

REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS	
Executive Summary	Following the District Council elections on 4 th May 2023, the Council is required to review and approve the allocation of seats on committees, sub committees and working parties to reflect the political balance of the Council, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder.
Options considered	Any alternative options for the allocation of committee seats are set out in the accompanying appendix.
Consultation(s)	Group Leaders are consulted with in advance of the Annual General Meeting of Full Council. They are advised of any recommended allocations and then agree and final decisions prior to the meeting.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council approves the political balance calculation as per section 3.1 of this report 2. That Council approves the allocation of seats to political groups as shown at Appendix A 3. That following the Annual Meeting of Council, any subsequent appointments to Committees be delegated to the Group Leaders.
Reasons for recommendations	To ensure that the allocation of seats to committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels reflects the political balance of the Council, following the District Council election on 4th May 2023.
Background papers	

Wards affected	All wards
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Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Not applicable. This is a statutory requirement
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	A statutory requirement, with no cost implications.
Council Policies & Strategies	Not applicable.

Corporate Governance:

Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	This item is not exempt.
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Then political balance of the Council is calculated following a District election and each time there is a change to the political groups.

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 Following the District Council elections on 4th May 2023, it is necessary to review the political balance of the Council and determine the allocation of seats on committees.
- 1.2 Council's duty is to determine the allocation of seats to be filled by appointments by the authority, except the Cabinet. The purpose is to ensure that there is proportionality across all formal activities of the Council, reflecting the overall political composition. It affects all formally constituted committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels which discharge functions on behalf of the authority.
- 1.3 This report and the accompanying appendix, sets out the political balance of the council and how this is reflected in the allocation of seats on committees, sub committees, working parties and panels.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 On 4th May 2023, following the District Council elections, the political balance of the Council changed. The Council now has the following composition: Liberal Democrats (25 Members), Conservatives (12 Members), Independent Group (3 Members).
- 2.2 Section 15(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to review the representation of the different political groups on committees and sub-committees:
- at, or as soon as practicable after the Annual Meeting of the Council or,
 - where notice is received of a change in the composition of political groups
- 2.3 The Head of Paid Service has a duty, whenever such a review takes place, to submit a report to the Council showing what the allocation of seats, in their opinion, best meet the requirements of the above Act.

3. Proposals and Options

3.1 Political Composition

The political composition of the Council is outlined below:

Group	No. of members	%
Liberal Democrat	25	62.5
Conservative	12	30
Independent	3	7.5
Total	40	100%

3.2 The Council needs to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups on those committees which are required by law to be politically balanced.

3.2 The obligation to ensure that there is proportionality in the political composition of the Council's committees extends only to proportionate representation of members of political groups

3.3 In carrying out any review, the Council is obliged to adopt the following principles and to give effect to them 'so far as is reasonably practicable':

- a) That not all seats on the Council are allocated to the same political group
- b) That the majority of the seats on the Council are allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership
- c) Subject to the above, that the number of seats on ordinary committees of the Council which are allocated to each political group, have the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority and
- d) Subject to a) and c) above, that the number of the seats on the Council which are allocated to each group have the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that Council as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Council.
- e) That following the Annual meeting of Council, delegation should be given to the Group Leaders to make any changes required to appointments to committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels as long as they are in accordance with the political balance. Group Leaders will inform the Democratic Services Manager of any changes members will be notified by email. In addition, and to ensure they changes are recorded formally, an update will be provided to the next meeting of Full Council.

3.4 **Entitlement to Places**

The table at Appendix A shows provides the entitlement to places of each group. Generally, the approach taken has been to round up percentages where they are above 0.5%. However, in the case of the Independent Group, due to their size, they are not automatically entitled to a seat on all of the main committees. Adjustments to the share of committee seats have therefore been proposed to facilitate this and it is now up to the Groups to negotiate between themselves to finalise the allocations.

3.5 The political balance rules apply to all committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels, unless there is agreement by the Group Leaders and approval by Full Council to waive this requirement.

4. Corporate Priorities

The review of the Council's political balance and approval of the allocation of seats on Committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels must be considered at the AGM of the new administration, so that the business of the Council can continue without impediment, whilst reflecting the political make-up of the Council.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

This is a statutory report and has no financial or resource implications.

6. Legal Implications

This is a statutory report and the Council is required to calculate the political balance and allocate seats in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder.

7. Risks

If Full Council does not comply with the statutory requirements set out in Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made thereunder, the core governance functions of the Council cannot operate and decisions cannot be taken.

8. Net Zero Target

Although this report and any decisions arising from it do not have direct implications for the Council's Net Zero Target, decisions taken by the Council's committees will have an impact. To ensure that the Council can continue to take decisions in compliance with its targets, the political balance needs to be reviewed and seat allocations need to be approved.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Council's policy has been considered and applied where relevant.

10. Community Safety issues

Not applicable.

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

Following a change in the political balance of the Council, it is necessary to review the allocation of seats on committees, sub-committees, working parties and panels.

- 1. That Council approves the political balance calculation as per section 3.1 of this report**
- 2. That Council approves the allocation of seats to political groups as shown at Appendix A**
- 3. That following the Annual Meeting of Council, any subsequent appointments to Committees be delegated to the Group Leaders.**