

To: Annual Council
Date: 20 May 2026
Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)
Title of Report: Appointment of Committees for the Council Year 2026/2027

Summary and Recommendations	
Decision being taken:	For Full Council to appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the Council year 2026-27, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15)
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	A Well-Run Council.
Policy Framework:	None.

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1.	Approve the structure of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's Constitution and set out in <i>Appendix 1: Committee Structure 2026-2027</i> ;
2.	Approve the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on the Council's committees as outlined in the report and shown in <i>Appendix 2: Political Proportionalities on Council Committees 2026-2027</i> ;
3.	Appoint to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and the nominations made by political groups, as shown in <i>Appendix 3: Committee Nominations 2026-2027</i> ;
4.	Agree to appoint Councillor David Newman of Blackbird Leys Parish Council as the co-opted, non-voting member of the Standards Committee representing the four Parish Councils in Oxford until May 2027;
5.	Agree that all members of the Council will form the pool of members able to observe on appeals and some grievances panels in accordance with the Council's policies; and

6. **Appoint** one non-executive member to the Joint Oxfordshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as shown in *Appendix 3: Committee Nominations 2026-2027*.

Information Exempt from Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Committee Structure 2026-2027	No
Appendix 2	Political Proportionalities on Committees 2026-2027	No
Appendix 3	Committee Nominations 2026-2027	No

Introduction and background

1. This report invites Annual Council to appoint non-executive committees for the 2026-2027 council year in accordance with the Council procedures set out in the Constitution (Part 11.1 (i) and (j)).
2. The committee structure that Full Council is asked to approve is attached as Appendix 1. There are no changes to the committee structure from last year. The programme of committee meeting dates was agreed by Full Council on 26 January 2026.
3. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15) (“the Act”) provides a statutory basis for the allocation of committee seats to political groups based on principles of political proportionality. To enable this the Council has to provide for:
 - Political Groups to be formed and Group Leaders elected.
 - Seats on committees to be allocated to political groups in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
4. The political balance of the Council and its committees have been reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Appendix 2 (to be circulated in the Council Briefing Note) shows the political proportionalities on the committees the Council is asked to appoint to.
5. Appendix 3 (to be circulated in the Council Briefing Note) shows the nominations to the seats on committees.

Political Groups

6. Individual members are required to indicate a wish to be a member of a particular political group (or cease to be a member of a political group). Political groups comprise two or more members who have indicated that they wish to be a member of that group by signing a notice to the Proper Officer, Director of Law, Governance

and Strategy. The group secretaries of established groups will normally hold and coordinate the submission of these notices (commonly known as political group forms).

7. Each notice must include the name of the Group Leader and may include the name of the Deputy Group Leader.
8. Once political groups have been formed, changes to the membership and leadership of groups can be made by notice to the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy. A change of group leader must be notified by a majority of group members.

Political balance calculations

9. The Full Council has a duty to appoint to most committees using the principles of political proportionality as set out in the Act. These principles should be read hierarchically:
 - Where there is more than one political group, all seats must not be allocated to the same group.
 - The majority of seats must be allocated to the group with the majority on the Council.
 - When considering all seats available for allocation the total of those given to each group should match their representation on the Council overall.
 - The number of seats allocated to groups on each individual committee should match their representation on the Council overall.
10. Applying these principles may not result in a precise mathematical allocation of seats. In these cases, the allocations will be rounded up at 0.5 and above.
11. In the event that achieving political proportionality on all committees results in an overall over-allocation of seats to a particular group, the group with the over-allocation will be asked which seat(s) they wish to relinquish. Any such seats will then be reallocated to group(s) with an overall under-allocation of seats. This process may involve some discussion between political groups.
12. Non-grouped independent members are not treated as political groups but do affect overall proportionality. As such they should be offered any seats that remain unallocated once all groups have received their full proportional allocation of seats.
13. Appendix 2 shows the number of committee seats allocated to political groups for the 2026/2027 council year on the basis of the methods, calculations and conventions described in paragraphs 8-12. A total of 85 committee seats are included in political balance calculations.
14. The requirements of political proportionality do not apply to the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee, but the convention is that Full Council will apply the same principles when appointing to this committee. For simplicity, Full Council has agreed that political groups will be encouraged to nominate the same members to both licensing committees.

