

Public Document Pack

Notice of Meeting

West Surrey Shadow Authority Standards Committee

<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Monday, 2 November 2026 at 2.00 pm	Council Chamber. Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB	Democratic Services committeeservices@spelthorne.gov.uk

Membership

Name	Ward
Councillor Jane Austin	Waverley Eastern Villages
Councillor Chris Bateson	Staines
Councillor Harleen Boparai	Staines South & Ashford West
Councillor Steve Greentree	Knaphill & Goldsworth West
Councillor Jonathan Hulley	Thorpe, Longcross & Ottershaw
Councillor Nirmal Kang	Heatherside & Parkside
Councillor Sarbie Kang	Camberley West & Frimley
Councillor Scott Lewis	Woodham & New Haw
Councillor Carl Mann	Thorpe, Longcross & Ottershaw
Councillor Louise Morales	Woking South
Councillor Isabel Mullens	Egham
Councillor Rory O'Brien	Sunbury Common & Ashford Common
Councillor Joanne Shaw	Guildford East
Councillor Sally Shorthose	West Surrey Shadow Authority
Councillor Richard Wilson	Bagshot, Windlesham & Chobham Ward

MEETING SUMMONS

To the members of the Standards Committee:

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Standards Committee to be held on Monday, 2 November 2026 at 2.00 pm, for the transaction of the business set out in the following agenda.

Such meeting to be held in the Council Chamber. Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

For enquiries regarding this agenda contact: Democratic Services

committeeservices@spelthorne.gov.uk

Susan Sale
Interim Monitoring Officer
West Surrey Shadow Authority
Published: Date Not Specified

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AGENDA

Page nos.

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Minutes**

To follow

- 4. Schedule of Meetings**

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The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the results of the member survey on meeting times and availability,
2. Approve the principles in Appendix 2 to the report, that will be used to create the final timetable once the committee structure has been approved as part of the Constitution,
3. Note the expectation that, with the exception of any area-based committees, the meetings of the Council, Executive and Standing Committees of the Council will be conducted at the Civic Headquarters at Millmead House in Guildford; and
4. Recommend to the Shadow Authority that authority be delegated to the Executive for Legal and Governance, in consultation with

the Group Leaders, to approve the Schedule of Meetings 2027/28, once the committee structure has been approved.

5. Recruitment Process for Independent Persons **35 - 48**

The Committee is asked:

Authorise the Monitoring Officer to commence the recruitment of independent persons under s.28 of the Localism Act 2011 by way of external advertisement and assessment by the Standards Committee, supported by the Monitoring Officer.

6. Terms of Reference of Audit and Governance Committee

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

7. Budget Procedure Rules

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

8. Company Governance Protocol

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

9. Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

10. Council Procedure Rules

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

11. Finance Procedure Rules

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

12. Licensing Function

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

13. Post Vesting Day Scrutiny Arrangements

This item is to be considered at a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 29 October 2026 so report to follow.

14. Committee Forward Work Programme

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The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items. In attending any meeting, you are recognising that you may be filmed and consent to the live stream being broadcast online, and available for others to view. Members of the press/public may film or record proceedings, blog or tweet proceedings and take photographs providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting.

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The use of mobile devices, including for the purpose of recording or filming a meeting, is subject to no interruptions, distractions or interference being caused to any Council equipment or any general disturbance to proceedings. The Chairman may ask for mobile devices to be switched off in these circumstances.

Thank you for your co-operation.

West Surrey Shadow Authority		
Report title: Schedule of Meetings for West Surrey Council 2027/28.		
Report to: Standards Committee		
Date: 2 November 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder / Lead Councillor responsible: Cllr Victoria Kiehl, Executive Member for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services		
Report of: Susan Sale, Interim Monitoring Officer		
Report author(s): Rachel Whillis, Democratic Services Sub Workstream Lead.		
Wards affected: All		
Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: No		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: n/a	
Report cleared for publication by:		
People Workstream	N/A	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment complete	N/A	N/A
Implementation Team Leader (or their delegate)	N/A	N/A
S151 Officer	Vicky Radford	20 October 2026
Monitoring Officer	Susan Sale	21 October 2026
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	21 October 2026
Committee Chair consultation	Cllr Richard Wilson	21 October 2026
Head of Paid Service	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	21 October 2026

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** This report proposes the adoption of a set of principles for meeting scheduling for the new authority, including agreeing the day, time and scheduling pattern for each decision making body. The proposed principles take into account responses to the member availability survey, best practice principles, and equality considerations. The principles will be used to set the Schedule of Meetings 2027/28 once the final committee structure has been agreed.
- 1.2** The principles for scheduling meetings have been designed to allocate timings that best suit the nature of the meeting, for example, meetings that involve partner organisations will be scheduled during the day, whilst meetings that are expected to have higher levels of public engagement will be scheduled in the evening.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1** That the Standards Committee resolves to:
- 2.1.1** **Note the results of the member survey on meeting times and availability;**
- 2.1.2** **Approve the principles attached in Appendix 2 to this report, that will be used to create the final timetable once the committee structure has been approved as part of the Constitution;**
- 2.1.3** **Note the expectation that, with the exception of any area-based committees, the meetings of the Council, Executive and Standing Committees of the Council will be conducted at the Civic Headquarters at Millmead House in Guildford; and**
- 2.1.4** **Recommend to the Shadow Authority that authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Legal & Governance, in consultation with the Group Leaders, to approve the Schedule of Meetings 2027/28, once the committee structure has been approved.**

3 Reason(s) for recommendation:

- 3.1** Recommendation 2.1.1 – To ensure that members understand the range of views and needs expressed by respondents to the survey when they consider options for the scheduling of all meetings.
- 3.2** Recommendation 2.1.2 – To agree a set of principles that can inform proposals for the Schedule of Meetings once the committee structure has been agreed and provide a clear and transparent approach to this work.

- 3.3** Recommendation 2.1.3 – To provide a clear and consistent approach in relation to the location of meetings from 1 April 2027 onwards.
- 3.4** Recommendation 2.1.4 – To enable an efficient and timely decision, based upon the principles adopted, once the final committee structure is known. Early notification will help advise members of their suitability to nominate themselves to a committee.

4 Next steps

- 4.1** A report will be presented for consideration at the West Surrey Shadow Authority meeting on 19 November 2026, confirming the decision of the Standards Committee regarding the adopted principles, and seeking the appropriate delegation to agree the schedule.
- 4.2** Further work will be carried out following these meetings to draft a timetable that incorporates all of the Standing Committees of the Council, once the committee structure has been agreed, as part of the work on the Constitution for West Surrey Council.
- 4.3** It is proposed that the Executive Director for Legal & Governance will be authorised to agree the final Schedule of Meetings after consultation with the Group Leaders.
- 4.4** It is anticipated that a schedule of meetings for West Surrey Council for 27/28 will be confirmed by early February 2027.

5 Exemption from publication

- 5.1** None of this report is exempt from publication.

6 Background and Proposal

- 6.1** The Standards Committee is asked to consider proposals for the meeting schedule for 1 April 2027 onwards.
- 6.2** The Shadow Authority has previously considered the subject of meeting scheduling during the shadow period, at which time it was proposed that a comprehensive exercise be undertaken in September 2026 to develop a schedule of meetings for West Surrey Council that will run from 1 April 2027. This work was proposed to involve seeking the views of councillors, revisiting best practice principles, and take into account the increased number of committees that the authority will need to have in place once it has assumed full responsibility for council functions from the predecessor councils.
- 6.3** A survey with councillors was undertaken in September 2026 on their availability and further detail is included in section 7 of this report and Appendix 1.

- 6.4** It is anticipated that it will be necessary to schedule meetings at a range of times as it will not be possible to accommodate all meetings the authority will require at one time of a day. Furthermore, it is considered to be good practice to schedule meetings at a variety of times. This will enable groups to allocate members to meetings that best meets their other circumstances.
- 6.5** The work on the Constitution is ongoing, and a definitive list of committees has not yet been agreed by the Shadow Authority. It is not therefore possible to propose a final schedule of meetings. As a result, detailed information that is proposed to be used when drafting the Schedule of Meetings is set out in Appendix 2. The main principles are as follows:
- 6.5.1** Council meetings will be held on Wednesday evenings, in line with the schedule detailed in the Appendix. The Appendix also includes proposed dates for these meetings in 2027/28.
- 6.5.2** Executive meetings will be scheduled in the mornings of the second Tuesday of each month.
- 6.5.3** If the Access to Information Rules require public meetings for any Portfolio Holder decision making, these meetings will be aligned with meetings of the Executive.
- 6.5.4** Overview & Scrutiny meetings will be scheduled to align with the lead in times for Executive meetings (second or third week of a month where a meeting is scheduled).
- 6.5.5** Planning Committee meetings will be scheduled on Thursday evenings of the first week of the month. It is suggested that, if there is more than one Planning Committee agreed as part of the committee structure, committees are also held on the third Thursday of the month. Furthermore, if a strategic planning committee is established this will be scheduled during the daytime on a Thursday.
- 6.5.6** All other meetings are proposed to be scheduled on a periodic basis, in line with the proposals in Appendix 2.
- 6.5.7** The timetable has also been prepared with a view to accommodating training, political groups meetings, and associated meetings, within the timetable.
- 6.6** Members are reminded that the timetable can be reviewed prior to the schedule being set for 2028/29.
- 6.7** Research into practice has been undertaken and information arising from this work is set out in Appendix 3. The findings set out in the appendix have influenced the proposals set out throughout this report and the scheduling principles in Appendix 2.

Locations for Meetings

- 6.8** At its meeting on 12 October 2026, the Shadow Executive agreed to designate Millmead House, Guildford as the preferred Day 1 Civic Headquarters for West Surrey Council. The report proposing this decision stated that the chosen Civic Headquarters would need to accommodate Full Council meetings but did not specify whether meetings of the Executive and other committees would also be expected to meet at the Civic HQ.
- 6.9** It is now suggested that, with the exception of the committees that have an area-specific focus, from 1 April 2027 all meetings of the Full Council, Executive and the Standing Committees of the Council will be scheduled to meet at the designated Civic Headquarters in Guildford. This will provide a number of efficiencies and assist the options for ICT associated with democratic processes and the streaming of meetings, whilst also providing clarity for members, officers and residents on where decision making will take place. It is also expected to help reduce some challenges that have been presented during the shadow period by the use of different locations.

