

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	14 May 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Vicky Poole (Portfolio Holder: Strategy and Governance and Commercialisation)
Date Head of Service agreed report:	14 April 2026
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	30 April 2026
Report Author:	Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources)

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the appointment and allocation of seats on Committees for the next Municipal Year in accordance with the duty under section 15 of the Local Government Housing Act 1989, to ensure that this reflects the latest political make-up of the Council.
- 1.2 The election of Councillors to West Berkshire Council usually takes place every four years but the political representation of Members on Committees needs to be considered on an annual basis.
- 1.3 This report also seeks the approval of the Council's Policy Framework for 2026/27 as set out in paragraph 5.22 of the report, reflective of the Policies reserved for Full Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council is informed that, under paragraph 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice has been received that the Members set out in paragraph 5.1 are to be regarded as Members of the Liberal Democrat Group, Conservative Group, and Minority Group respectively.
- 2.2 That the Council agrees to the appointment of the various Committees and to the number of places on each as set out in Table A, at paragraph 5.5.
- 2.3 That the Council agrees to the allocation of seats to the Political Groups in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 as set out in Table B at paragraph 5.15 of the report.

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

- 2.4 That the number of substitutes on each of the Committees be as set out at paragraph 5.18.
- 2.5 In respect of the District and Area Planning Committees, the substitute Members are all drawn from Members representing wards within the Committee's area who are not appointed to the Committee. Where substitutes attend the District Planning meeting, they need to be drawn from the same Area Planning meeting as the Member they are substituting for.
- 2.6 That the Council approves the appointment of Members to the Committees as set out in Appendix A, and the appointments to Task Groups and Panels set out in Appendix B, which are in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.
- 2.7 That the Council, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 as amended, agrees that the Council's Policy Framework for 2026/27 be as set out in paragraph 5.23 of this report, and that any necessary amendments be made to the Council's Constitution.
- 2.8 That the Council notes that other plans, policies, and strategies requiring approval which are not included in the approved Policy Framework, and which are not otherwise reserved by law to Council, will be the responsibility of the Council's Executive in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.
- 2.9 That the Council notes that Part 2, Paragraph 6.2 of Article 6 of the Constitution will be amended to reflect any changes made to the Executive by the Leader of the Council at the Annual Council meeting.
- 2.10 To re-appoint three Independent Persons (standards), namely Lindsey Appleton, Mike Wall and Alan Penrith.
- 2.11 To appoint Simon Carey as an Independent Person (Audit) to focus on the risk and audit functions of the Audit and Risk Committee and up to two non-voting Parish/Town Councillors on the Personnel and Standards Committee.
- 2.12 To note the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board as set out in Appendix C.
- 2.13 That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make any changes required to the Constitution as a result of the changes to the number of Members of the Council and following the appointments to Committees.
- 2.14 Council is also informed about the Council Bodies Rules as detailed at Part 6 of the Constitution detailed at Appendix E.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
Financial:	No new implications arising from this report. Members Allowances are met from within existing budgets in accordance with the proposals agreed by Council.			
Human Resource:	None			
Legal:	The allocation of seats to the Political Groups is in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 and related regulations mentioned in the report.			
Risk Management:	None			
Property:	None			
Policy:	The appointments and allocations will be made in accordance with the Council's statutory obligations. The Council's Policy making framework is reviewed annually.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		
Core Business:		X		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	The political groups have been consulted on aspects of this report.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report sets out the membership of the Political Groups, the proposed size and membership of the Committees, as well as the number of substitutes to be appointed for each of the bodies. It also sets out the 2026/27 Policy Framework.
- 4.2 The Council is required to appoint Committees and other Member bodies that are not part of the Executive. Membership of the Council's Committees is agreed annually at the May Council meeting.
- 4.3 Appointments to the Executive are a matter reserved to the Leader of Council and are therefore not included in this report.