Appointments to Council Committees

15. Appendix 3 shows the nominations to committee seats made by political groups, in accordance with the seat allocations shown in Appendix 2. Full Council is recommended to appoint the nominated members to committees as set out in Appendix 3.
16. There is a standing item on Full Council agendas to enable political groups to propose any changes to their committee appointments, should they wish to do so.

Appeals and grievances

17. The Council's HR policies require that should an appeal be received against a decision to dismiss an employee, then a hearing should be observed by an elected member. The same applies to certain appeals within the Council's grievance procedure. A pool of members is required, and Full Council is recommended to agree, as in previous years, that this pool consists of all members of the Council.

Appointment to the Joint Oxfordshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18. Oxfordshire County Council invites the Council to appoint one non-executive member to sit on the Joint Oxfordshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which delivers the health scrutiny function for Oxfordshire. The member nominated by the controlling political group will be named in Appendix 3. Meetings have been scheduled on the following dates (all 10.00am):
 - 11 June 2026
 - 10 September 2026
 - 26 November 2026
 - 4 February 2027
 - 15 April 2027

Appointments to Scrutiny Working Groups and Review Groups

19. The Scrutiny Committee may establish informal standing working groups or review groups (otherwise known as 'task and finish' groups) and appoint members to them, normally one member from each political group on the Council. Membership of these bodies will be cross-party and can be drawn from all non-executive members, but the principles of political proportionality do not strictly apply. Nominations to these bodies will be handled separately, once those bodies have been established by the Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting on 9 June 2026.

Parish Council representative on the Standards Committee

20. The Council may appoint members of committees who are not members of the local authority. Such persons may be appointed because they can offer specialist knowledge, expertise or enthusiasm in the work of the committee or

because they represent sections of the local community that are relevant to the work of the committee.

21. The Council's Standards Committee membership provides for one co-opted (non-voting) member to represent the four Parish Councils in Oxford.
22. The Parish Councils may agree jointly on a single nominee, or they may submit individual nominations from each Parish Council. There are no rules concerning the qualifications, but common sense suggests that:
 - The appointment would be for the duration of the representative's term of office on the Parish Council; this is to provide a degree of consistency and continuity.
 - The appointment should not be for a dual-hatted City and Parish Councillor.
23. Only one Parish Council submitted a nomination, with no objections from the remaining Parish Councils:
 - Councillor David Newman, Blackbird Leys Parish Council
24. The Standards Committee on 17 March 2026 voted to recommend Councillor David Newman to the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year. Councillor Newman has been a member of the Parish Council since May 2023.

Alternative Options Considered

25. Full Council could choose not to agree the proposed political proportionality and committee nominations; however, this would not be appropriate. The political groups of the Council have been consulted on the political proportionality proposals and the relevant allocations to each of the Council's committees.
26. Full Council could choose not to appoint Councillor David Newman to the Standards Committee; however, it would be against the decision to recommend him taken by the committee in March 2026.
27. It would also leave the Parish Councils without a representative at the first meeting of the Standards Committee of the new municipal year in June 2026 and would also be against the wishes of the Standards Committee.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

28. There are no implications from the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) arising from this report. The committee allocations process is an annual requirement for all local authorities and any changes in response to LGR will be implemented following updates to legislation.

Financial implications

29. There are no financial issues to consider and the recommendations in this report do not have any financial impacts.

Legal issues

30. The legal issues including the Council's duty to appoint to committees in accordance with the provisions of S15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are contained within the report.

Level of risk

31. The risk of the Full Council not approving the recommendations is low as it is a legal requirement for all local authorities to approve the political proportionality of its committees following an election or change in the political groups which form part of the Council. The appointment to committees is set annually in May and the political groups are involved in allocating the seats to their members.

Equalities impact

32. No equalities issues have been identified in relation to this report. Political proportionality of the Council's committees ensures there is a balance of the political groups across all the committees established by the Full Council.

Report author	Jonathan Malton
Job title	Committee and Member Services Manager
Service area or department	Law, Governance and Strategy
Telephone	01865 602767
e-mail	jmalton@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None