7 Consultation

- 7.1** All members of the Shadow Authority were invited to complete a survey seeking feedback on their availability for meetings and provide information on their preferences and any of the factors they felt should be considered when proposing the timetable of meetings. A total of 68 responses were received to the survey from West Surrey councillors, representing a 75.5% response rate.
- 7.2** The survey asked councillors to indicate whether they were available at 10am, 2pm, 5pm, and 7pm, Monday to Thursday, and 10am and 2pm on Fridays. These time slots were chosen with consideration of travel time across the authority area and how that could impact members working full or half days, school collection times, and ensuring there would be sufficient time to conduct a meeting's business.
- 7.3** The consultation responses have indicated a range of availability and preferences for meeting scheduling, as well as a variety of factors members have asked to be taken into consideration. The survey did not highlight a clear preferred day or time for meetings.
- 7.4** There were some recurring themes in responses, including references to work commitments and caring responsibilities influencing availability. Comments also referenced the vast geography of the area, consideration of meetings time, the length of meetings, and ensuring the timetable supports good decision making.
- 7.5** More detailed information on the survey responses is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

8 Key Risks

- 8.1** There is a risk that the timing and location of meetings may limit the ability of some members to attend, resulting in reduced participation or, in some cases, meetings not being quorate. Meeting arrangements may also affect attendance by residents, partners and other stakeholders. This risk will be mitigated by taking account of the member survey, accessibility, travel times, public participation and the requirements of different meeting types when preparing the final Schedule of Meetings.
- 8.2** The committee structure has not yet been finalised and may differ from the assumptions used to develop the proposed scheduling principles. This could result in insufficient capacity within the timetable, conflicting meetings or changes being required after publication. This risk will be mitigated by approving the principles rather than a final timetable at this stage and completing the Schedule of Meetings once the committee structure has been agreed.
- 8.3** The overall number and distribution of meetings may place pressure on the members, specialist officers, venues and technical resources required to support them. This could affect meeting resilience and the timely progression of business between committees, the Executive and Council. This risk will be mitigated through reasonable notice, coordination between meeting cycles, a balanced distribution of meetings and sufficient flexibility to arrange additional or revised meetings where necessary.

9 Options

- 9.1** Option 1 (recommended option): endorse the proposed principles that will be used for scheduling meetings and recommend that the Shadow Authority delegates authority to the Executive Director for Legal & Governance in consultation with the Group Leaders to finalise the Schedule of Meetings 2027/28.
- 9.2** Option 2: endorse the proposed principles that will be used for scheduling meetings, with any changes considered appropriate, and recommend that the Shadow Authority delegates authority to the Executive Director for Legal & Governance in consultation with the Group Leaders to finalise the Schedule of Meetings 2027/28. This is not the recommended option as the proposals have been designed to fit together within the schedule and an alteration to one aspect could affect other aspects of the schedule.
- 9.3** Option 3: endorse the proposed principles, with or without any changes considered appropriate, but agree not to delegate the approval of the final Schedule of Meetings and consequently require the final decision to be made by the Shadow Authority. This is not recommended as it will delay the final agreement of the Schedule of Meetings for 2027/28, thereby reducing the notice members have to make arrangements to attend meetings from 1 April 2027.

- 9.4** Option 4: endorse the proposed principles, with or without any changes considered appropriate, but proceed with alternative arrangements for meeting venues, for example by replicating the arrangements in the shadow period for all meetings of a committee to be held at a specified predecessor council building. This is not recommended for the reasons set out earlier in the report.

10 Issues for consideration

10.1 Financial Implications

- 10.1.1** There could be additional costs associated with holding meetings outside of regular working hours, such as building security, utilities costs, and staff overtime costs.
- 10.1.2** The timing of meetings could impact the cost of travel claims by members, for example the reimbursement of taxi fares in evenings when public transport is less readily available.
- 10.1.3** Holding meetings at Millmead House in Guildford may also generate additional officer travel expenses where staff are based elsewhere. These costs will need to be assessed under the applicable terms and travel expenses policies and reflected in the relevant budget.
- 10.1.4** The Members' Allowances Scheme identifies two types of child and dependants' allowances. Whilst childcare is linked to a fixed rate, specialist care can be reimbursed at cost upon production of receipts, which may result in higher rates depending upon when the provision of specialist care is typically more expensive.

10.2 Section 151 Officer Commentary

- 10.2.1** West Surrey will operate in a very challenging financial environment, with significant budgetary pressures and limited financial resources from 2027/28 (Vesting Day), coupled with increasing demand and costs of services, and reducing government funding. West Surrey Council will be increasingly reliant on Council Tax as the primary source of income.
- 10.2.2** Decisions made by the sovereign councils in West Surrey and the West Surrey Shadow Authority will need to consider the ongoing financial impact and ensure that expenditure does not exceed the resources available. It is vital that significant importance is placed on effective financial management and medium-term financial sustainability to deliver a balanced budget going forwards and protect service delivery.
- 10.2.3** Any costs associated with holding committee meetings needs to be quantified and anything over and above current costs will need to be factored into the budget.

10.3 Legal Implications

- 10.3.1** The timing of local authority committee meetings is not prescribed by statute and is a matter for each authority to determine, but the arrangements must be sufficient to enable the authority to discharge its functions effectively and in accordance with public law principles. █
- 10.3.2** Committee meetings should support timely decision making on key matters ahead of vesting day. █

10.4 Monitoring Officer Commentary

- 10.4.1** Having a scheduled of meetings established for the year provides clarity and certainty to enable councillors and officers to schedule their own diaries but also to provide notice for the public to engage with decision making meetings of West Surrey Council.
- 10.4.2** The Council Procedure Rules still provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that meetings may be cancelled for lack of business or in an emergency and also that additional meetings may be convened on proper notice where the business of the Council requires it.

10.5 People/Human Resources Implications

- 10.5.1** The timing, frequency and location of meetings will affect the working arrangements of officers required to attend, support and advise those meetings. This includes officers from Democratic Services and other services who may be required to attend outside their usual working hours.
- 10.5.2** Evening meetings may require appropriate arrangements for working hours, overtime or time off in lieu. When allocating staff, consideration should also be given to caring responsibilities, flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments. Arrangements should take account of any additional travel time associated with attending the meeting venue and allow for appropriate breaks and rest between working commitments.
- 10.5.3** Democratic Services officers and other officers required to support meetings are not all currently based at Millmead House, Guildford. Holding meetings there may therefore require travel away from their normal work base, with implications for travel time, staff availability and travel expenses. Any entitlement to reimbursement, including where officers travel directly from home rather than from their normal work base, will need to be assessed against the applicable contractual terms and travel expenses policies, taking account of their normal home-to-work journey where required.
- 10.5.4** The designation of Millmead as the meeting venue does not, in itself, change officers' contractual work bases. Practical arrangements should

also address safe travel, public transport availability, lone working, building security and access to facilities and technical support.

- 10.5.5** The overall number and distribution of meetings will determine the officer resource required and could place pressure on small specialist teams where meetings are concentrated or require consecutive evening commitments. Regular requirements to work outside normal hours or travel significant distances may also affect the accessibility and attractiveness of meeting support roles for existing and prospective employees. Reasonable notice and a balanced distribution of meetings will help the council manage resources effectively, support recruitment and retention, maintain resilience and allocate evening work fairly.

10.6 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.6.1** The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 10.6.2** The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 10.6.3** An initial Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Tool has been used to identify potential impacts (Appendix 4). This indicates that the various proposals set out within this report could potentially have an adverse impact on any people with a particular protected characteristic. A summary of the potential areas for consideration can be found below.
- 10.6.4** Holding meetings during the daytime will potentially impact on councillors of working age and be a barrier to them being able to attend. However, evening meetings could also impact on older people who may have concerns about travelling at night and there could be a perception of increased health and safety risks.
- 10.6.5** Residents may experience a similar impact with regards to ability to attend meetings in the working day and staff may also share concerns about travel and personal safety for attendance at evening meetings.
- 10.6.6** There could be an impact on residents, councillors and staff with disabilities with regards to meetings being held in the evening with

some not wanting to have to travel at night or not having access to support services to enable them to attend and participate in an evening meeting.

10.6.7 There are also considerations to be made regarding religion and belief as evening meetings could potentially have an impact on Muslim councillors during Ramadan. It is not proposed to schedule meetings on Fridays, therefore avoiding any impact on Muslim councillors or residents.

10.6.8 Personal safety is another area that could have an impact and in particular women could potentially be impacted as some may feel unsafe attending a meeting taking place in the evening including the associated travel to and from the meeting. This could also be applied to pregnant and/or breastfeeding mothers.

10.6.9 The approach proposed is to schedule meetings at a variety of times on different days, thereby mitigating the impact on any particular group.

10.6.10 The decision to hold meetings at the Civic Headquarters could impact specific groups. In particular, this decision could impact officers or residents with a disability and their ability to attend public meetings in person.

10.7 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

10.7.1 The timing of meetings could impact members' options in relation to opting to use sustainable forms of transport.

10.8 Stakeholders Implications

10.8.1 The principles for meeting schedule have been designed with residents' and stakeholders' needs as a key consideration. For example, it is proposed to hold Planning Committee meetings, which typically see higher levels of community engagement, in the evenings. Conversely, it is proposed to hold Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, which are often attended by partner organisations and other stakeholders, during the working day.

10.8.2 It is recognised that Town and Parish councils' meetings are held in the evening and any decisions to hold West Surrey meetings in the evenings could impact dual-hatted councillors' ability to attend meetings of both authorities.

11 Overview & Scrutiny Comments

11.1 Not applicable.

12 List of Appendices

- 12.1** Appendix 1- summary of the outcomes of the member survey on meeting time availability.
- 12.2** Appendix 2 – Proposed Principles for scheduling of West Surrey Council meetings.
- 12.3** Appendix 3 – Background Research and Best Practice Case Studies
- 12.4** Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment screening tool.
- 13 List of Background papers**
- 13.1** None

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Responses to the Member Survey on the 2027/28 Schedule of Meetings

Background

All members of West Surrey Council were invited complete a survey seeking their thoughts and availabilities to attend meetings of the new authority. The survey was open for a two-week period and a total of 68 responses were received, representing a 75.5% response rate.

