

From: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer
To: Selection & Member Services Committee, 7 May 2026
Subject: KCC 2025 Election – Candidate Spending Returns
Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with The Representation of the People Act 1983, agents for candidates standing at local government elections are required to submit a spending return and declaration to the Returning Officer within 35 calendar days of the election results being declared. This deadline was 6 June 2025. A separate declaration by each candidate must be submitted within 7 working days of the spending return being submitted.

2. Outstanding Spending Returns

2.1 Following a discussion about the incomplete or outstanding candidate spending returns at this Committee on 5 March 2026, it was noted that an update report on the status of the returns and potential follow-up actions would be brought to the next meeting.

2.2 On 10 April 2026, the KCC Election Team wrote to all candidates and/or agents, with incomplete or outstanding spending returns, to ask that they submit the required documents as soon as possible.

2.3 As of 28 April 2026, 11 are still incomplete or outstanding of a total of 427 candidates:

Issue	Count
Missing Spending Return, Agent Declaration & Candidate Declaration	3
Missing Agent Declaration	2
Missing Candidate Declaration	6
Total	11

3. Follow-Up Actions

3.1 Failure to submit a spending return or declaration by the deadline without an authorised excuse is a criminal offence.

3.2 In 2017 and 2021, KCC wrote to the Electoral Commission to advise that 3 spending returns out of 339 candidates in 2017 and 22 spending returns out of 343 candidates in 2021 were incomplete or outstanding. We were not informed of any further action having been taken.

3.3 Whilst the Electoral Commission has a legal remit to secure compliance with the rules on candidates' spending and donations, it has no sanctioning

powers in respect of breaches. It now advises that suspected breaches of the rules should be referred directly to the police.

4. Recommendation

The Selection & Member Services Committee is asked to note the report and asks the Monitoring Officer to consider potential follow-up actions relating to outstanding spending returns.

5. Background Documents

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 11 December 2017

[Agenda for Electoral and Boundary Review Committee on Monday, 11th December, 2017, 3.30 pm](#)

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 29 March 2022

[Agenda for Electoral and Boundary Review Committee on Tuesday, 29th March, 2022, 10.30 am](#)

Electoral Commission (2026) 'What happens if a spending return or declaration isn't submitted?', <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england/after-election/completing-your-return/what-happens-if-a-spending-return-or-declaration-isnt-submitted>

Selection & Member Services Committee, 5 March 2026

[Agenda for Selection and Member Services Committee on Thursday, 5th March, 2026, 2.30 pm](#)

6. Report Author and Relevant Director

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