



Report To: South Holland District Council

Date: Wednesday, 13 May 2026

Subject: Democratic Arrangements 2026/27

Purpose:

- a) To establish, allocate seats and appoint members to the Council's Committees and Panels for 2026/27
- b) To receive nominations and appoint to any vacancies on outside bodies
- c) To approve the 2026/27 Schedule of Meetings
- d) To reappoint members of the Independent Remuneration Panel until May 2028

Report Of: John Medler, Service Director – Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Report Author: Rhonda Booth, Democratic Services Manager

Ward(s) Affected: None

Exempt Report: No

Summary

This report sets out recommendations for the Council to establish the democratic arrangements for the Council's Committees and Panels for the municipal year 2026/27 and make appointments to outside bodies where there are vacancies. It also seeks agreement for the schedule of meetings and the reappointment of the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Recommendations

That the Council

1. Approves the establishment of Committees and Panels for the Municipal Year 2026/27, including the allocation of seats to political groups and appointments (and substitutes) as nominated by Political Group Leaders, as set out in **Appendix A** to this report, including an increase in the size of the Planning Committee from 11 members to 13 members.

2. Notes the current appointments to Outside Bodies as detailed in **Appendix B** and receives nominations and makes appointments to any vacancies.
3. Approves the Council meeting dates and its committee meeting dates and notes the proposed dates for Cabinet meetings for the Council Municipal Year 2026/27 (**Appendix C**).
4. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Chairman to amend or cancel meeting dates as necessary, subject to compliance with any constitutional requirements where an agenda has already been published.
5. To re-appoint the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel until May 2028.

Reasons for Recommendations

To establish the Council's democratic decision-making arrangements and appointments to outside bodies for the municipal year 2026/27

Other Options Considered

Do nothing – this is not a viable option as the Council would not be in compliance with the law or be able to undertake its business

To maintain the current Planning Committee size – whilst this is an option it is considered that the proposed change from 11 to 13 members will support effective decision-making and is compliant with proposed draft regulations.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Annual Council on 17 May 2023 (the Annual Meeting after the last District Council elections), the Council (i) approved committee membership for the four-year period ending at the next ordinary election in 2027; (ii) appointed committee chairmen and vice-chairmen for the same period; and (iii) made appointments to outside bodies for the same period.
- 1.2 Changes to committees, sub-committees and outside body appointments can be made (when necessary) at any Council meeting.
- 1.3 In addition, there have been a number of changes to political group membership, and this has resulted in the need for a review of the allocation of committee seats to political groups.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the Act) provides that the default position for appointments to committees is on a politically proportionate basis. At each Annual Council meeting the Council must consider whether any changes to committee seat allocations are required in order to maintain political proportionality.
- 2.2 In addition Section 15 of the Act and Regulation 17 of the Local Government (Committees and Political group) regulations 1990 together also require a review of seat allocation to different political groups as soon as is practicable after there is delivered to the proper officer a notice under Regulation 9(b) of the Regulations stating that a member wishes to join a political group and requests a review.
- 2.3 The following changes have taken place which have necessitated a review of committee seat allocations to be undertaken:
- Councillors Harrison and Chauhan have joined the South Holland Independent Group
- 2.4 Under Regulation 16 of the 1990 Regulations, where some of the members of the relevant authority are members of one or more political groups and the others are not, the Council's obligations are as follows:
- i) To determine the proportion of the total membership of the Council who are members of one or more political groups and ensure that the same proportion of the total number of seats to be filled is allocated to each of the political groups in the proportion that the number of members of that group bears to the membership of the authority; and
 - ii) To secure that persons appointed to any seats that do not fall to be allocated to a political group under the above requirement are not allocated to a person who is a member of a political group.
- 2.5 Having determined the overall seat allocations, the next step is to allocate the seat allocations to individual committees. The 1989 Act requires the Council to apply the following principles in sequential order and as far as reasonably practicable when determining seat allocations:
- a) That not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group.
 - b) That the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership.
 - c) Subject to (a) and (b) above, that the total number of seats each political group has on all ordinary committees is in proportion to that group's share of the total council elected membership.
 - d) Subject to (a) and (c) above that each political group has the same proportion of seats on a body as it holds on the Council as a whole.
- 2.6 Once the allocation of seats has been determined, there is a duty on the Council to give effect to the allocation by making appointments to seats in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.
- 2.7. The proposed allocation of seats and appointments which Council is being asked to approve includes the continuation of a gifting of one seat on the Planning Committee