Day By Day Availability

Members were asked to select from a list of four proposed meeting start times, all the times on each weekday that they could make themselves available to attend a meeting. The table below summarises how many members said that they could be available for the times and days listed:

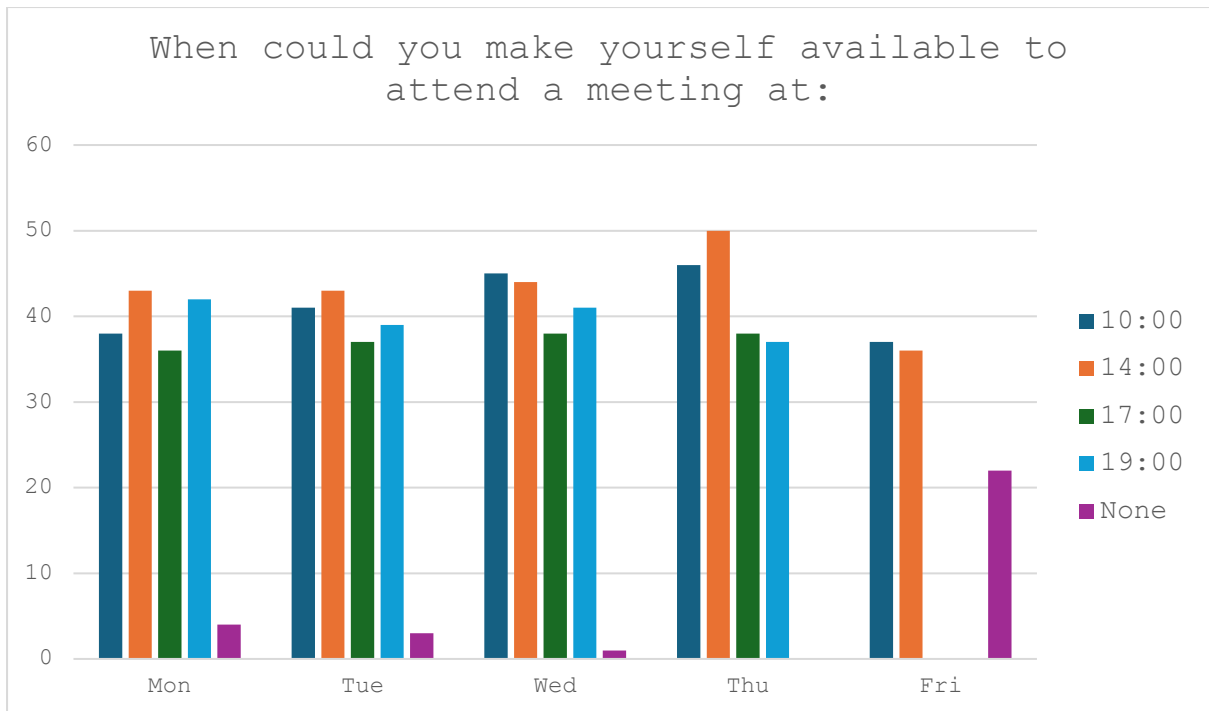
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total
10:00	38	41	45	46	37	207
14:00	43	43	44	50	36	216
17:00	36	37	38	38	-	149
19:00	42	39	41	37	-	159
Total	159	160	168	171	73	
None of the above	4	3	1	0	22	

* 17:00 and 19:00 on a Friday were not presented to members as an option to select.

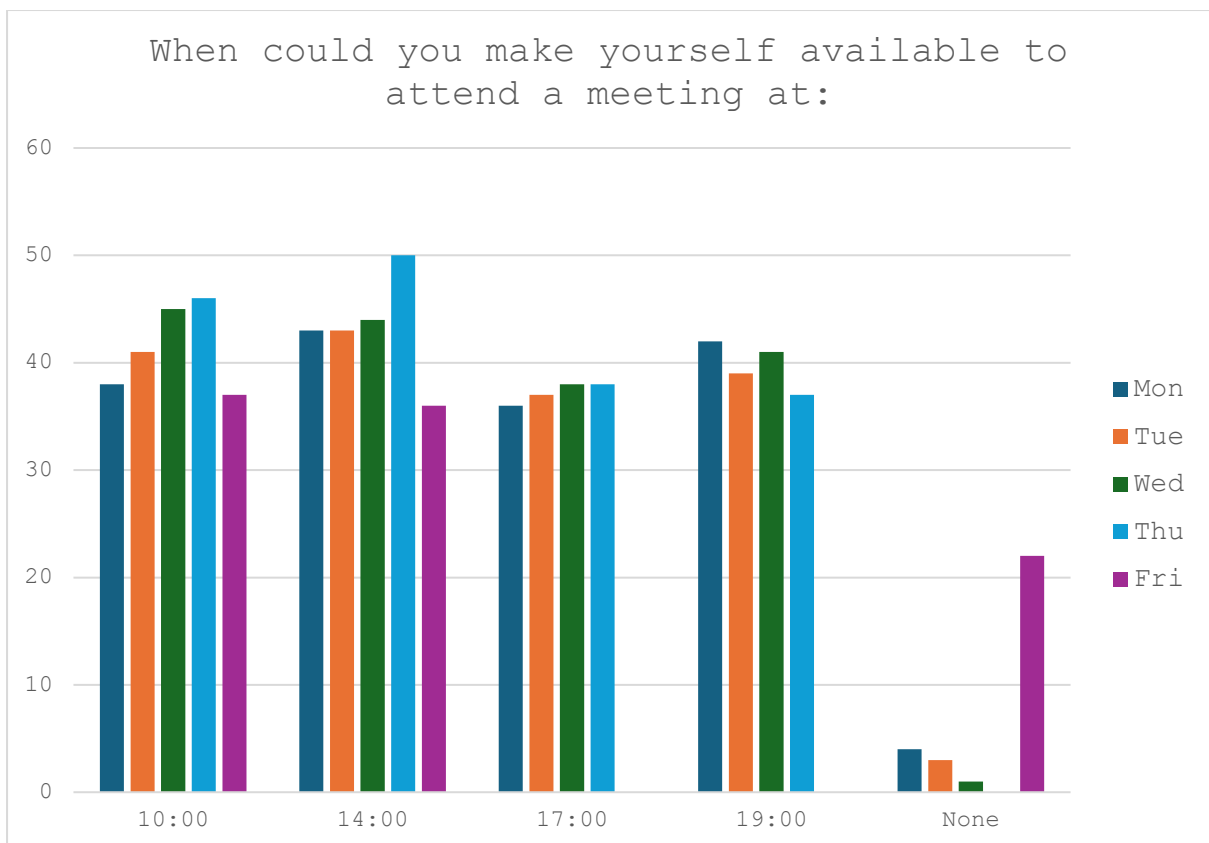
The date and time selected by the most members was 14:00 on a Thursday. The least selected were 17:00 on a Monday and 14:00 on a Friday. The day which most members indicated that they could be available at some point was Thursday closely followed by Wednesday.

The time that the most members indicated that they could be available at any day of the week was 14:00. It is worth noting that later time slots on a Friday were not provided as options for members to vote for. If only responses on the first four weekdays are considered, 14:00 remained the most popular time (180 responses) then 10:00 (170 responses).

The graph below presents the information in the table, grouping the number of responses received for each time, by each day. This illustrates that across three weekdays 14:00 was the preferred meeting time, except for Monday and Friday where 10:00 was the most preferred. The greatest margin between two selected times was between 10:00 and 17:00 on Thursday (8 responses), showing a stronger preference for daytime meetings on a Thursday compared to other times on a Thursday, and other days of the week.



The graph below presents the information in the table, grouping the number of responses received for each day, by the start times presented. Thursday was the most selected day for the earliest three meeting times provided, except for 19:00 where Monday was the most selected day. A slight preference for 10:00 and 14:00 meeting start times can also be observed.



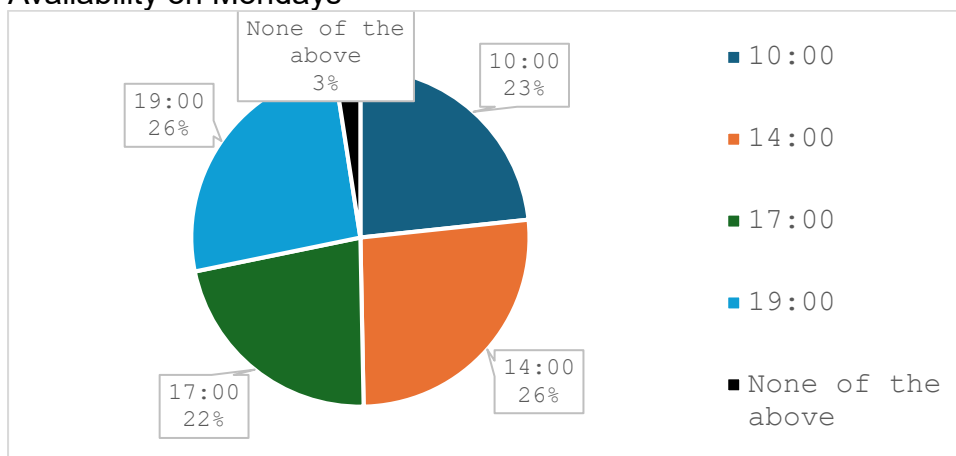
Members were invited to select all of the times that they would attend a meeting on each weekday. Below is a table of the amount of times were a member indicated that they could only attend one time in a particular day.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00	1	4	2	1	10 (14.71%)
14:00	0	1	1	1	9 (13.24%)
17:00	0	0	1	0	
19:00	11 (16.12%)	9 (13.24%)	12 (17.65%)	9 (13.24%)	

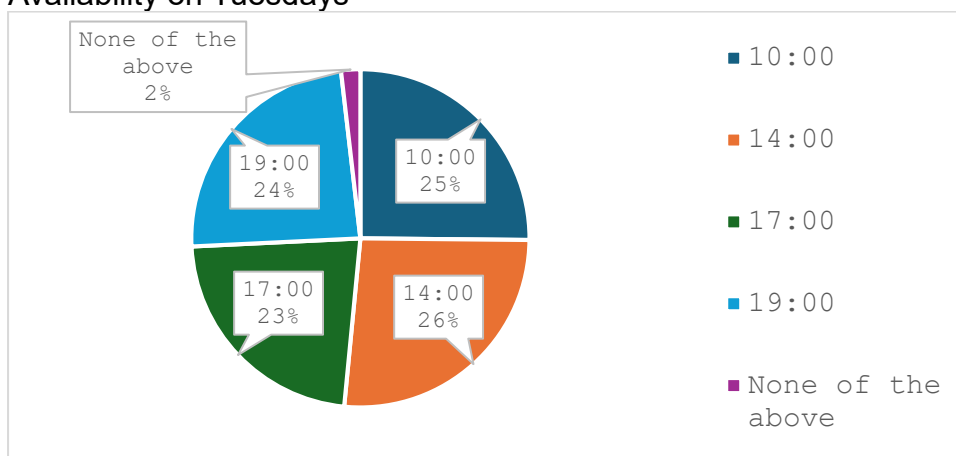
5 members indicated that 19:00 was the only time they could do on each day of the week.

