

Council

27 May 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Appointment of Council Bodies and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Public report
Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Jayne La Grua, Director of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Report author	Simon Hill, Democratic Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Terry, Leader of the Council
Council priority	All
Recommendations	<p>Council is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. agree the total number of Committees Seats, the overall share of Committee Seats, and the Allocation of Committee Seats as set out in Tables 1 to 3 of Appendix 1;2. appoint to the list of Committees as set out in Table 3 of Appendix 1;3. authorise the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the relevant Group Leader, to determine any necessary adjustments to be made to individual Committee allocations in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;4. appoint to the Corporate Parenting Panel and Health & Wellbeing Board in accordance with the Constitution, and approve the allocation of seats as set out in Tables 4 and 5 of Appendix 1;5. appoint to the Consultative Committees and Forums listed in Table 6 of Appendix 1; and6. Agree and adopt the revised Constitution agreed by the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education as attached at Appendix 2.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council is required at its annual meeting to decide which committees to establish for the year, their size and terms of reference, and determine the allocation of seats to political groups represented on the Council on committees in accordance with the provisions of [Sections 15 and 16 of The Local Government and Housing Act 1989](#) and [The Local Government \(Committees and Political Groups\) Regulations 1990](#).

2. Background

- 2.1. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to allocate seats on committees to political groups for the forthcoming municipal year in accordance with the size of each group on the Council as a whole, unless alternative arrangements are notified to all councillors and agreed without any councillor voting against them.

- 2.2. Section 15 of the 1989 Act (Duty to Allocate Seats to Political Groups) sets out the requirements as to political proportionality on Council bodies and requires the Council, in allocating seats on committees of the Council to political groups, to give effect, so far as practicable, to the following four principles:
- (a) that not all seats on the committee are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) that the political group having a majority of seats on the Council should have a majority on each committee;
 - (c) that, subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the Council's committees allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total number of such committee seats as the number of members of that group bears to the membership of the full Council; and
 - (d) that, subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, seats will be allocated on each committee in the same ratio as exists on the Council.
- 2.3. Section 16 of the 1989 Act (Duty to Give Effect to Allocations) requires the Council to give effect to the allocations determined as set out above in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.
- 2.4. The following table sets out the proportionate distribution of seats amongst political groups that have formed since the local elections held on 7 May 2026:

Table 1: Proportionality Calculation:

Political Group	Number of seats on the Council	Percentage Entitlement
Labour	29	60.42%
Green	11	22.92%
Conservative	5	10.42%
Liberal Democrat	3	6.25%
Total	48	100%

3. Establishment of Committees and their Terms of Reference

Standing Committees

- 3.1 Article 7 of the Council's [Constitution](#) establishes the following four Standing Committees:
- (1) Policy Committee
 - (2) Adult Social Care, Children's Services & Education Committee
 - (3) Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee
 - (4) Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport
- 3.2 The duty to allocate seats to political groups in proportion to their membership of the Council applies to all of the Standing Committees listed above.
- 3.3 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires that the Leader, Deputy Leader and each of the Lead Councillors be appointed to Policy Committee.
- 3.4 There is no restriction on the overall size of the Council's Standing Committees.
- 3.5 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Standing Committees are set out in Section 2 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

Regulatory and Other Committees

- 3.6 In addition to the Council's four Standing Committees, the Council appoints the following Regulatory and Other Committees to discharge its quasi-judicial, regulatory and other functions in accordance with Article 8 of the Council's Constitution:
- (1) Licensing Applications Committee
 - (2) Planning Applications Committee
 - (3) Standards Committee
 - (4) Audit and Governance Committee
 - (5) Personnel Committee
- 3.7 The duty to allocate seats to political groups in proportion to their membership of the Council applies to all of the Regulatory and Other Committees listed above, with the exception of the Licensing Applications Committee.
- 3.8 The Licensing Applications Committee is established under the Licensing Act 2003, which overrides the usual proportionality provisions of the 1989 Act and are not included in the allocations. The Council still aims for political balance in practice, but it is not a statutory requirement.
- 3.9 Section 6 of [The Licensing Act 2003](#) requires Licensing Committees to have at least 10 and no more than 15 members.
- 3.10 Regulation 7 of [The Town and Country Planning \(Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions\) \(England\) Regulations 2026](#), which is expected to come into force during the 2026/2027 municipal year, will limit membership of Planning Committees to no more than 13 members.
- 3.11 Article 9 of the Council's Constitution includes the following provisions in respect of membership of the Standards Committee:
- Seven Councillors, subject to each registered political group on the Council having an entitlement to at least one seat;
 - At least one, and no more than three, co-opted Independent Member(s) (persons who are not a Councillor or an officer of the Council or who are not disqualified from being a Member of a Committee of the Council under Section 104 of the Local Government Act 1972);
 - Each political group may nominate named substitute members and those Councillors may attend in the place of appointed Councillors provided that they have received training similar to that received by members of the Committee.
- 3.12 There are no restrictions on the overall size of the Audit and Governance Committee or Personnel Committee.
- 3.13 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Regulatory and Other Committees are set out in Sections 3 and 4 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.
- #### 4. Allocation of Committee Seats
- 4.1. The number of seats available on the Council's Committees have been calculated having regard to the statutory and constitutional provisions set out above and assuming that the overall size of Committees remain approximately as they were for the 2025/2026 municipal year, subject to some minor adjustments to achieve political balance. This calculation is set in **Table 1 of Appendix 1**.
- 4.2. To achieve a political balance the distribution of committee seats between political groups is calculated on the proportional split of 48 Council seats, as set out at paragraph 2.4 above. The overall share of the total number of seats on Committees is shown in **Appendix 1 at Table 2**.
- 4.3. The allocation of seats on each of the Council's Committees follows the proportionality calculation set out in paragraph 2.4 above, the general principle of rounding up or down,

