

COUNCIL	
Meeting Date	28 January 2026
Report Title	Reduction in number of Service Committees
EMT Lead	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Head of Service	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Lead Officer	Larissa Reed – Chief Executive
Classification	Open
Recommendations	That Council: - Does not implement the part of the decision taken on 2 April 2025 to reduce the committees by a further reduction of one in the municipal year 26/27 - To keep the committee structure as the following Committees - Policy and Resources - Environmental Services and Climate Change - Housing, Health and Communities - Property and Economy

1.0 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Council not to implement the decision taken by Council on 2 April 2025 to change the committee system to reduce the committees by one for the Municipal Year 26/27.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council moved from the Cabinet System to the Committee System in May 2022. A cross-party working group was set up to agree the numbers and functions of the committees. This group (Constitutional Working Group) considered a number of options in relation to the number of committees and the size of committees and proposed a model consisting of Policy and Resources and four Service Committees to Full Council, which was accepted.

- 2.2 In April 2025, members voted to:

- Take a two stage approach to reduce the service committees from Policy and Resources committee and 4 service committees to Policy and Resource and 2 service committees by reducing the service committees by

one in the municipal year 25/26 and by a further reduction of one in the municipal year 26/27.

2.3 From the Municipal year 2025/2026, the council has the following committees

- Policy and Resources
- Environmental Services and Climate Change
- Housing, Health and Communities
- Property and Economy

2.4 In 2025 the role of committees in Swale has evolved and the committees are undertaking more scrutiny and have more 'to note' reports giving members vital information about both council services and national picture. This has increased the number of items on the committee agendas.

2.5 The concern has been raised that if there are fewer committees, there will be a requirement for an increased number of extraordinary meetings.

3.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

3.1 Option 1

To keep the two stage approach agreed by Council in 2025 to reduce the service committees from Policy and Resources committee and three service committees to the Policy and Resource and two service committees by reducing the service committees by one in the municipal year 25/26 and by a further reduction of one in the municipal year 26/27. This is not recommended as this would result in either additional meetings or fewer 'to note' reports coming to committee.

3.2 Option 2

Reduce the number of Committees but increase the frequency of meetings. This is not recommended for two reasons. Firstly it reduces the number of members who are able to take part in Committees and it also puts additional pressure on the members of the new committees who would be required to attend an increased number of meetings.

4.0 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

4.1 An informal consultation has taken place with the chairs of the committees.

5.0 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Corporate Plan can be delivered with the reduced number of Committees but there would be fewer 'to note' information items.

Financial, Resource and Property	The Special Responsibility Allowances for Chairs of Service Committees are £5,938 per annum, this would not be saved
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	There is no legal requirement to have a set number of Service Committees
Crime and Disorder	There are no direct crime and disorder implications of this proposal
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	There are no direct Environmental Emergency implications of this proposal
Health and Wellbeing	Although there is not direct Health and Wellbeing impact of this decision, fewer evening meetings will be of benefit to staff and members of the council.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	There are no direct safeguarding implications of this proposal
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are no direct health and safety implications of this proposal
Equality and Diversity	There are no direct Equality and Diversity implications of this proposal
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no direct privacy or data protection implications of this proposal

6.0 Appendices

None

7.0 Background Papers

Report to Full Council on the Committee System [Report on Governance Model Change October 2021](#)

[Report to Council on the Committee System \(2 April 2025\)](#)