Below is a breakdown of the availability for each day of the week, split by the four meeting times proposed and how many people could attend none of the times presented:

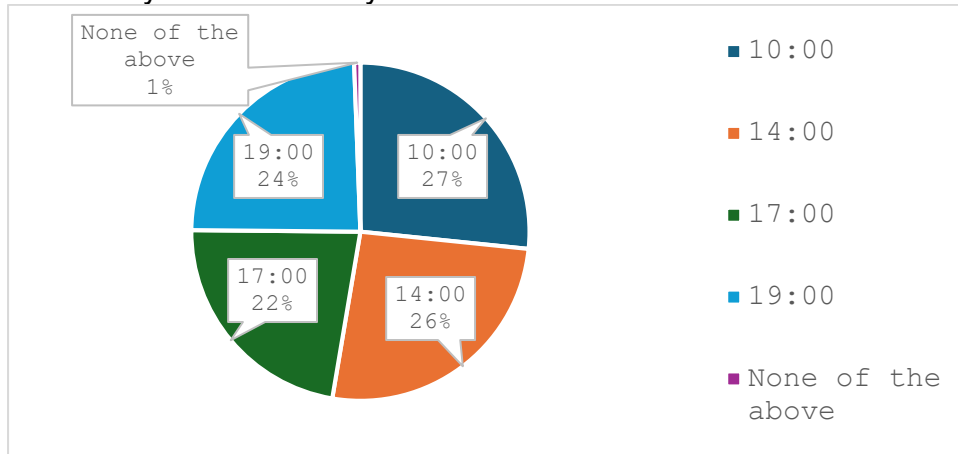
Availability on Mondays



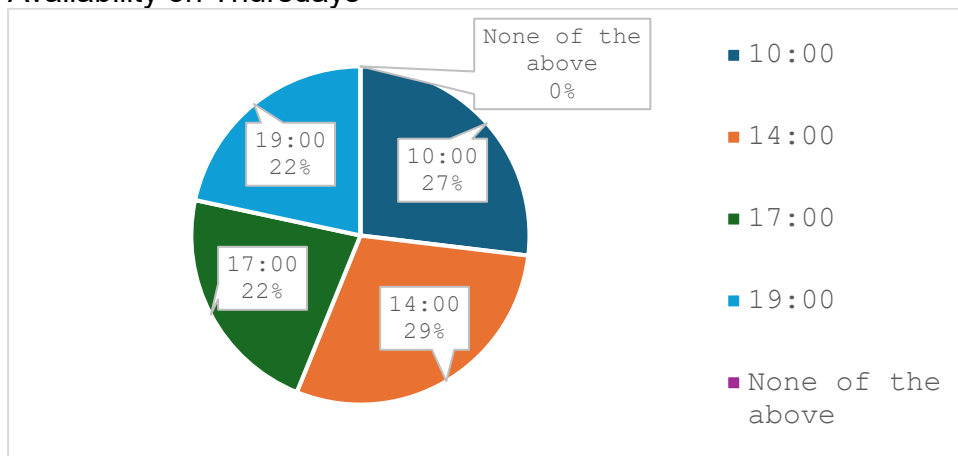
Availability on Tuesdays



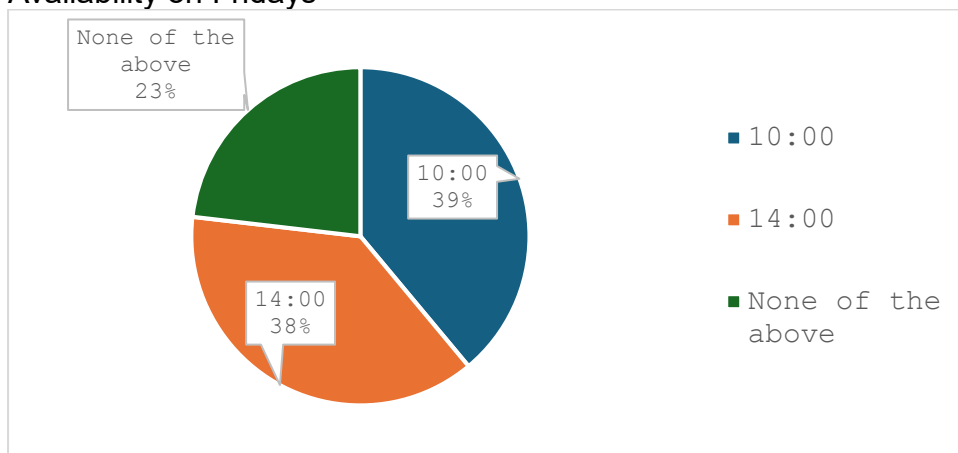
Availability on Wednesdays



Availability on Thursdays



Availability on Fridays



Written Responses

Members were asked the question; “*Thinking about the list of suggested principles, are there any other factors the council should consider when scheduling meetings?*”. Of the responses received to this question:

- 12 members noted the vast geography of the new council, how public transportation would be a limitation for some councillors, or lengthy travel times would affect their ability to stay late into the night for meetings that lasted beyond 10pm;
- 9 members raised a concern about the safety of staff travelling to and from the offices in winter months, or on wet or frosty roads during the night time, and that this should be considered when deciding when to host meetings;
- 6 members questioned the ability of members to make informed decisions at an evening meeting, particularly if after a full day of work.
- 6 members requested that the size of the meetings be considered when booking them, that shorter meetings are held online or during less popular hours, requesting firm end times for evening meetings, or a vote required to continue beyond 10pm, scheduling breaks in between lengthy meetings, and arranging substantive meetings during the day or at a more convenient time for members and officers;
- 5 members supported the use of online or hybrid meetings, particularly for smaller meetings, non-committee meetings, or meetings where it was not a necessity for all members to be present in the same room;
- 5 members requested a variation to meeting times, such as meetings being hosted during the day during winter months, and avoiding a situation where multiple in person meetings are held in the same week in the council offices;
- 5 members noted the need to include officer resource and availability in the setup of meetings, noting the cost incurred for officers to deliver evening meetings and their improved availability during the working day.

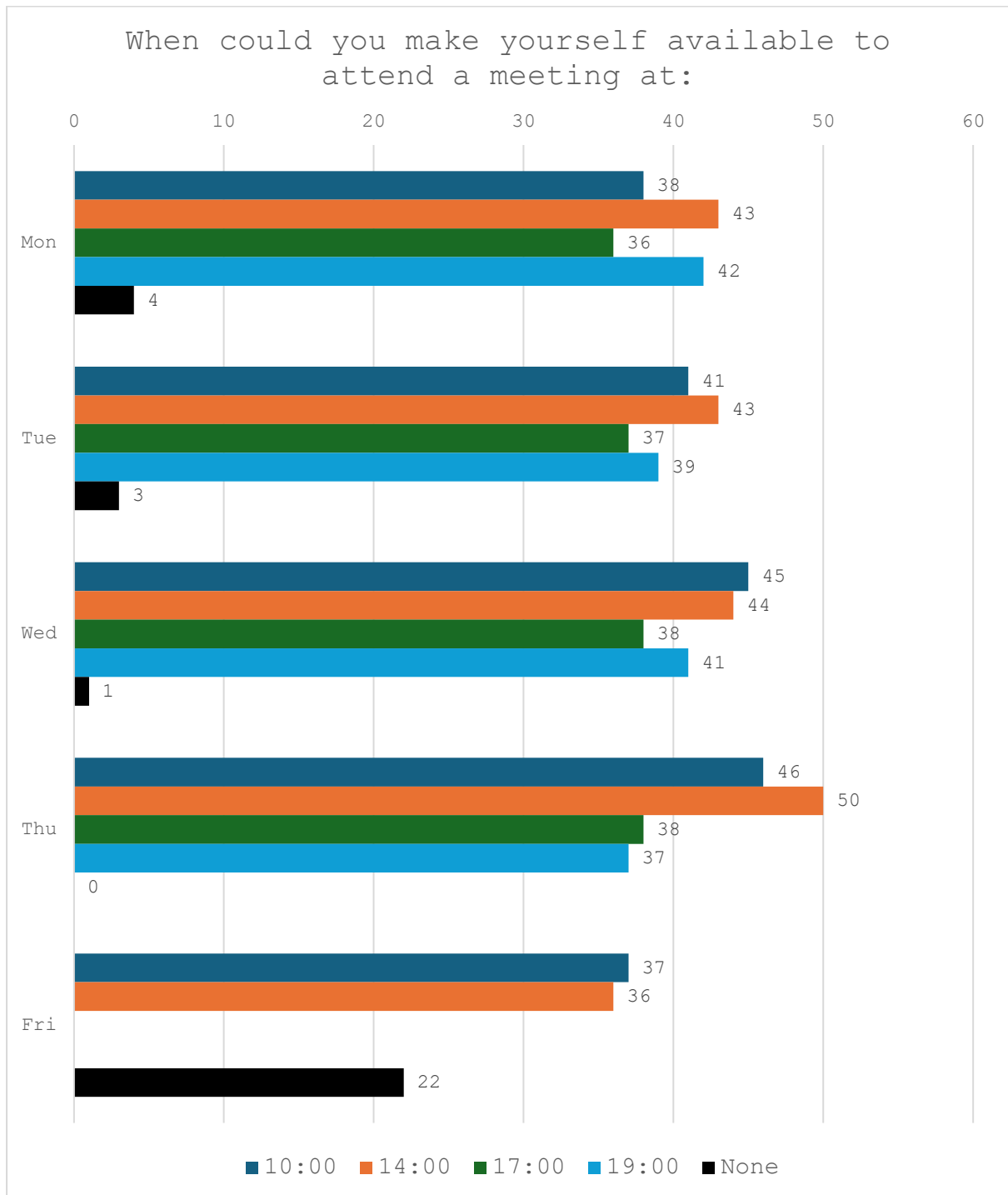
Members were asked the question; *“Please provide any further information on your availability and preference for meeting times that you think would be helpful for us to know.”* Of the responses received to this question:

