

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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.