and any specific constitutional requirements such as the inclusion of all Lead Councillors on Policy Committee and the representation of all Political Groups on Standards Committee. A suggested proportionate distribution of seats amongst political groups is shown in **Appendix 1 at Table 3**.

5. Nominations and Appointments to Committees

- 5.1 A motion will be moved at the meeting that nominations to the Council's Standing, Regulatory and Other Committees be made.

6. Sub-Committees

- 6.1 Committees may appoint Sub-Committees to discharge specific functions and provision is made in the Council's Constitution for the following Standing Committees to appoint the following Sub-Committees in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution:

Table 2: Sub-Committees of Standing Committees

Appointing Committee	Sub-Committee
Policy Committee	Trustees' Sub-Committee
SEPT Committee	Traffic Management Sub-Committee

- 6.2 Appointments to the above Sub-Committees are made by their Appointing Committees in proportion to the Council's overall political balance. The Policy and SEPT Committees will meet to consider a motion on appointments to the the Sub-Committees on the rising of the Council meeting.

7. Corporate Parenting Panel

- 7.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is not included within the political balance arrangements as it is not a committee to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies. The Panel reflects the Council's collective corporate parenting responsibilities and is constituted to support cross-party working rather than political proportionality.
- 7.2 A motion will be moved at the meeting that appointments be made to the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2026/27 municipal year.

8. Health & Wellbeing Board

- 8.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board, which came into effect on 1 April 2013, is a Committee of the Council. Political balance is not a requirement. Council is required to confirm the appointment of the Board, whose terms of reference are contained in Section 4 of Part 3 the Constitution of the Council.
- 8.2 A motion will be moved at the meeting that Councillor appointments to the Health and Wellbeing Board be confirmed for the 2026/27 municipal year.

9. Consultative Committees and Forums

- 9.1 Article 10 of the Council's Consitution provides that, each municipal year, the Council will appoint Councillors to represent it on the bodies listed below:

- Access and Disabilities Working Group
- Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality
- Arts and Heritage Forum
- Civic Board
- Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum

- Cycle Forum
- Local Joint Forum
- Older People's Working Group
- Safer Reading Neighbourhood Forum

9.2 The rules on political balance do not apply to these Consultative Committees and Forums. However, in previous years, the Council has informally applied broadly the same proportionality rules to these bodies.

9.3 Accordingly an indicative-only allocation of seats is shown in Table 6 of Appendix 1, based on the 2025/2026 allocations and subject to the preferences and nominations made by the political Groups.

10. Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education Constitution

10.1 The Council also appoints to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

10.2 SACRE reviewed its Constitution during 2025/26, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 2**. The Constitution sets out arrangements for the SACRE including membership, recruitment, meetings procedures and Chairing. It also sets out the requirements for a statutory Agreed Syllabus Conference.

10.3 It is a requirement that SACRE's Constitution be formally adopted by the Council.

10.4 The SACRE Terms of Reference set out in Article 10 of the Council's Constitution (Consultative Committees and Forums) remain unchanged.

11. Joint Bodies and Outside Bodies

11.1 The Council has delegated responsibility for making appointments to Joint and Outside Bodies to the Policy Committee.

12. Contribution to Strategic Aims

12.1 The governance arrangements and decision-making structure adopted by the authority are integral to creating a framework to deliver the Council's strategic aims.

13. Environmental and Climate Implications

13.1 There are no environmental and climate implications resulting from the recommendations contained in this report.

14. Community Engagement

14.1 Political Groups have been consulted in relation to recommendations set out in the report.

15. Equality Implications

16.1 There are no equality implications resulting from this report and no need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

16. Other Relevant Considerations

17.1 There are none.

17. Legal Implications

18.1 The Council is required to decide which committees and sub-committees to establish for the year, their size and terms of reference, and determine the allocation of seats to political groups represented on the Council on Committees in accordance with the

provisions of Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

18. Financial Implications

18.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

19. Timetable for Implementation

19.1 Not applicable.

20. Background Papers

20.1 There are none.

21. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Allocation of seats on Committees and Other Bodies (to follow)

Appendix 2 - SACRE Constitution and Terms of Reference