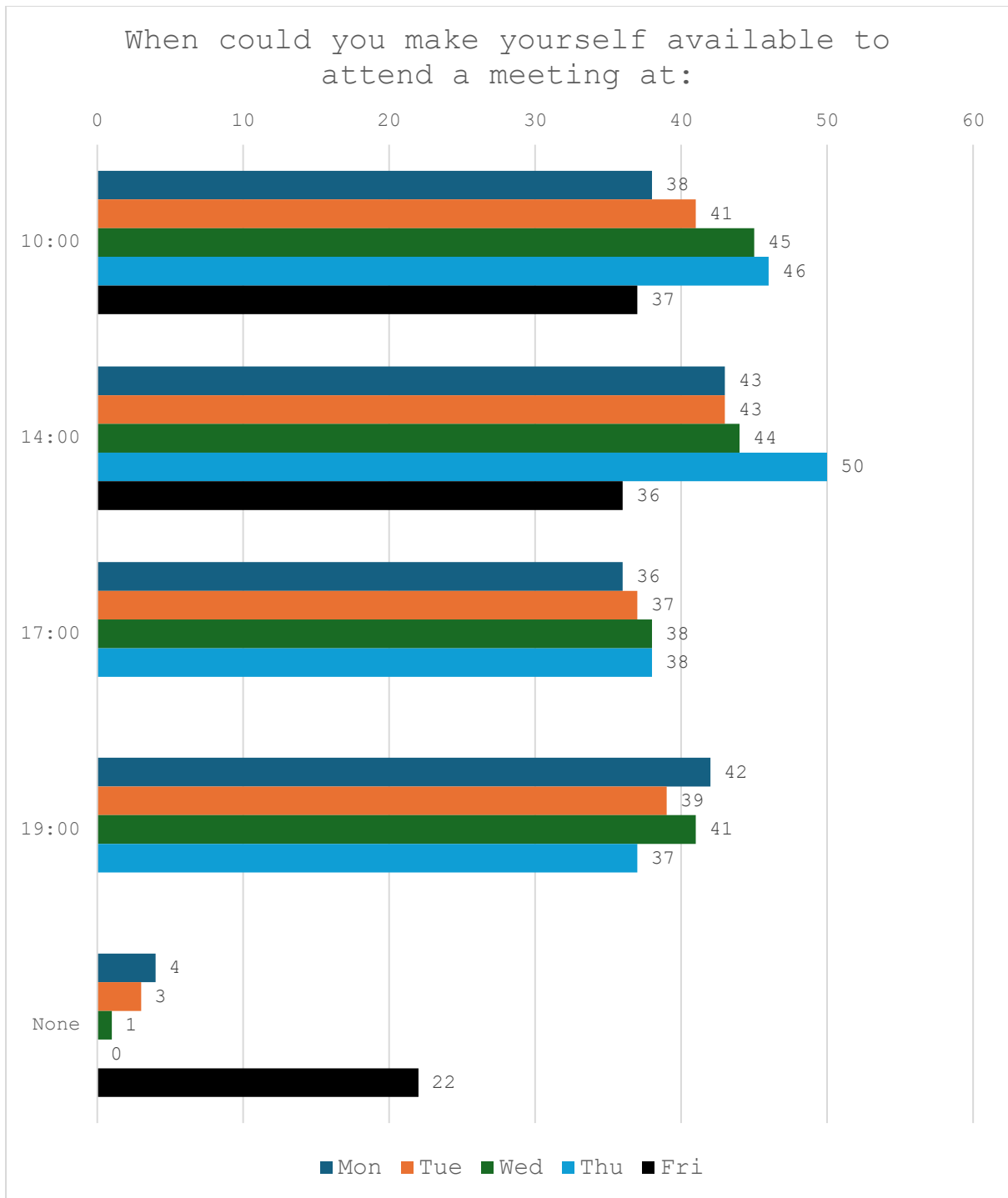
- 9 members indicated a preference for daytime meetings
- 7 members indicated a preference for evening meetings
- 6 members stressed that their employment would impact their availability to attend meetings
- 4 members stated that their parental or caring duties would impact their availability to attend meetings

Members were asked the question *“Do you have any other comments you would like us to take into account when proposing the times for meetings?”*. Of the responses received to this question:

- 6 members stressed the need for flexibility and for meetings to be hosted at a variety of times and days to accommodate as many members as possible
- 5 members indicated a preference for daytime meetings.
- 4 members requested a time limit on meetings and debates to prevent late night travel, or risk leaving a meeting early to catch public transport;
- 3 members stated that they would struggle to make the times that they could not attend, and that their ability to serve as a councillor would be hindered if their preferred times were not implemented.

Large Print Graphs





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Meeting Schedule Principles

In developing a meeting calendar for the new authority, the aim is to establish arrangements that support informed decision-making, maximise attendance and participation, and make best use of members' and officers' time. The following principles and considerations have been taken into account when forming these proposals:

- Given the size of West Surrey, considerations must be given to travel times for meetings. It is proposed that no meeting should take place before 10am. Likewise evening meetings should have a 3 hour limit.
- Different meeting types may be better suited to different times of day and a single approach may not be appropriate for all meetings. For example, Licensing sub-committee are usually daytime meetings to aid external attendees, while Planning Committees, which generally have higher community engagement levels, usually take place in the evening to aid public attendance.
- Meetings which typically have longer agendas may be better suited to daytime to ensure business can be concluded the same day.
- Meeting arrangements should provide a level of consistency for all participants.
- Reasonable accommodations relating to health, accessibility or religious observance will be addressed through meeting-specific arrangements where required.
- Where possible, scheduling committee meeting in the school holidays, as set out by the local authority, will be avoided.

It is proposed to schedule meetings on the following basis:

- All meetings will have a regular scheduled time and day.
- Overview & Scrutiny meetings will be scheduled during the daytime to assist with a wide range of witnesses attend when required.
- Planning meetings will be scheduled in the evening to support public engagement. If a decision is made to have a separate strategic planning committees and development planning committees, the strategic meetings could be held in the daytime and development meetings in the evening.
- Licensing Sub Committee meetings will held during the daytime. As Licensing Sub Committee meetings are convened in response to contested licensing applications made or to requests for reviews of licenses and often need to be held within a short timescale, the fourth Wednesday morning of every month will be kept free to accommodate these meetings where possible.
- Some committees such as Employment Committee are expected to meet more in this inaugural year, but meetings may reduce in the second or third year.
- In addition to the formal committees, the schedule will need to accommodate member development sessions, meetings of working groups and panels. It is proposed to allocate time within a week for these sessions and meetings.

- There are also meetings that affect smaller numbers of councillors such as the Pension Committee, Police & Crime Panel and the Joint Waste Collection Services Committee. It is proposed to keep a day of the week free for such meetings. As these are likely to involve East Surrey councillors, similar arrangements will be made for the East Surrey Schedule of Meetings 2027/28.

Proposals for scheduling Council, Executive and committee meetings:

Meeting	Day	Time	Schedule
Full Council	Wednesday	Evening – 7pm	Meetings scheduled on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 May 2027 (annual meeting) • 14 July 2027 • 20 October 2027 • 15 December 2027 • 16 February 2028 (budget meeting) <i>[23 February 2028 – reserve for budget]</i> • 22 March 2028
Executive	Tuesday	10am	Second Tuesday of every month:
Portfolio Holder (TBC)	Tuesday	To follow any Executive meetings	This is subject to whether there will be individual decision making and if this will happen in public.
Planning	Thursday	Strategic - daytime Development - Evening	First and third Thursday of every month
Licensing	Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday	2pm	Four times a year
Licensing Sub	Dates held on Wednesday morning in fourth week	Morning	Unscheduled. Possible clash with reserve budget day.
Overview & Scrutiny	Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday	Daytime – 2pm	Likely to be multiple committees timetabled for similar time to feed into Executive, possibly second/ third week of month. Daytime proposed due to role of witnesses.

Audit & Governance	Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday	Daytime – 2pm	Quarterly – speak to finance re audit deadlines.
Standards	Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday	Daytime – 2pm	Quarterly
Constitution (possibly a sub-committee or working group)	Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday	Evening if Working Group	Quarterly. To be scheduled to feed into Standards Committee and/ or Council as necessary. It could be a working group, therefore online.
Employment	Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday	Daytime - afternoons	Every 2 months (for first year)
Police & Crime Panel	Monday	Daytime	Currently meets 6x per year. Only until 2028. Budget meeting needed for February. Complaints sub committee currently established.
Joint Waste Collection Services Committee	Monday	Daytime	Four times a year
Neighbourhood Committees	To be confirmed; possibly Tuesdays.	Evening	To be confirmed

Proposals for scheduling meetings by the day of week and time:

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	Keep free for 'other' meetings	Keep free for 'other' meetings	Keep free for Group meetings and Member training
Tuesday	Executive in the second week of the month; PFH meetings to follow First, third and fourth week free for scheduling	Avoid scheduling in second week of the month (Executive and PFH meetings) First, third and fourth week free for scheduling	Free for scheduling
Wednesday	Weeks 1 to 3 free for scheduling Fourth Wednesday of every Wed kept free for Licensing Sub	Free for scheduling	Primarily reserved for Council meetings
Thursday	Free for scheduling	Free for scheduling	Planning meetings in the first and third week of the month Second and fourth week free for scheduling
Friday	Keep free for Member training	Avoid scheduling	

Background research and best practice case studies

This appendix sets out research and current thought in this area, including both barriers to participation and examples of good practice, to identify principles that encourage inclusivity for elected representatives and potential candidates.

