council and proportionality arrangements but comments made during the meeting would be passed to the Leader for consideration prior to decision- making.
- i) If the Leader decided to establish a Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, work would be undertaken with relevant services and Cabinet Members to organise meetings, which could involve expanding business to fill a full day.

### **23. 2024/25 Combined Member Grant Report** *(Item 5)*

1. Mr Watts explained that in reference to his earlier comments about the Head of Governance role, Ms Adam, Operations and Client Relationships Manager, would also be taking on a portion of the responsibilities and would therefore be presenting this paper.
2. Ms Adam explained that the Committee had a responsibility for monitoring the Members' Grant Scheme. The report detailed the grants awarded during the 2024/25 financial year, which was the final year of the previous electoral term. Following the Committee's consideration, the report would be published online, in line with the statutory requirement to publish annual details of grants awarded to the voluntary sector. Ms Adam expressed her appreciation to the whole team for their work in processing grants during the 2024/25 period.
3. RESOLVED that the Committee note the grant recipient list for the Combined Member Grants 2024/25.

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From: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer  
To: Selection & Member Services Committee, 5 March 2025  
Subject: 2026/27 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses  
Status: Unrestricted

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## 1. Introduction

- a) At its meeting on 8 March 2010, the Electoral & Boundary Review Committee agreed that it would annually authorise and approve the County Scale of Fees and Expenses for Kent County Council elections (KCC Scale of Fees).
- b) Following the transfer of functions from Electoral & Boundary Review Committee to the Selection & Member Services Committee, this Committee is now responsible for authorising and approving the KCC Scale of Fees as part of its remit in dealing with all matters delegated to it by full Council relating to KCC elections and the Council's electoral boundaries.
- c) Since 2024/25, KCC has adopted the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) pay banding system for election staff in its entirety except for Poll Clerks and Presiding Officer fees which are capped at the midpoint of the pay band for single elections. This is to safeguard against significant costs to KCC if all districts decided to implement the maximum amount payable for these roles in a single election. There is also a further exception to this, where the MHCLG fees include bookkeeping costs which KCC has previously taken the decision not to pay.
- d) The draft KCC Scale of Fees in Appendix 1 covers items not included in MHCLG's 2026/27 Pay Bands but included within the MHCLG's Expense Guidance. This arrangement has been in place since 2025/26.
- e) Appendix 2 contains the MHCLG's 2026/27 Pay Bands in its entirety which is updated annually to reflect changes to the national minimum wage and average public sector pay.
- f) All other costs listed in the 2026/27 KCC Scale of Fees are proposed to be reimbursed as actual costs or by a percentage increase relating to the Deputy Returning Officer Costs section. It is proposed that for the 2026/27 Scale of Fees, the Deputy Returning Officer Costs is updated by 3.8% based on the general increase to pay grades in the 2026/27 Kent Pay Scheme as agreed at Budget County Council on 12 February 2026.

## **2. Recommendation**

The Selection & Member Services Committee is asked to approve the proposed County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2026/27.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed KCC Scale of Election Fees and Expenses 2026-27
- Appendix 2 – MCHLG's 2026/27 Pay Bands

### **Background Documents**

County Council, 12 February 2026

[Agenda for County Council on Thursday, 12th February, 2026, 9.30 am](#)

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 8 March 2010

[Agenda for Electoral and Boundary Review Committee on Monday, 8th March, 2010, 1.00 pm](#)

### **Report Authors**

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## PROPOSED COUNTY SCALE OF FEES AND EXPENSES UPDATE 2026/27

KCC has adopted the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) 2026/27 pay bands in its entirety with the exception of the following roles:

- Poll Clerks and Presiding Officer fees are capped at the midpoint of the 2026/27 pay band for single elections as detailed in the 'Polling Station Staffing Costs' section.
- Bookkeeping fees are unable to be reimbursed (see Note 2)

The items below are not included in MHCLG's 2026/27 Pay Bands. With the exception of 'Deputy Returning Officer Costs' & 'Other Costs' sections, these items are based on MHCLG's Expense Guidance for Returning Officers (February 2026).

		2025/26 Update	2026/27 Update
<b>Stationery &amp; Equipment Costs</b>			
Page 7	1	Printing and publishing all notices, forms and other documents, providing stationery and sundries, and other miscellaneous expenditure	Actual Cost
	2	Stationery and equipment at each polling station, including depreciation	
	3	Hire of any building or room for the purpose of the election and the expenses attending the use of any building or room, including temporary polling stations if necessary	
	4	Fitting-up polling stations including the provision, transport and erection of voting compartments, the hire of necessary furniture (where this is not otherwise available) and the return to store afterwards	
	5	Production and printing of Ballot Papers	
	6	Printing and providing copies of the Electoral Register	
	7	Production and printing of official poll cards and postal vote packs	
	8	Electoral Management Software	25% of annual licence fee to be shared equally at a combined election