5 Supporting Information

Political Groups

- 5.1 In accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the under-mentioned Members have given notice of their wish to be regarded as Members of the Political Groups set out below.

Liberal Democrat Group	Conservative Group	Minority Group
Antony Amirtharaj	Dennis Benneyworth	Adrian Abbs
Phil Barnett	Dominic Boeck	Carolyne Culver
Jeff Brooks	Paul Dick	David Marsh
Nick Carter	Clive Hooker	Clive Taylor
Patrick Clark	Paul Kander	
Heather Codling	Jane Langford	
Martin Colston	Ross Mackinnon	
Jeremy Cottam	Biyi Oloko	
Iain Cottingham	Richard Somner	
Laura Coyle	Jo Stewart	
Billy Drummond	Howard Woollaston	
Nigel Foot		
Denise Gaines		
Stuart Gourley		
Owen Jeffery		
Janine Lewis		
Alan Macro		
Geoffrey Mayes		
Tom McCann		
Erik Pattenden		
Justin Pemberton		
Vicky Poole		
Chris Read		
Matthew Shakespeare		
Stephanie Steevenson		
Louise Sturgess		
Martha Vickers		
Tony Vickers		

- 5.2 It is proposed, at recommendation 2.1, that the Council notes that under Paragraph 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice has been received that the Members set out in Paragraph 5.1 are to be regarded as Members of the Liberal Democrat, Conservative, and Minority Groups respectively.

Appointment of Committees

- 5.3 In accordance with Part 2, Article 4 of the Constitution, the Council is required to appoint Committees and other Member bodies that are not part of the Executive or its sub-committees.
- 5.4 It should be noted that Council is due to consider a report on changes to Governance and Personnel Committee arrangements. This will be heard before this report and, if the recommendations are approved, would make changes to the Council’s Committees. In summary, if approved, both the Governance and Personnel Committees will be reorganised into a new Audit and Risk Committee and a Personnel and Standards Committee. Both new Committees would have seven Members and up to two Independent Members (Audit and Risk) and up to two co-opted Parish/Town Councillors (Personnel and Standards). If approved, these changes would take effect immediately.
- 5.5 It is proposed that Council appoint the Committees set out in Table A, with the number of places shown for each.

Table A	
Body	Number of Seats
Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee	9
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	9
Health and Adult Social Care Committee	9
Licensing Committee	12
District Planning Committee	11 <i>(five members of the Eastern Area Planning Committee and five Members of the Western Area Planning Committee as well as the Portfolio Holder for Planning)</i>
Eastern Area Planning Committee	9
Western Area Planning Committee	9

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

Appeals Panel	12
Audit and Risk Committee	7 <i>(up to two co-opted, non-voting Independent Person (Audit) will also be appointed to this Committee)</i>
Personnel and Standards Committee	7 <i>(up to two co-opted, non-voting Parish Councillors will also be appointed to this Committee)</i>
Total	94

- 5.6 The Health and Wellbeing Board is subject to its own membership requirements and is therefore not included in the above table. The boundaries for the Eastern and Western Area Planning Committees are set out in Appendix D.
- 5.7 In addition to the Committees in Table A above, the Council has appointed a Joint Public Protection Committee and a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. West Berkshire Council has three seats on the Joint Public Protection Committee and two seats on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Appointments to the Joint Public Protection Committee are in accordance with the Inter Authority Agreement, which states that this will reflect the political balance of the Council.
- 5.8 It is proposed that 12 Members be appointed to the Licensing Committee and the Appeals Panel to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of Members trained and available to undertake the work of these Committees, which frequently sit as a Sub-Committee (referred to internally as Panels).
- 5.9 It is recommended (at point 2.2 of the report) that the Council agrees to the appointment of the various Committees and to the number of places on each as set out in Table A.
- 5.10 It is recommended (at point 2.13 of the report) that authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make any changes required to the Constitution as a result of the changes to the number of Members of the Council and following the appointments to Committees.
- 5.11 The Rules for Council Bodies are attached to this report for information at Appendix E.