Although the amount of research in this area is surprisingly modest, useful practice, thought and guidance does exist from which some important general principles can be drawn. There is also helpful consideration, and application, of the issues in Welsh local authorities where [regulations](#) and associated [statutory guidance](#) has been issued, to which (Welsh) local authorities must have regard in respect of the times and intervals at which meetings of a local authority are held.

Examples of research and best practice has also been drawn from those unitary authorities created since 2020 as part of local government change programmes, namely Buckinghamshire, North Northamptonshire, West Northamptonshire, Cumberland, Westmorland & Furness, North Yorkshire, and Somerset.

Groups with the potential to be negatively impacted by meeting start times

1. **Women in local government** - In 2017 a report was published in England – [The Final Report of the Local Government Commission by the Fawcett Society](#) - looking at barriers to the participation of women in local government and amongst its findings said that:

“Many women councillors face significant barriers from the inflexibility of meeting times, and almost two thirds of women councillors feel that changing this will bring more women in....”
2. **People with caring responsibilities in local government** - People with caring responsibilities also face barriers to meeting attendance where they have to arrange care for others in their place.
3. **People with disabilities in local government** - While accessibility, not for consideration in this report, is key to inclusion for those councillors with a physical disability, the Fawcett report, when considering timings of meetings refers to those councillors who have “*chronic or fluctuating conditions such as Crohn’s disease or ME*” and found that for these people “*the inflexibility of meeting times was an issue*”.
4. In its official [LGA Toolkit for Disabled Councillors](#), the Association also emphasises that rigid start times penalise councillors managing chronic, variable, or energy-limiting health conditions.
5. **People in paid employment in local government** - Many councillors will undertake their public duties alongside paid employment, and this balance can be difficult where meeting times are not carefully considered, for example some councillors may find it difficult to attend daytime meetings.

Potential mitigations

6. **Support to attend meetings for those in employment** - Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 entitles councillors to time off for public duties but in practice this will often require leave to be booked, and some employers are more sympathetic to this requirement than others.
7. **Consultation and flexibility** - The Fawcett and the LGA toolkit both recommend that councils should consult on meeting times before agreeing any schedule and that this schedule should be properly tailored to take into account the survey results. In Wales, this is already included in statutory guidance with councils being expected to survey their councillors at least once per term, shortly after each election, to assess their preferences and be committed to act on the conclusions.
8. **Further considerations** - In 2012, a Parliamentary Select Committee (Communities and Local Government) heard evidence from the Chair of a previous commission on a similar topic of Councillor representation. While the evidence was some time ago, it is still relevant. Dame Jane Roberts said of that Commission:

“We recommended that councils should adopt modern business and meeting processes which seek to remove potential barriers to participation. These should include accessible meeting times (not necessarily in the day, and with specified end times), efficient chairing, the use of modern technology where appropriate, support for childcare, and concise paperwork. We felt strongly that councillors should be able to work in a variety of other employments, have domestic commitments, and be a councillor”
9. These recommendations show that there are various considerations and mitigations that should be considered to ensure that local government is as inclusive as possible, with meeting times forming part of that picture.
10. One matter not considered in this report but widely supported as key to inclusivity is the ability of councils to hold hybrid meetings – the government has indicated that it intends to legislate for such meetings but as yet has not and those committees convened under the powers of the Local Government Act 1972 must meet in-person.
11. Equalities information should also be considered in order that the needs of not only current councillors, but prospective candidates and members of the public are also taken into account.
12. A variety of meeting times is likely to be most beneficial taking into account the types of meetings, numbers and types of attendees (including councillors, officers and witnesses) and the volume of democratic meetings for the whole authority.
13. Best practice also suggests that a guillotine be provided for in the council’s constitution and adhered to in meetings.

14. Practically, any consultation and proper consideration of the results, will take time to undertake and would lend itself more reasonably to the agreement of times for the meetings post vesting day (1 April 2027).
15. In addition, a deferred decision on meeting times would allow for a clearer picture on hybrid meetings to emerge as this could influence decision making on the matter.

The government has said that:

“The government is of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices.

We have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows.”

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Equality Impact Assessment Screening tool

Sense checking if a full EIA is required and to evidence due regard under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).



Purpose and when to use this tool

Use this tool to identify whether a decision could affect people with protected characteristics and whether you therefore need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

An Equality Impact Assessment is a structured analysis of how a proposal might affect different people with protected characteristics in different ways. It enables decision-makers to consider potential positive and negative impacts, identify mitigations, and maximise opportunities to advance equality. Completing and using EIAs is part of evidencing due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which is part of the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Under the PSED, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a [protected characteristic](#) and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a [protected characteristic](#) and those who do not.

Do I need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment?

This tool will help you decide whether a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is needed. It will also enable you to evidence that you have paid “due regard” to the different protected characteristics when making your decision, including when you have decided a full EIA is not needed.

Key to determining whether an EIA is required is whether any aspect of a new policy, function or service, or changes to an existing one, will have an impact on residents, service users or staff sharing protected characteristics. If it will, then it is likely that an EIA will need to be completed

If proposals could impact residents or staff across one or both new authorities, it is highly likely an EIA will be needed. Below are examples that could trigger the need for a full EIA – this is not an exhaustive list:

- **Service changes affecting residents’ experience, including:**



- Approach to service transition (disaggregation, aggregation, hosting, etc)
- Changes to eligibility, access or delivery models arising from LGR
- Budget setting for the new unitary councils
- Other policy and strategic choices affecting communities
- **Workforce and organisational changes, which could include:**
 - TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) to the new unitary councils
 - Changes to working practices, locations or terms and conditions of employment
- **Programme implementation, which could include:**
 - Major procurement and contract decisions
 - Decisions on estate, ie buildings owned across all 12 sovereign councils

How to complete this screening tool

Complete the table in this document to assist you in thinking about potential equality impacts on the protected characteristics listed. Completing the table should help you decide if a full EIA is needed.

When completing this screening tool, consider:

1. What is changing and why.
2. Whether the proposal affect residents, service users, carers, staff or partners (access, eligibility, locations, channels, charges, terms, workforce changes)?
3. If there are different effects on people who share a protected characteristic (including indirect impacts)?
4. If there is limited or no evidence to rule out differential impact?
5. How each protected characteristic might be affected, using the table.
6. What evidence exists and any known gaps.
7. What your conclusion and next steps are (e.g. complete full EIA, gather more evidence, consult, record an EIA is not needed and why).

What kinds of impact should I consider?

Direct and indirect impacts: A rule that applies to everyone can still disadvantage some groups (indirect discrimination). Consider delivery channels (e.g. digital-only), eligibility thresholds, charging, opening hours, site moves, language/communication, and procurement/commissioning.



Intersectional and cumulative impacts: People may share more than one characteristic (e.g. older disabled women). Consider how impacts might combine or build up across multiple changes.

Positive, neutral, negative: Capture benefits as well as risks. Where there are risks, identify proportionate mitigations and how you will monitor them.

What next?

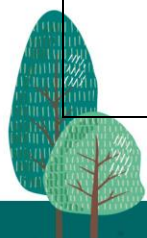
If the decision is made that a full EIA needs to be completed, you can proceed to the Template document, which can be found alongside this document and the [EIA Guidance](#) on the website. This will outline the steps you need to take to complete the EIA.

If you decide not to complete an EIA, you must record this. This might take the form of minutes of a meeting, an internal email or a record in a service plan. Most importantly, it must make clear why you have concluded that an EIA is unnecessary. If you are unsure whether a full EIA is needed or not, contact devolutionandlgr.pmo@surreycc.gov.uk for further support.

Impact of the proposals on residents, service users and staff with protected characteristics

Title of proposal	Description (what is changing and why)
Schedule of Meetings 2027/28	Scheduling of meetings for 2027/28. Includes

Protected characteristics	Potentially impacted (Yes/No/Unsure)	Additional details (evidence, risks, proposed mitigations, next steps – gather more evidence, consult, conduct full EIA)
Age – including younger and older people (e.g. are specific age groups excluded? Would the same process affect age groups in different ways?)	Yes	Younger people are more likely to be able to attend evening meetings due to potentially having work commitments in the daytime. Older people may be less keen to attend meetings in the evening due to travel concerns at night



		and/or health and safety risks.
Disability- including hearing and/or visual impairments, physical disability, neurodevelopmental impairments, and long-term conditions (e.g. are information/questionnaires/consent forms available in different formats upon request?)	Yes	Dependent on the disability, people may find attendance easier or more challenging at different times of the day dependent on their needs and requirements.
Gender Reassignment (e.g. Is confidentiality of the resident or staff member maintained?)	No	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity (e.g. are services suitable and accessible for pregnant and/or breastfeeding women?)	Yes	Pregnant women may be reluctant to attend meetings at night due to safety concerns.
Race- including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality (e.g. any specific needs identified for certain groups? Are interpretation and translation services required?)	No	N/A
Religion & Belief (e.g. are locations affected by closures or restrictions? Is there equal access to the service or potential barriers to participation?)	Yes	There is a potential for Muslim councillors to be impacted by meetings taking place on Fridays or during Ramadan.
Sex (e.g. is gender neutral language used in the way the policy or information leaflet is written? Are there different access requirements?)	Yes	There may be a reluctance for women and girls to want to attend evening meetings due to personal safety concerns when travelling at night.
Sexual orientation (e.g. is inclusive language used? Are there different access rates?)	No	N/A
Marital status/civil partnership (e.g. would there be any difference because the individual is/is not married/in a civil partnership?)	No	N/A

Have you identified any potential direct or indirect impacts on people with protected characteristics? If yes, you will need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment.

No – although potential impacts have been identified, it is felt that the full Equality Impact Assessment should be undertaken once the final timetable is proposed, at which point it will be possible to identify the extent of any impact and whether the anticipated mitigations will reduce any such impact.



If 'No' please provide an explanation as to why an EIA is not required:

The screening assessment has shown that there are potential impacts but it is suggested that a full EIA should be undertaken when the 2027/28 timetable can be viewed in its entirety.