<b>Polling Station Staffing Costs</b>			
1	Presiding Officer– single election	£16.07 - £18.08 [MHCLG Pay band C rate] (see Note 3)	£16.59 - £18.66 [MHCLG Pay band C rate] (see Note 3)
2	Presiding Officer– combined election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at discretion of DRO)	£18.09 - £20.09 [MHCLG Pay band C rate] (see Note 3)	£18.67 - £20.73 [MHCLG Pay band C rate] (see Note 3)
3	Presiding Officer who acts as a supervisor in a Polling Place where there are a number of polling stations (additional).	PO taking on additional responsibilities can be paid an additional £25 on top of the PO fee	PO taking on additional responsibilities can be paid an additional £25 on top of the PO fee
4	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – single election	£12.21 - £13.86 [MHCLG Pay band A rate] (see Note 4)	£12.71 - £14.35 [MHCLG Pay band A rate] (see Note 4)
5	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – combined election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at discretion of DRO)	£13.87 - £15.50 [MHCLG Pay band A rate] (see Note 4)	£14.36 - £15.99 [MHCLG Pay band A rate] (see Note 4)
7	Standby Polling Station Staff Fee	£50 (max) to be shared equally at a combined election	£50 (max) to be shared equally at a combined election
<b>Verification and Count Staffing Costs</b>			
1	Night Rate	Up to 1.5x the hourly daytime rate shown in the pay bands	Up to 1.5x the hourly daytime rate shown in the pay bands
2	Refreshments for staff at the verification and count	Maximum £6 per head	Maximum £6 per head
<b>Deputy Returning Officer Costs</b>			
1	Contested single election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	£59.49	£61.75

2	Contested combined election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	Shared equally at a combined election, up to a maximum of £41.09	Shared equally at a combined election, up to a maximum of £42.65
3	Payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff (including the provision of a DRO) at an uncontested election – for each 1000 electors or part	£39.16	£40.65
<b>Other Costs</b>			
1	Additional expenses (if any) involved in and about the conduct of the election including (a) professional, clerical and other assistance, (b) professional and legal advice, (c) additional costs associated with a recount of the votes and (d) other disbursements	Up to £1000 per single item to be approved by the County Returning Officer under delegation from the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee and be reported back to Committee at the appropriate time.	Up to £1000 per single item to be approved by the County Returning Officer under delegation from the Selection & Member Services Committee and be reported back to Committee at the appropriate time.

Definitions:

1. Single election means a poll for the County Council election or by-election only.
2. Combined election means a poll that is conducted at the same time as the County Council poll, which could be a District or Parish election or by-election or a national poll, such as a parliamentary election or a referendum.

Notes:

1. The Deputy Returning Officer Costs are calculated on the number of local government electors on the register of electors and entitled to vote at the last day for publication of the notice of election.
2. KCC is only able to make payment in accordance with its Scale of Fees and Expenses. There is no provision for the following costs, so these are unable to be reimbursed:
  - registration costs including printing and postage related to absent voting
  - completion of claim form/bookkeeping costs

- DRO superannuation costs
3. Up to a maximum of 18 hours: 16 hours on polling day plus 2 additional hours for the collection and drop-off of polling station equipment and attendance at a Presiding Officer briefing in advance of polling day
  4. Up to a maximum of 16 hours for Poll Clerks and 16.5 hours for Polling Station Inspectors
  5. Fringe areas to London, as defined by MHCLG, can uplift, subject to the discretion of the CRO, each pay band by a maximum of 5%.
  6. Holiday pay of up 12.07% is available for contracted hours of work
  7. Core staff can claim overtime at their contracted rate where the tasks undertaken are part of their contracted duties and necessary. For all other staff, overtime where reasonably worked can be claimed up to 1.5x of the hourly daytime rate unless the overtime takes place on a Sunday or bank holiday in which case the uplift can be up to 2x the hourly daytime rate.

**Pay Bands 2026/27 (with effect from April 2026)**

Pay Band A		
Roles		
Casual admin support		
Polling station - ballot box/equipment issuing assistants		
Postal vote - prep and issue assistant		
Postal vote - opening and checking assistant		
Ballot box receipt assistant		
Poll card - prep and issue assistant		
Poll clerks	£12.71	- £15.99
Count setup/take down assistant		
Count and verification assistants		
Count security		
Postal vote security		
Reception staff		
Poll card – printing		
Printing coordinator (e.g. printing of letters)		

Pay Band B		
Roles		
Polling station - ballot box/equipment issuing supervisors		
Postal vote - prep and issue supervisor		
Postal vote - opening and checking supervisor		
Ballot box receipt supervisor		
Poll card - prep and issue supervisor		
Count staff - IT support	£14.22	- £18.96
Postal vote - IT support (signature verification)		
Count setup/take down supervisor		
Count and verification team leader		
Unused ballot papers checking and verification		
Collection and prep of equipment		

Pay Band C		
Roles		
Presiding officer		
Count and verification supervisor		
Staff payments/payroll		
Poll card, postal votes and ballot papers - running data, checking and proofing	£16.59	- £20.73
Postal vote - signature adjudicators		
Top table assistant/data officer		
Media handling/comms		

Pay Band D		
Roles		
Count manager		
Polling station inspector	£17.77	- £30.80
Postal vote – opening session manager		

Other Rates		
Type		
Poll card (hand) delivery (per poll card)	£0.21	- £0.40
Postal Vote (hand delivery)	£0.36	- £0.70
Travel up to 10 miles		£4.50
Travel between 10-20miles		£9.00
Travel of 20 miles or more	£9	- £18
Private mileage rate		£0.45
Public mileage rate		£0.25
Electric vehicle mileage rate (home charging)*		£0.08
Electric vehicle mileage rate (public charging)*		£0.14
Training per member of staff (up to a maximum) **		£44.96
Training Prep & Delivery (per session)	£105.78	- £158.67
Bookkeeping capped at a maximum (prior approval required)		£423

\*Electric vehicle mileage rates were introduced by HMRC with effect from 1 September 2025.

\*\* Note that ROs can choose to pay at any fixed rate up to the maximum amount. The rate, however, will need to reflect the duration and complexity of the training.

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