

By: Joel Cook – Democratic Services Manager

To: Selection and Member Services Committee – 16 December 2025

Subject: Committees Review

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

This report sets out proposals for consideration in relation to changing the number of Committees, adjusting relevant terms of reference and confirming the arrangements for managing transition of required activity.

Introduction

1. This report sets out proposals for delivering the work of the Council Committees in a more efficient way and reduces the number of Committees and meetings while still meeting statutory and Constitutional requirements.
2. The Council is required to establish and operate a number of Statutory Committees and in many cases, the Council is required to undertake specific functions. There is some flexibility as to how the Council seeks to manage these and the report explores options to deliver the same functions via fewer Committees.
3. Alongside the review of the non-Executive Committees, the Leader has undertaken a review of Cabinet Committee arrangements and proposals for change are shared in this paper for information.
4. Options and recommendations for review are set out below in the relevant sections.

Ordinary Committees

5. The Council operates the following main non-Executive Committees:
 - Scrutiny Committee
 - Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Governance & Audit Committee
 - Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
 - Personnel Committee
 - Planning Applications Committee
 - Regulation Committee
 - Selection and Member Services Committee
 - Pension Fund Committee
 - Kent Flood Risk Management Committee
 - Standards Committee

In some cases, the above are supported by a range of sub-committees exercising specific functions.

6. The Committees which must remain due to their specific functions and requirements are:
 - Scrutiny Committee
 - Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Governance & Audit Committee
 - Pension Fund Committee
7. The Committees which could be amended but it is recommended they continue unchanged at this time are:
 - Personnel Committee
 - Flood Risk and Water Management Committee
 - Standards Committee

Proposed changes:

8. Ordinary Committees which may be merged (while still maintaining all required activity and functions):
 - Selection and Member Services Committee & Electoral and Boundary Review Committee
 - Planning Committee & Regulation Committee
9. The functions currently undertaken separately by the Selection and Member Services and Electoral and Boundary Review are distinct but have a reasonable connection to arrangements relating to Members. A single Electoral and Member Arrangements Committee could be established to undertake all the functions – including making appointments (or agreeing arrangements for the appointments) to outside bodies, reviewing and recommending changes to the Constitution, monitoring Member Grants, determining Election arrangements and responding to Boundary Reviews where these are relevant to the County Council.
10. Selection and Member Services Committee includes a payable SRA to the Chair – this would continue under the proposals, pending any future Member Remuneration Panel review.
11. The proposed changes to the Selection and Members Services functions also include relevant reviews to update the Terms of Reference to better reflect the practical management of some of the elements still referenced in the Constitution.
12. In addition to updating the SMS functions, it is recommended that the Member Development Sub-Committee (a sub-committee of Selection and Member Services) be discontinued. The sub-committee played an important role in reviewing Member Development arrangements in 2023/24 and assisted in the

preparation of an effective Member Induction Programme which continues to run following the May 2025 election. The requirement for formal Committee consideration of these plans has now passed and any required working group activity can be monitored as necessary by the main Committee.

13. The Council has legal requirements to manage Planning Application matters for relevant strategic issues via a non-Executive process. This is achieved either through formal Planning Committee meetings or via delegated Officer decisions. KCC already operates an effective level of delegation in accordance with national Planning regulations and guidance.
14. The Regulation Committee has an important formal responsibility as it exercises functions in relation to enforcement of the control of development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and related statutory instruments. However, the majority of these decision-making functions are, in practice, exercised via Officer delegation or through ad hoc sub-committees rather than the main parent Committee. The sub-committees determine matters such as School Transport Appeals, Public Rights of Way issues and Village Green Applications.
15. Given the lack of substantive business requiring regular consideration or decision by the main Regulation Committee, it is recommended the Planning and Regulation Committees functions be merged into one overarching Committee.
16. It is recommended in the first instance that the current required sub-committee / panel arrangements for Regulation and Planning Committees are established under the new merged committee.

Cabinet Committees

17. The number of Cabinet Committees, their terms of reference and membership are all determined by the Leader of the Council. They are not subject to formal Proportionality Rules. This allows significant flexibility in how they are managed and the Executive can and should review them to ensure they provide an effective tool to assist Cabinet Members in policy development and in making well informed decisions.
18. The Executive is proposing to consolidate all Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) related Cabinet Committee activity within a single GET Cabinet Committee – this is achieved by the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee absorbing the GEDC activity and the disbanding of the GEDC Cabinet Committee.
19. The Committee is asked to note the proposed changes to Cabinet Committee arrangements.

Meeting arrangement implications

20. The proposals would result in a reduction (business need depending) of at least 15 meetings per annum. KCC holds, at present, an average of between 120 and 150 meetings per year so this is a material reduction.
21. A reduction in committee support requirements and expenses alongside operational efficiency activity, making the best use of technology and the proposed reduction in SRAs provides a saving of approx. £75k per annum.

Recommendation:

- 1) Recommend to County Council that the proposed changes to the Ordinary Committees (including relevant updates to Terms of Reference and associated Constitutional changes) as detailed in the report be adopted.
- 2) Note the proposed changes to Cabinet Committees.
- 3) Note that detailed Committee membership will be determined via the Proportionality Arrangements via Full Council.
- 4) Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Political Group Leaders to progress detailed Terms of Reference updates for the affected Committees.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Revised Terms of Reference for Electoral and Member Arrangements Committee

Appendix 2 – Revised Terms of Reference for Planning and Regulation Committee

Report Author:

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