Sign-off:

Date:



West Surrey Shadow Authority		
Report title: Recruitment process for appointment of Independent Person(s)		
Report to: West Surrey Standards Committee		
Date: 2 November 2026		
Executive Portfolio Holder: Councillor Victoria Kiehl, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Democracy and Corporate Services		
Report of Statutory Officer: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (interim)		
Report author(s): Arabella Davies, Work Stream Lead for Constitution and Shadow Authority		
Wards affected: All		
Ward councillors informed: No		
Exempt from publication: Yes/No/Partially		
Key Decision: No	If a Key Decision, date registered on Forward Plan: Not Applicable	
Report cleared for publication by:		
People Workstream	Shella Smith	15 October 2026
Equalities Impact Assessment complete	N/A	N/A
Implementation Team Leader (or their delegate)	N/A	N/A
S151 Officer	Susan Sale on behalf of Vicky Radford	21 October 2026
Monitoring Officer	Susan Sale	21 October 2026
Executive Portfolio Holder consultation	Councillor Victoria Kiehl	21 October 2026
Committee Chair consultation	Councillor Richard Wilson	21 October 2026
Head of Paid Service	Susan Sale on behalf of Andy Brown	21 October 2026

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** The Council is required under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 to appoint “independent persons” who provide guidance and support to councillors in matters relating to the Council’s Code of Conduct for councillors.
- 1.2** This report seeks the Committee’s approval to carry out a recruitment process for independent persons for West Surrey Council.
- 1.3** At the conclusion of the recruitment exercise, the proposed selection of Independent Person(s) will be presented to the Standards Committee for consideration and onward recommendation to the Shadow Authority for approval.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1** That the Standards Committee resolves:
 - 2.1.1** **To authorise the Monitoring Officer to commence the recruitment of independent persons under s.28 of the Localism Act 2011 by way of external advertisement and assessment by the Standards Committee, supported by the Monitoring Officer.**

3 Reason(s) for recommendation:

- 3.1** To comply with the provisions set out in the Localism Act 2011, the Shadow Authority is required to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist with the arrangements for dealing with complaints against Councillors (including Co-Opted Members) and other matters relating to any proposed dismissal of a Statutory Officer.
- 3.2** The existing appointments of Independent Persons, as previously considered by this Committee and approved by the West Surrey Shadow Authority, will expire on 31 March 2027. New appointments are therefore required for Vesting Day onwards.

4 Next steps

- 4.1** Subject to agreement by the West Surrey Shadow Standards Committee, the recruitment exercise will commence in November. Thereafter interviews with applicants will be held and proposals for the appointment of Independent Persons will be brought back to this Committee for consideration and onward recommendation to the West Surrey Shadow Authority in February 2027, to enable the appointments to be made in time for Vesting Day on 1 April 2027.

5 Exemption from publication

- 5.1** None of this report is exempt from publication.

6 Background and Proposal

- 6.1** The Council is required under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to appoint at least one Independent Person under its arrangements for investigating complaints about elected and co-opted members and complaints about a member or co-opted member of a parish council of which the council is the principal authority under the Code of Conduct.
- 6.2** Under the Act, an Independent Person must be consulted before the Standards Committee decides on the outcome of an investigation that a member has breached the Code of Conduct. Members and co-opted members who are the subject of a complaint may also consult the Independent Person.
- 6.3** In the 2019 report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL), the importance of the Independent Person in providing a distinctive and important source of assurance within the standards regime in local government was recognised. The 2019 report recommended that there should be a minimum of two Independent Persons to support management of potential conflicts of interest in advising different people involved in a complaint. In addition, the report recommended that the Independent Persons should be appointed for a two-year fixed term, renewable once, to provide security in the role and to support the maintenance of independence.
- 6.4** At this point, the Committee does not need to determine how many Independent Persons it may wish to appoint; the Committee can take a view on this at the conclusion of the recruitment process. Committee approval is specifically sought to initiate the recruitment process.

Proposed Recruitment Process

- 6.5** Adverts with supporting documents, will be placed on the Shadow Authority's website and the Sovereign Council websites in West Surrey. A copy of the recruitment pack, which includes the advert, background information, role description, together with eligibility requirements, a proposed application form and associated privacy notice are attached as Appendix A.
- 6.6** Members will note that the proposed term of office for the Independent Person will commence from 1 April 2027 and in line with the recommendations of the report of the CSPL, it is suggested that the appointment will be for a two year fixed term, renewable once (four years in total).

7 Consultation

- 7.1** The Monitoring Officer (Interim) for the West Surrey Shadow Authority has been consulted on the proposed recruitment process as set out in this report to Committee Members.

8 Key Risks

- 8.1** The appointments of the new Independent Persons are required to be approved in time for Vesting Day. Any delays to the proposed recruitment process could interfere with this and result in failure to comply with the statutory provisions set out in the Localism Act 2011. Approval of the proposed recruitment process will mitigate against this potential risk.

9 Options

- 9.1 Option 1 (recommended):** The Committee is asked to endorse the proposed recruitment process and associated documentation.
- 9.2 Option 2:** The Committee may wish to suggest some amendments to the proposed documentation.

10 Issues for consideration

10.1 Financial Implications

- 10.1.1** The allowances payable to the Independent Persons, as previously recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and formally adopted as part of the Members' Allowance Scheme at the inaugural meeting of the West Surrey Shadow Authority in May 2026, provide for a payment of £1,159 per annum. Independent Persons may also claim travel, subsistence and other expenses in accordance with this scheme, provided that their expenses are not also being met by a third party.

10.2 Section 151 Officer Commentary

- 10.2.1** There are no additional comments.

10.3 Legal Implications

- 10.3.1** As detailed in the body of the report, the Localism Act 2011, section 28 (7), requires the standards arrangements to be adopted by the West Surrey Unitary Authority to include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person.

10.4 Monitoring Officer Commentary

- 10.4.1** As detailed in the body of the report, the Localism Act 2011, section 28(7), requires the standards arrangements adopted by the West Surrey Council to include provision for the appointment of at least one Independent Person.

10.5 People/Human Resources Implications

- 10.5.1 This commentary is provided by Surrey County Council's Director of People and Change in the capacity of People, Workforce and Culture Workstream Lead.
- 10.5.2 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report. The proposed recruitment process will support good governance and the effective operation of the standards arrangements for the West Surrey Council and does not create any additional employment-related obligations.

10.6 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.6.1 The requirements of the Localism Act 2011 comply with equalities legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and which requires public bodies to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 10.6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 10.6.3 The Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.
- 10.6.4 This duty has been considered in the context of this report and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.'

10.7 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

- 10.7.1 None for the purposes of this report as the decision is administrative in nature.

10.8 Stakeholders Implications

- 10.8.1 The purpose of this report is to establish the process for appointing at least one Independent Person. In addition to the statutory requirements, such an appointment is intended to ensure access to the necessary knowledge and experience to reinforce independence and provide assurance to the members of the public and Town and Parishes throughout the West Surrey Authority area of the preservation of ethical standards by Elected Members.

11 Overview & Scrutiny Comments

- 11.1 Not applicable

12 List of Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix A: Advert, background information, selection and eligibility criteria, role description, application form and privacy notice

13 List of Background papers

- 13.1 None

PROPOSED RECRUITMENT PACK FOR APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON

Are you interested in local democracy? Would you like to help the Council promote high standards of councillor conduct?

If you are interested in local government, politically aware but unaffiliated, we would welcome you to apply to work as an Independent Person for member standards across West Surrey. The Council is looking to recruit two Independent Persons to undertake this important role.

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its elected members and town and parish councillors.

The Independent Person(s) will be consulted when we receive a complaint that a Councillor has breached the member Code of Conduct; on decisions to investigate complaints; and before a decision is made on an investigated complaint. The Independent Person(s) may also be consulted on other standards matters, including by the member who is subject to an allegation.

You would play a key role in ensuring public and councillor confidence in the Council's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

The Independent Person(s) is consulted on complaints on a case-by-case basis by the Monitoring Officer and may also be asked to advise individual members who may be the subject of a complaint.

The Independent Persons will also be involved in the event of disciplinary action against any of the Council's statutory officers (Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer). In these circumstances a panel of at least two Independent Persons will be appointed for the purpose of advising the Council on matters relating to the dismissal of these officers.

A fixed allowance estimated to be in the region of £1,159 per annum will be paid, together with expenses for travel, subsistence and other expenses in accordance with the West Surrey Shadow Authority Scheme of Members' Allowances, provided that these expenses are not also being met by a third party.

Engagement is initially for a 2-year period, commencing on 1 April 2027, with the possibility of an extension for a further two years from the date of appointment.

For further details, including an information pack and eligibility criteria, please visit the

Council's website or contact: Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer (Interim),

Email: monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is 27 November 2027. Those applicants invited to interview will be notified shortly after that date.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 the Council is responsible for deciding how to deal with standards issues at a local level, including adopting its own local code and determining what arrangements it will adopt to deal with complaints.

The Act provides that the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person to assist in discharging these responsibilities. The Council is looking to appoint two Independent Persons to undertake this role. Full details of the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person are included in this Recruitment Pack.

The Council will confirm the appointment of the Independent Person(s) at a meeting of its full Council in March 2027.

Selection Criteria / Skills and Competencies

The Independent Person will have:

- a keen interest in standards in public life;
- a wish to serve the local community and uphold local democracy;
- the ability to be objective, independent and impartial and offer authoritative and impartial
- advice and make decisions grounded in sound reasoning and impartiality;
- sound decision making skills; and
- leadership qualities, particularly in respect of exercising sound judgement.

The Independent Person will:

- be a person in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence;
- understand and comply with confidentiality requirements;
- have a demonstrable interest in local issues;
- have an awareness of the political nature of local authorities and sensitivity to how this
- might impact on the ethical standards regime
- have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviours;
- ability to analyse and interpret substantial and complex information (written and verbal)
- and to synthesise which is important and relevant;
- have excellent listening skills;
- be able to work constructively with members of the public, elected and co-opted members and senior officers of the council;
- have the ability and willingness to constructively challenge accepted views and put
- forward alternative perspective where this is appropriate;
- be a good communicator;
- be contactable during normal working hours and be available to attend hearings and committee meetings which may be held at relatively short notice and during normal working hours.