Allocation of Seats

5.12 The political balance of the Council currently stands as follows:

	Number of Members No.	Political Composition %
Liberal Democrat Group	28	65.12%
Conservative Group	11	25.58%
Minority Group	4	9.3%
TOTAL	43	100

5.13 In allocating seats on Committees, the Council must give effect to the requirements for political balance on Committees as prescribed by section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These requirements apply only to voting members of the Committee.

5.14 This section creates a sequential test that must be adhered to when allocating seats to the Committees of Council, which provides as follows:

- (1) Not all seats on any Committee are to be allocated to the same political group.
- (2) The majority of seats on any Committee must be allocated to the majority group.
- (3) Subject to the satisfaction of the above statutory criteria, the total number of seats on ordinary Committees must be allocated to political groups in the same proportion as their representation on the Council.
- (4) Subject to all the above, the number of seats on each Committee must be the same proportion as the political group's representation on full Council.

5.15 Having regard to the above, it is proposed that the seats on Committees should be allocated as follows:

Table B				
Committee	Total Number of Seats	Liberal Democrat Group	Conservative Group	Minority Group
Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee	9	5	3	1
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	9	5	3	1
Health and Adult Social Care Committee	9	5	3	1

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

Licensing Committee	12	7	3	2
District Planning Committee	11	8	2	1
Eastern Area Planning Committee	9	5	3	1
Western Area Planning Committee	9	5	3	1
Appeals Panel	12	9	3	0
Audit and Risk Committee	7	5	1	1
Personnel and Standards Committee	7	5	1	1
Number of committee seats based on % of Council		61.2 (1dp)	24.0 (1dp)	8.7 (1dp)
Number of Seats Allocated	94	59	25	10
Percentage of Seats on Council		65.1%	25.6%	9.3%
Percentage of Seats Allocated	100%	62.8% (1dp)	26.6% (1dp)	10.6% (1dp)

5.16 It is recommended that the Council agrees to the allocation of seats to the Political Groups in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 as set out in Table B above.

Substitutes

5.17 The Council is also required to determine the number of substitute Members that may be appointed in respect of each Committee.

5.18 The proposed number of substitutes for each Committee is detailed in Table C below.

Table C	
Resources and Place Scrutiny Committee	Up to 3 per Political Group

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	Up to 3 per Political Group
Health and Adult Social Care Committee	Up to 3 per Political Group
Area Planning Committees	Up to 3 per Political Group
District Planning Committee	Up to 4 per Political Group – 2 from the Eastern Area of the District and 2 from the Western Area of the District
Licensing Committee	No substitutes permitted
Appeals Panel	No substitutes permitted
Audit and Risk Committee	Up to 2 per Political Group
Personnel and Standards Committee	Up to 2 per Political Group

5.19 In respect of the District and Area Planning Committees, the substitute Members are all drawn from Members representing wards within the Committee's area who are not appointed to the Committee. Where substitutes attend the District Planning meeting, they need to be drawn from the same Area Planning meeting as the Member they are substituting for.

Appointment to Committees

5.20 Appendix A is a full list of Committees and the nominations from each Political Group, including the Joint Public Protection Committee.

5.21 It is proposed that the Council approves the appointment of Members to the Committees as set out in Appendix A, and the appointments set out in Appendix B which are in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.

Planning and Policy Framework

5.22 It is recommended that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 as amended, the proposed Budget and Policy Framework for 2026/27 (Policies etc reserved to Council) contains the Budget, Policies, Plans and Strategies set out below:

- Investment and Borrowing Strategy;

Appointment and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year

- Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Capital Strategy;
- Revenue Budget;
- Council Strategy;
- Local Transport Plan;
- Licensing Policy;
- Gambling Policy;
- Plans and strategies which together comprise the Development Plan;
- Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Statutory Pay Policy Statement;
- Property Investment Strategy.

