

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title	Establishment and Appointment of Committees and Other Council Bodies 2026-27
Meeting / Date	Council, 21 May 2026
Directorate	Resources
Report author/ Contact details	Mark Hynes, Corporate Director Governance and Law Mark.hynes@walthamforest.gov.uk
Wards affected	None specifically
Public access	Open
Appendices	Appendix A – Proportionality Calculations Appendix B – Committees and Other Bodies 2026-27

1. Summary
 - 1.1. This report concerns the establishment of committees and appointment of councillors on committees and other bodies in 2026-27. It is the Council's duty to ensure that appointments are made in accordance with those regulations regarding political balance.
 - 1.2. A list is attached of the committees and other Council bodies concerned (Appendix 1). This shows the number of seats proposed for each body in 2026-27.
2. Recommendation
 - 2.1. Council is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Appoint standing committees for the municipal year 2026-27
 - 2.1.2. Determine the number of seats on all committees
 - 2.1.3. Determine the allocation of seats on committees to party groups in accordance with the political balance rules
 - 2.1.4. Appoint councillors to sit on committees in accordance with nominations made by the Group Whips
 - 2.1.5. Appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of committees for 2026-27
 - 2.1.6. Appoint councillors to serve on the other council bodies listed within Appendix 1

(Specific proposals and nominations submitted by the Group Whips will be circulated with the Order Paper for the meeting)

- 2.1.7. Note the memberships of the Boards of Directors of the Local Authority Trading Companies
- 2.1.8. Agree the terms of reference of standing committees for 2026-27 shall be as set out in the Council's constitution
- 2.1.9. Agree that all councillors will be appointed as supernumerary members to substitute when a named member of a committee is unable to attend a meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme for the appointment of substitute members; Group Leaders and/or Group Whips being able to agree substitutions in respect of members of their party groups;
 - a) that in respect of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Executive members may be substituted only by other members of the Executive;
 - b) that in respect of the Coordinating Scrutiny Committee, Chairs of Scrutiny Committees may only be substituted by vice-chairs, with other members of the committee to be substituted by any other non-executive member;
 - c) and that in respect of any Scrutiny Committee, Executive members cannot serve as substitutes. (Note: The supernumerary arrangements do not apply to the Cabinet)

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council is required, under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (ss. 15-17) and the Regulations made under that Act, to comply with political balance rules when appointing 'Ordinary' Committees (i.e. committees appointed under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972).
- 3.2. The Rules provide that seats on 'Ordinary' Committees must be allocated in line with the following principles in order of precedence:
 - a. That not all seats on a body are allocated to the same political group.
 - b. That the majority of seats on the body are allocated to a political group which has a majority of the Council's membership.
 - c. That, subject to principles (a) and (b) above, the total number of seats across all the ordinary Committees shall be allocated to each political group in the proportion of their size on the Council as a whole.

- d. That, subject to principles (a) to (c) above, seats on each individual body shall be allocated to each political group in the same proportion as to their size on the Council as a whole.
 - e. Principle (d) (but not principles (a), (b) or (c)) also applies to sub-committees and advisory committees.
- 3.3. The Council may, when carrying out a review of proportionality, adopt some arrangement other than that prescribed by the Act or Regulations. Any decision on such a proposal must be passed without objection (i.e. abstentions will not impede the decision, but a single vote against the proposal will cause it to fall).
- 3.4. The political balance of the authority (60 councillors) is as follows:

Green	31 councillors (52%)
Labour	15 councillors (25%)
Conservative	14 councillors (24%)

Ordinary Committees

- 3.5. Ordinary Committees are those appointed under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. Ordinary Committees are appointed by the Council.
- 3.6. Appendix 1 sets out the outcome of proportionality calculations on Ordinary Committee seat allocations.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- 3.7. Principles (a), (b) and (d) of the Rules also apply to Overview & Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees. However, because these are bodies established under the Local Government Act 2000 (and not section 101 or 102 of the Local Government Act 1972), they are not included when calculating the total number of seats on ordinary committees (principle c).
- 3.8. Consequently, Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees should be balanced but on an individual basis. The same situation applies to advisory committees (relating to Council functions) and certain outside bodies.
- 3.9. The proportionality arrangements may be varied by the Council provided no committee subject to political balance is made up solely of members of one political group, and no Member of the Council votes against

alternative arrangements. (Local Government & Housing Act 1989 s17(1)(b).