Desirable Additional Criteria

- Working knowledge/experience of local government or other public service and/or of large complex organisations and awareness of and sensitivity to the political process.
- Knowledge and understanding of judicial/quasi-judicial or complaints processes.
- An understanding of dispute resolution processes such as mediation

You should demonstrate in your application how you meet the above criteria as this will assist the short-listing process.

Means of assessment will be by application form and by interview.

Eligibility for Appointment

A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person if they are or were within a period of five years prior to the appointment:

- a member, co-opted member or officer of West Surrey Shadow Authority, Surrey County Council or any of the sovereign councils within the West Surrey area.
- A member, co-opted member or officer of a parish council in the West Surrey Shadow Authority's area, or
- a relative or close friend of the above.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Responsible to: The Council

Liaison with: Monitoring Officer, members of the Standards or relevant Committee with Standards functions , officers and members of the Council and Town and Parish Councillors within the council area, key stakeholders within the community.

1. To assist the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members of Cumberland Council and town and parish councillors and in particular to uphold the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
2. To be consulted by the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or relevant Standards Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend meetings of any Hearing Panel for this purpose.
3. To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or Standards Committee or any sub-committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same.
4. To be available for consultation by any elected member, including a town and parish councillor, who is the subject of a standards complaint.
5. To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within Cumberland Council and its town and parish councils.

6. To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons operating outside the Council's area.
7. To attend training events organised and promoted by the Council's relevant Standards Committee.
8. To act as advocate and ambassador for the Council in promoting ethical behaviour.
9. The Council may also invite Independent Persons to be considered for appointment to an advisory panel in the event of disciplinary proceedings leading to the dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer.

APPLICATION FORM

Individuals who wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person at West Surrey Council are requested to provide the following information to support their application.

All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for the purposes of selecting and appointing the Independent Person.

Please use a separate continuation page if you wish to expand upon your answer to any question outlined below.

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

CONTACT DETAILS

Daytime Telephone Number:

Evening Phone number/mobile:

Email Address:

2. QUALIFICATIONS

(Please list any qualifications which you think are relevant to the position of Independent Person)

3. SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

(Please give a brief account of your experience including career, public and voluntary work together with the nature of your current or most recent occupation)

4. RELEVANT EXPERTISE/SKILLS

(Please outline briefly any knowledge or expertise which you believe would be particularly relevant to your role as an Independent Person having regard to the selection criteria and role description)

5. Why do you wish to be considered for appointment as Independent Person and what particular attributes do you believe you would bring to the role?

6. Please provide any additional information you may wish to give in support of your application:

**7. References may be taken up for all applicants who are invited for interview
Your referees' knowledge of you should be relevant to the person
specification for the role(s) for which you are applying.**

Referee 1	Referee 2
Name	Name
Address	Address
Tel No.	Tel No.

I wish to apply to be an Independent Person.

In submitting this application, I declare that:

- I am not and have not during the past five years been a member, co-opted member or officer of West Surrey Shadow Authority, Surrey Council or any of the District or Borough Council within the West Surrey Area or of any Town or Parish Council within the authority's area.
- I am not related to, or a close friend of, any Member or Officer of the above Councils or of any Town or Parish Council within the West Surrey area.
- I do not have a public profile in party politics including a role on the management or selection committee(s) of a registered political party, nor have I been a candidate or canvasser for a registered political party at a local or national level.
- I am not currently an officer or member, or co-opted member of any other relevant authority (this includes parish, district, county and unitary councils and Police and Fire Authorities), nor have been for the last five years.
- I do not have an existing contractual or commercial relationship with the above Council, or with any Town or Parish Council within the West Surrey area, that could cause a potential conflict of interest.
- I have not been convicted of a criminal offence (excluding minor traffic offences) in the last five years.
- I have read the privacy notice attached to this Application Form.

Signed

Date

Please return your application to:

The Monitoring Officer, email: monitoring.officer@westsurrey.gov.uk

Privacy Notice

UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018

Your personal information will only be used by the Council:

- to contact you;
- to help determine your suitability for the role(s) applied for.

To enable the Council to do this we may also share your personal information with your nominated referees. Other than this, the Council will hold your personal information securely and in the strictest confidence.

If your application is successful and the Council appoints you to the role of Independent Person/Substitute Independent Persons, the Council will retain your personal information, other than information relating to the payment of allowances or expenses, for the term of your office plus one year, whereon it will be securely destroyed. Information relating to the payment of allowances or expenses will be kept for six years or such longer period as may be required by HMRC.

If your application is unsuccessful, the Council will securely destroy your personal information within three months of the date of the letter or e-mail notifying you that you were unsuccessful.

WEST SURREY SHADOW AUTHORITY

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME

June 2026 – March 2027

Version History		
Version	Notes	Author
V2 26/06/26	Second draft – cleared by Susan Sale	AG
V3 24/08/26	Third draft – cleared by Susan Sale	SCS
V4 21/10/26	Fourth draft – cleared by Susan Sale	SCS

Meeting Date	Number of Items
06/07/2026	5
02/09/2026	8
22/10/2026	4
02/11/2026	11
15/12/2026	9
18/01/2027	1
09/03/2027	3

Meeting Date	Item	Description	Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Contact	Date Added
06/07/2026	Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice Chair	To elect a Chair and appoint a Vice Chair for the West Surrey Standards	N/A	N/A	Susan Sale	26/06/2026

		Committee for the Shadow Period				
06/07/2026	Review of 26/27 Shadow Authority Meeting Times	A report considering the review of shadow meeting times as resolved at the inaugural shadow council meeting.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Vicky Hibbert	26/06/2026
06/07/2026	Appointment of Independent Persons for WSSA	To appoint at least one Independent Person for the shadow period.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Arabella Davies	26/06/2026
06/07/2026	Update on the Member Development Programme -1	To provide an update on the Member Development Programme for the Shadow Year.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Cath Rose / Anna Miller	26/06/2026
06/07/2026	Shadow Authority Constitution Updates	A report to notify the West Surrey Standards Committee of changes needed to the constitution including arising from executive decisions and minor ones under the Monitoring Officers delegations.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	26/06/2026

02/09/2026	Update on the Member Development Programme -2	To provide a further update on proposals for the Member Development Programme for the Shadow Year.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Anna Miller	26/06/2026
02/09/2026	Appointment of Additional Independent Person(s)	To appoint an additional Independent Person for the shadow period.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Arabella Davies	Susan Sale	30/07/2026
02/09/2026	Social Media Policy	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
02/09/2026	Gifts & Hospitality Guidance	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
02/09/2026	Member Conduct Complaint Arrangements	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
02/09/26	Governance Arrangements	To propose that the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	06/08/2026

	for Constitution Work	becomes a Working Group of the Standards Committee				
02/09/2026	Terms of Reference of the Employment Committee	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
02/09/2026	Review of the Member Officer Protocol	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
22/10/2026	Council Motion	To consider the motion from Council regarding recorded votes	N/A	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	23/09/26
22/10/2026	Petition Scheme	To consider a Petition Scheme for West Surrey Council for post Vesting Day	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	17/09/26
22/10/2026	Proper Officer Designations	To consider an amendment to the shadow period constitution regarding the scrutiny officer	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	17/09/26
22/10/2026	Articles	To consider the Articles of the	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	8/10/26

		Constitution for post vesting day	Cllr Victoria Kiehl			
02/11/2026	Schedule of Meetings for West Surrey Council 27/28	To agree principles and recommend that shadow council notes than and delegates authority to an officer to produce a schedule in consultation with group leaders.	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	26/06/2026
02/11/2026	Recruitment process for the appointment of independent persons for post vesting day	To approve the process for recruiting and appointing independent persons for post vesting day	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Arabella Davies	Susan Sale	26/06/2026
02/11/2026	Finance Procedure Rules	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Working Group to endorse the standing orders for post vesting day	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Radford	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
02/11/2026	Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Working Group to endorse the	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Radford	Susan Sale	06/08/2026

		standing orders for post vesting day				
02/11/2026	Council Procedure Rules	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee to endorse council procedure rules for post vesting day	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	06/08/2026
02/11/2026	Review of Proper Officer Designations	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Working Group regarding designation of a scrutiny officer during the shadow period	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
02/11/2026	Review of Audit & Governance Committee Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Working Group for post vesting day	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
02/11/2026	Budget Procedure Rules	To receive recommendations from the	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group	Vicky Radford	Susan Sale	24/08/2026

		Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl			
02/11/2026	Post Vesting Day Scrutiny Arrangements	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
02/11/2026	Company Governance Protocol	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Michael Graham	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
02/11/2026	Post vesting Day Licensing Committee Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Recommendation from Constitution Working Group Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Post Vesting Day Planning Committee Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Deborah Davies	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	DBS checks for councillors	To consider a policy regarding DBS checks for councillors to be effective after Vesting Day	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	20/10/2026

15/12/2026	Review of Employment Committee Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Budget and Policy Framework Rules	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Radford	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Officer Decision Making Protocol	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Responsibility for Functions	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Scheme of Officer Delegations	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale, Deborah Davies & Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Delegations to Executive Members	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale, Deborah Davies & Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	24/08/2026

15/12/2026	Proper Officer Designations	To receive recommendations from the Constitution Sub Committee	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale, Deborah Davies & Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	24/08/2026
15/12/2026	Report on Joint Governance arrangements	To include the Fire & Rescue Service, the Surrey pensions Authority and the Foundation Strategic Authority	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale, Deborah Davies & Vicky Hibbert	Susan Sale	21/10/2026
18/01/2027	Report on proposed appointments of Independent Persons for post Vesting Day	A report to propose appointments of independent persons following the recruitment process	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale / Vicky Hibbert / Arabella Davies	26/06/2026
09/03/2027	Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer	To receive a report from the Monitoring Officer regarding Standards matters that have arisen during the Shadow Period including member conduct matters	N/A	Susan Sale	Susan Sale / Vicky Hibbert / Deborah Upton	26/06/2026
09/03/2027	Adoption of Member's Allowance Scheme for	To make recommendations to WSSA full council for the adoption of a	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale	26/06/2026

	West Surrey Council	member's scheme of allowances.				
09/03/2027	To receive a provisional work programme for The West Surrey Council Standards Committee	To consider work programme for the Standards Committee and its sub committees for the 2027/2028 municipal year	Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Susan Sale	Susan Sale / Vicky Hibbert / Arabella Davies	26/06/2026