5.23 Other plans, policies, and strategies requiring approval which are not included in the approved Policy Framework, and which are not otherwise reserved by law to Council, will be the responsibility of the Council's Executive in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

Executive

5.24 Council is asked to note that the Constitution will be amended to reflect any changes made to the Executive Portfolios by the Leader of the Council announced at this Annual Council meeting.

Governance

5.25 In addition to the elected Members who will be appointed on a proportional basis to the Audit and Risk Committee, it is recommended that up to two Independent Members (Audit and Risk) also be appointed. It is proposed that the Council re-appoint Simon Carey to continue to fulfil this role on the Audit and Risk Committee for the municipal year 2026/27, as set out in the recommendations and at Appendix A. The Independent Member (Audit and Risk) would sit on the Committee and provide their expertise. The Independent Member (Audit and Risk) was initially selected through a publicity exercise and selection. However, in subsequent years, the Council has reconfirmed their appointment with their consent.

5.26 In addition to the elected Members who will be appointed on a proportional basis to the Personnel and Standards Committee, it is recommended that up to two co-opted non-voting Parish/Town Councillors also be appointed as Parish/Town Council representatives. In addition, up to two substitute (and also non-voting) Parish/Town Councillors will also be appointed to provide continuity. This is presented within Appendix A. The Parish/Town Council co-opted Members were initially selected through a publicity exercise and selection. However, in subsequent years, the Council has reconfirmed their appointment with their consent.

5.27 It is also proposed that Council re-appoint three Independent Persons, namely Lindsey Appleton, Alan Penrith, and Mike Wall MBE to assist with standards matters. These Independent Members (Standards) were initially selected through a publicity exercise and selection. However, in subsequent years, the Council has reconfirmed their appointment with their consent.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 5.28 The Health and Wellbeing Board is created under the relevant provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. A number of regulations linked to Committees have been dis-applied in relation to this Committee such as the proportionality rules and rules pertaining to voting.
- 5.29 The membership of the Board is set out in Appendix C and a number of the Board Members have nominated a named substitute as set out in that Appendix.
- 5.30 Council is asked to note the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board, including those Members nominated by the Leader of Council, which are set out in Appendix C.

6 Proposals

- 6.1 As detailed in this report, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, 28 Members wish to be regarded as members of the Liberal Democrat Group, 11 Members wish to be regarded as members of the Conservative Group, and 4 Members wish to be regarded as members of the Minority Group.
- 6.2 Members, and where appropriate substitutes, will be appointed to 10 Committees totalling 94 seats. In this case 59 of these seats will be allocated to Liberal Democrat Members, 25 to Conservative Members, and 10 to the Minority Group. The Health and Wellbeing Board is not included in these appointments as it is subject to its own membership requirements.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the appointments to Committees are made in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups and as fully set out in the recommendations and related Appendices.
- 6.4 The Council will also appoint up to two Parish/Town Councillors to the Personnel and Standards Committee, two Independent Persons (Audit and Risk) to the Audit and Risk Committee, and three Independent Persons (Standards) to assist with standards complaints.

7 Other options considered

- 7.1 None as the Council is required to consider and review membership of committees on an annual basis.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Members are asked to agree the appointment and allocation of seats on the Committees for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.
- 8.2 Members are asked to agree the Council's Policy Framework for 2026/27 as set out in Paragraph 5.22.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – Membership of Committees 2025/26 (To Follow)
- 9.2 Appendix B - Task Group and Panel Memberships 2025/26 (To Follow)
- 9.3 Appendix C – Membership of Health and Wellbeing Board (To Follow)
- 9.4 Appendix D - Wards covering each Planning Committee (To Follow)
- 9.5 Appendix E – Council Bodies Rules - [Part 6 of the Constitution](#) (To Follow)

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: (All Wards);

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