

Report to: Council

Date of Meeting 13 May 2026

Heading/Title: Council Constitution, Allocation of Committee places and appointments to Panels, Forums and Joint Bodies and appointments to outside bodies 2026/2027.

Cabinet Member(s): Council, Corporate Coordination & External Engagement (Councillor John Loudoun) and Communications and Democracy (Councillor Sarah Jackson)

Director/Assistant Director: Governance (Melanie Wellman)

Author and Directorate: Andrew Melhuish (Democratic Services Manager – Governance Directorate)

Contact Details andrew.melhuish@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan N/A

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Report Summary and Recommendations/Decision

The report includes sets out the Council's Constitution for 2026/2027, including an amendment to the Terms of Reference for the LATCo Shareholder Committee.

This report also sets out the proposed allocation and appointment of members for seats on the Council's committees, the proposed appointment of members to Panels, Forums and Joint Bodies and the proposed appointment of members to outside bodies for the municipal year 2026/2027.

The report also includes the calendar of meetings for 2026/2027.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution full Council is responsible for the changes to the Constitution and the appointment of Chairs, Vice Chairs and members to committees and these appointments are usually agreed at Annual Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Council:

1. Approves the Council's Constitution for 2026/2027, including the amendment to the Terms of Reference of the EdenServ (LATCo) Shareholder Committee at Appendix 1.
2. Notes the political balance of the Council and agrees the proposed allocation of committee places as set out in this report at Appendix 2.
3. Approves the Terms of Reference, size and quorum arrangements for all committees as set out in the Council's Constitution at Appendix 1.
4. Approves the appointment of Chairs, Vice Chairs, members and co-opted members to the Council's committee and panels, forums and joint bodies as set out in the appointments schedule at Appendix 3 & 4.
5. Agrees to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the appropriate group leader to make in year changes to committee and panels, forums and joint bodies (excluding the appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs) in accordance with the allocation of places to political groups by the Council and the wishes of the relevant political group leader.
6. Approves the appointment of councillors to outside bodies at Appendix 5.
7. Approves the appointment of Councillor Champions as set out in Appendix 6.
8. Agrees to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the appropriate group leader to make in year changes to outside bodies in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group leader.
9. Approves the calendar of meetings for 2026/2027 at Appendix 7.

1. Background

Amendment and adoption of the Constitution

- 1.1 The Annual Council meeting is required to approve the Council's Constitution for 2026/2027.
- 1.2 The current Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Committee (SHC), as approved at Council on 15 April 2026 indicate that the Chair of the SHC would be the Portfolio Holder for Environment – Operations. It is proposed that the Shareholder Committee selects and appoints the Chair and Vice Chair from the SHC membership at its first meeting of each civic year.
- 1.3 At the first meeting of the SHC (October 2025), it was also agreed that the Deputy Leader should be included in the membership of the committee along with the Director of Place. The Terms of Reference do not currently reflect this position and there is not any provision for the appointment of a Vice Chair and to overcome this an amendment is proposed.
- 1.4 That the Terms of Reference be amended to include provision that the SHC consider the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the SHC at its first meeting of the civic year and the inclusion of the Director of Place in the membership. This proposed change will provide clarity and certainty over leadership roles, strengthen governance and accountability, ensure consistency with wider Council committee arrangements and support the effective and efficient operation of the Shareholder Committee.

- 1.5 The Constitution Working Group has been consulted on the proposed amendments and were supportive of the changes proposed.
- 1.6 The Constitution with the above amendment is set out in Appendix 1 and has been updated to reflect recent resolutions at full Council on 15 April 2026, including.

Allocation of Committee Places

- 1.7 Each year Council adopts the Constitution thereby confirming the committee structure, size and terms of reference of the committees and the proposals set out in this report and its supporting documents reflects the details contained in the updated Constitution.
- 1.6 Where membership of East Devon District Council is divided into political groups the Council is required to review and allocate the total number of seats on committees in accordance with the strength of each political group. The number of members of each political group on the Council results in the following political balance:

Democratic Alliance = 31 members

Conservative = 13 members

Independent Group = 10 members

Cranbrook Voice = 3 members

Independent Councillor Group = 2 members

Independent Councillor = 1 member (un grouped)

The Democratic Alliance form the majority administration for 2026 to 2027. This report has been prepared on the basis of the political groups reflecting the position set out above.