to the South Holland Independent Group from the Reform Group. This alternative arrangement is permissible as long as no member of the Council votes against the proposal.

Review of Planning Committee Size

2.8 The Council is asked to consider increasing the size of the Planning Committee from 11 to 13 Members. The Committee's membership was reduced in July 2025 from 15 to 11 as part of wider governance changes. Since that time, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 has introduced powers for national planning committee reforms, including regulations relating to the size and composition of planning committees, which are expected to come into force later in 2026 following statutory consultation. The draft regulations stipulate that a planning committee may have a maximum size of 13 members. Increasing the Committee to 13 Members would provide additional capacity and resilience in anticipation of these changes, while representing a modest and proportionate adjustment to support effective decision-making under the new regulatory framework.

Outside body appointments

2.9 Outside body appointments were made at the May 2023 Annual Council meeting for a four-year period. Changes to these appointments can be made at any Council meeting should the need arise, and a list of current outside body appointments is attached at Appendix B.

2.10 In the case of certain outside bodies specified in law political proportionality rules apply where three or more appointments are made by the Council. No changes to outside bodies are required on the basis of political proportionality rules. Any issues and over/under-representation to be addressed are highlighted in Appendix B. Nominations received for the vacancies will be confirmed at the meeting and members will be asked to make appointments to these vacancies

SHDC Schedule of Meeting 2026/27

2.11 A draft Schedule of Meetings for the 2026/27 Municipal Year is attached at Appendix C to this report. This has been developed with relevant members and officers. The programme provides a clear timetable which supports the decision-making processes within the Council and takes account of the current District election timetable. Care has been taken to ensure that all the necessary business of the Council can be managed within the proposed programme. Extraordinary meetings can be called to deal with urgent business should the need arise.

2.12 Members are asked to approve the programme of Ordinary meetings of Council and its Committees, and to note the proposed dates of meetings of the Cabinet, for the Council Municipal Year 2026/27. The Council is also requested to grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Chairman to amend meeting dates or cancel meetings as and when required.

Independent Remuneration Panel

2.12 Members are asked to approve the reappointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel, whose current term of office concludes on 30 September 2026. The Panel,

comprising Nicci Marzec, Chris Penney, Malcom Haddow and Terence York, has continued to provide independent, robust and effective advice to the Council on Members' allowances and related matters, in line with statutory requirements. To ensure continuity of expertise and support stability ahead of the next electoral cycle, it is proposed that the existing Panel members be reappointed for a further term from 1 October 2026 until May 2028.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None

Corporate Priorities

None

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The operation of committees and sub-committees and the appointment of members to outside bodies are dealt with in the Constitution and in law (Local Government Act 1972, Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990).

Data Protection

None

Financial

The costs of delivering the Council's Committee structures are factored into the approved Council budget.

Risk Management

None

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Consultation on the Schedule of Meetings has been undertaken with Group leaders, relevant Portfolio Holders and Committee Chairmen, in addition to senior officers. Appointments to committees and sub-committees, and outside bodies, reflect the wishes of the relevant political group/group leader. Consultation on the size of the Planning Committee has taken place with Group Leaders and the Chairman of Planning.

Reputation

None

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

None

Acronyms

None

Appendices

Appendix 1	Appointments to Committees and Panels (To Follow)
Appendix 2	Outside Body Appointments
Appendix 3	Schedule of Meetings 2026/27

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

Report Approval

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