

# **East Herts Council Report**

## **Council**

- Date of meeting:** 14 May 2025
- Report by:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- Report title:** Political Balance and Committee Membership of the Council 2025/26
- Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);

**Summary** – Council, at its annual meeting, is required to approve the decision-making arrangements for the discharge of functions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:**

- a) That the Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees with the number of voting Members listed in paragraph 2.1 be appointed;**
- b) That the political balance of the Council at Appendix A be agreed;**
- c) That the membership and Chairman of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees be as set out in Appendix B, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated;**
- d) That the intention of the Leader of the Council to appoint Members to the Executive (in addition to the Leader) with the portfolio responsibilities as detailed in Appendix C be noted;**

- e) That the programme of Council meetings, as detailed at paragraph 4.1, be approved;**
- f) That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make changes in the standing membership of committees, joint committees and panels in (A) above, in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom seats on these bodies have been allocated;**
- g) That the action to be taken by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader, under delegated authority, concerning the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, be noted; and**
- h) The Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make such amendments to the Council's Constitution as may be necessary to account for the decisions in (A) to (G) above.**

## **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 In terms of the appointment of Members to the Executive, the Constitution provides that it is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council and the Leader determines the size of the Executive. The Leader's determination on the size of the Executive for 2025/26 is at Appendix C and remains unchanged from 2024/25.
- 1.2 The Leader is also responsible for advising Council on the allocation of executive portfolio responsibilities. The Executive portfolio responsibilities are also set out in Appendix C and again, remains unchanged from 2024/25.

## **2.0 Committees**

- 2.1 Council are asked to appoint the following Committees and size:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>No. of Members</b>
Overview and Scrutiny	15
Audit and Governance	7
Development Management	12
Human Resources	7
Licensing	12
Standards	7
Chief Officer Recruitment	5
East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council Joint Revenues and Benefits Committee (3 from East Herts)	6
Joint CCTV Executive (3 from East Herts)	12
East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council Joint Information Technology Committee (3 from East Herts)	6
Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee (1 from East Herts)	5

2.2 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be increased from 14 members to 15 members to account for the recommendations from the Member Constitution Review Group (following later in the agenda) and to ensure that the political balance across committees is achieved.

### **3.0 Political Groups**

3.1 Where Members of a Council are divided into political groups, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 places a duty on the Council to review the allocation between those groups of seats on its scrutiny committees, regulatory committees and joint committees according to certain principles. This is to ensure that the political composition of those committees reflects the political representation of the Council. The rules of proportionality do not

apply to the Executive.

- 3.2 The political groups within East Herts Council will be entitled to an allocation of committee places in proportion to their representation on the Council. The political balance representation of each relevant group is set out in Appendix A.
- 3.3 The Council must appoint Members to places on committees in accordance with each group's entitlement. Appendix B (to follow) sets out the proposed membership.

#### **4.0 Calendar of meetings**

- 4.1 A Calendar of meetings for 2025/26 has already been published on the council's website and Council is invited to confirm the dates of its meetings as follows:

23 July 2025  
22 October 2025  
10 December 2025  
4 March 2026  
13 May 2026

#### **5.0 Outside Bodies**

- 5.1 Council appoints a significant number of Members to be representatives on a range of outside bodies. The appointment of such representatives is delegated to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 5.2 A review of Outside Bodies has been undertaken and a report follows later in the agenda.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

### **Financial**

No

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

No

### **Human Rights**

No

### **Legal**

No

### **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 None

### **Contact Officer**

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