- 1.2 The above political balance results in the following entitlement to seats for committees where political balance rules apply:

Political Group	Number of Councillors	Entitlement to committee places	Overall entitlement
Democratic Alliance Group	31	61	52.5%
Conservative	13	25	22%
The Independent Group	10	20	17%
Cranbrook Voice	3	6	5.1%
Independent Councillor Group	2	4	3.4%
No political group	1	0	1.7%
Totals	60	116	100%

2. Appointments / Allocation of places

- 2.1 The Council's committee places (also known as seats) to be allocated to the political groups has been calculated and were subject to consultation with the relevant political group leaders during April 2026.
- 2.2 Appendix 2 sets out guidance regarding the method of allocation of seats / places on committees and comments on the application of this in relation to Appendix 3. Appendix 2 sets out the calculation of overall entitlement to places on Committees on the basis that the Council continues to agree the recommendation of the political group leaders.
- 2.3 Appendix 3 sets out the political group leaders proposed nominations to the committee places. When approving Appendix 3 the Council will meet the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which requires the application of certain rules to the appointment of council committees. The Schedule provides for:
 - (a) The appointment of chairs and vice-chairs (Appendix 3).
 - (b) The appointment of members to the committees of the Council of the committees (Appendix 3).
- 2.4 Full Council may waive the political balance rules for any committee(s) where the Council wishes to appoint an alternative number of members from political groups. In order for political balance to be waived no member must vote against this motion, an objection by a single member would make it necessary to apply political balance rules.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the Council delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make in-year changes between Annual General Meetings to committee appointments (excluding Chairs and Vice-Chairs) in accordance with the wishes of the political group leader that relates to the relevant place(s) on a committee.

3. Makeup of advisory Panels, Forums and Joint Bodies

- 3.1 The makeup of advisory panels, forums and joint bodies is set out in appendix 4. There is no legal requirement for these to be politically balanced and in some cases Council has decided to apply political proportionality to some panels, forums and joint bodies.

4. Appointment of Councillor Champions

The appointment of Councillor Champions is made at Annual Council and while changes can be made each year the expectation is that appointees will be appointed for a minimum of 2 years to ensure continuity in the role. A list of the current Councillor Champion roles is set out in Appendix 6.

5. Appointments to Outside Bodies

- 5.1 The Constitution requires the Annual Council to make appointments to outside bodies and a schedule of appointments is set out in Appendix 5.

6. Calendar of Meetings 2026/2027

- 6.1 The Constitution requires a schedule of ordinary meetings for the Council year to be approved at Annual Council and a calendar of meetings for 2026/2027 is attached at Appendix 7.

7. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 7.1 To ensure that the Council's governance framework is up to date and reflects the current political balance within the Council and to enable the required appointments to be agreed for the civic year.
- 7.2 It is important that the Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the Council's requirements.

8. Options

- 8.1 As this is a requirement of legislation and the Council's Constitution no other options were considered.

9. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

Having an up to date Constitution ensures the Council is able to support its Council Plan and priorities through the governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.

10. Financial Comments/Implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the budget for special responsibility allowances and basic allowances is from within existing budgets.

11. Legal Comments/Implications

- 11.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council is required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as is required or desirable.

11.2 The rules governing the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees to political groups are set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder including the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. The provisions of the 1989 Act include the requirement that, where Members of the Council are divided into political groups, then the membership of its committees and sub-committees must reflect the political balance of the Council as a whole. The proposals set out in this report comply with the Council's Constitution.

12. Risk Implications

12.1 It is important that the Council keeps its Constitution up to date to reflect best practice and any changes in legislation.

13. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

13.1 No specific negative equalities implications have been identified with the proposals set out in the new Constitution. Decisions taken by the Council, in accordance with its Constitution, will consider equalities implications and have due regards to its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The arrangements for committee meetings will take full consideration of equalities and public accessibility requirements. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for this decision as there are no direct impacts.

13.2 This report ensures that the political balance of the committee allocations is in line with the relevant legislation and guidance.

14. HR and Workforce Implications

14.1 There are no HR and Workforce implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

15. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

15.1 There are no Community Safety Implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

16. Climate Change Implications

16.1 There are no Climate Change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

17. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

17.1 There are no public health, health and safety or health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

17.2 There are no safeguarding issues that may arise from the recommendations in the report.

18. Procurement and Social Value implications

18.1 There are no procurement and social value implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

19. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

19.1 There are no land and buildings/asset management implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

20. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

20.1 N/A.

21. Digital and Data

21.1 N/A

22. Consultation and Engagement

22.1 Consultation on the proposals contained in this report has been undertaken with the Group Leaders during April 2026 and at meetings of the Constitution Working Group.

23. Communications

23.1 Details of the appointments will be made on the Council's website.

24. Next Steps

24.1 To update the Council's website to reflect the recommendations arising from this report, including notifying relevant officers and external organisations (Outside Body appointments) of the recommendations.

25. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Constitution 2026/2027
- Appendix 2 – Guidance and allocation of Committee places
- Appendix 3 – Appointment Schedule – Chairs and Vice Chairs and Committees 2026/2027
- Appendix 4 - Appointment Schedule – Panels, Forums and Working Groups 2026/2027
- Appendix 5 – Appointment Schedule – Outside Bodies 2026/2027
- Appendix 6 - Appointment Schedule – Councillor Champions 2026/2027
- Appendix 7 – Calendar of Meetings 2026/2027

26. Background Papers

26.1 None.