Membership of Committees

Committee considering report:	Council
Date of Committee:	Thursday 15 October
Portfolio Member:	Portfolio Holder: Strategy and Governance and Commercialisation
Date Service Director agreed report:	9 September 2026
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	24 September 2026
Report Author:	Nicola Thomas

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the appointment and allocation of seats on committees following the update to the Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, in accordance with the duty under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, to ensure that this reflects the latest political make-up of the Council.

1.2 The political representation of Members on committees is usually considered on an annual basis, but following updates to the Planning Committee arising from the implementation of the National Scheme of Delegation for Planning, there is a need to update West Berkshire Council's allocation arrangements.

2 Recommendations

2.1 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 A at paragraph 5.11 of the report.

2.2 That the number of substitutes on each of the Committees be as set out at paragraph 5.14.

2.3 That the Council approves the appointment of Members to the committees as set out in appendix A, which are in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.

2.4 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.

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		

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 Planning Committee as well as the number of substitutes to be appointed for this body.

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 but with the update to the arrangements of the Planning Committee, the allocation needs to be reviewed and updated.

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 is proposed that 11 Members be appointed to the Planning Committee which will replace the previously split Eastern, Western and District Planning Committees. The basis for this update is set out in a concurrent report before Council.

5.5 It is recommended (at point 2.3 of the report) that the Council agrees to the appointment to the Planning Committee and to the number of places on it as set out in Appendix A.

5.6 It is recommended (at point 2.4 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.

Allocation of Seats

5.7 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**

5.8 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.

5.9 This provision creates a sequential test that must be followed 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.

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

Table A				
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
Licensing Committee	12	7	3	2
Planning Committee	11	7	3	1
Appeals Panel	12	9	3	0
Audit and Risk Committee	7	5	1	1
Personnel and Standards Committee	7	5	1	1
Entitled number of committee seats based on % of Council		49.5 (1dp)	19.4 (1dp)	7.1 (1dp)
Number of Seats Allocated	**76**	**48**	**20**	**8**
Entitled Percentage of Seats on Council		65.1%	25.6%	9.3%
Percentage of Seats Allocated	**100%**	**63.2% (1dp)**	**26.3% (1dp)**	**10.5% (1dp)**

5.11 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 A above.

Substitutes

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

5.13 The proposed number of substitutes for the Planning Committee is up to four for the Liberal Democrat Group, up to four for the Conservative Group, and up to two for the Minority Group.

Appointment to Committees

5.14 Appendix A details the nominations from each political group for appointment to the Planning Committee.

5.15 It is proposed that the Council approves the appointment of Members to the committees as set out in appendix A which is in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.

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 four 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 76 seats. At this time 48 of those seats will be allocated to Liberal Democrat Members, 20 to Conservative Members, and 8 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 appendix.

7 Other options considered

7.1 None as the Council is required to consider and review membership of committees on an annual basis and this report updates the allocation following changes to the Planning Committee arrangements.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Members are asked to agree the appointment and allocation of seats on the committees for the remainder of the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Membership of Planning Committee 2026/27 (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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