- 3.10. Appendix 1 sets out the outcome of proportionality calculations on Scrutiny Committee seat allocations.

Committees not subject to political balance rules

- 3.11. The following bodies are entirely excluded from the Political Balance Rules:

The Cabinet

- 3.11.1. The Cabinet is appointed by the Leader and may comprise councillors from one political group only. It must have 2 to 9 members in addition to the Leader.

Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Committee

- 3.11.2. The Political Balance Rules do not apply to this Committee nor its sub-committees (although they do apply to the Licensing (General) Committee and its sub-committees). However, it is normal practice to constitute the sub-committees (panels) in accordance with political balance as far as practicable. Membership of the sub-committees is drawn from the membership of the parent committee.

Health and Wellbeing Board

- 3.11.3. Although the Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires the Council to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board as a section 102 committee, The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 modified and disapplied certain provisions of section 102 (and other sections of the Local Government Act 1972), as well as the political balance provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Appointments to the Health and Wellbeing Board therefore are not considered in the political balance calculations.

Substitution Scheme

- 3.12. It is the Council's normal practice to appoint all councillors as supernumerary members of committees, so that any member can substitute for another who is unable to attend a meeting. Notifications of a substitute must be in writing, and may be by e-mail, by the relevant group whip or group leader, to the Chief Executive (in practice to Democratic Services). Substitutions must be for a whole meeting (and

cannot be for only part of a meeting) and will apply for the specified meeting only, following which the original member will resume his/her membership of the committee.

- 3.13. Substitutions for councillors appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board are not governed by regulations; however, it is recommended that, given the appointment of Executive members, that only other members of the Executive be appointed as supernumerary members of the Board to be able to substitute.
- 3.14. At the establishment of the Coordinating Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed that the membership of the committee will include the chairs of Scrutiny as ex-officio appointments. These members may only be substituted by their vice-chair. All other members of the Coordinating Scrutiny Committee may be substituted by any other non-executive member.
- 3.15. Executive members cannot serve as substitutes for any Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Local Authority Trading Companies

- 3.16. The Council has three Local Authority Trading Companies, Waltham Forest Services Ltd, 60 Bricks Ltd and Norse Evolve.
- 3.17. When establishing the companies, Cabinet were asked to agree that the Directors of the three companies that constitute the LATCs would be ex-officio the officers holding the posts set out below (or any successor post performing the same function). The initial appointments were referred to full Council for endorsement.
- 3.18. The Boards of Directors are currently as follows:

60 Bricks Ltd (dormant)

- Director of Capital Strategy, Delivery and Estates

Waltham Forest Services Ltd

- Director of Inward Investment
- Assistant Director Commercial Law
- Director of Procurement
- Assistant Director Communities & Participation

Norse Evolve (joint venture with Norse group)

- Strategic Director of Place

4. Consultation
 - 4.1. Group Whips have been consulted for their nominations, which will be circulated with the Order Paper for the meeting.

5. Implications
 - 5.1. Finance, Value for Money and Risk
 - 5.1.1. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of certain committees will be entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance as set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme.
 - 5.2. Legal
 - 5.2.1. The legal implications are contained in the body of this report. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 provide that the Council must have standing orders with regard to the appointment of specified senior officer posts (i.e. the posts in s.2 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989). The Council may delegate this authority to a committee.
 - 5.3. Equalities and Diversity
 - 5.3.1. None specifically.
 - 5.4. Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder).
 - 5.4.1. None specifically.
 - 5.5. Council Infrastructure (e.g. human resources, accommodation or IT issues)
 - 5.5.1. None specifically.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None.