

REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND PANELS

Summary: Following the District Council election on 2nd May 2019, 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.

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

Recommendations:

- 1. That Council approves the political balance calculation as per section 2.4 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.**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Following the District Council elections on 2nd May 2019, 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.

2. Background

2.1 On 2nd May 2019, following the District Council elections, the political balance of the Council changed. The Council now has the following composition: Liberal Democrats (30 Members), Conservatives (6 Members), Independent Group (4 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 Heads of Paid Service have 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.

2.4 Political Composition

The political composition of the Council is outlined below:

Group	No. of members	%
Liberal Democrat	30	75
Conservative	6	15
Independent	4	10
Total	40	100%

2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 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 and Members will be informed via the Members' Bulletin. In addition, and to ensure they

changes are recorded formally, an update will be provided to the next meeting of Full Council.

3. Entitlement to Places

3.1 The table at Appendix A shows those Committees that are required to be politically balanced and 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 two smaller groups the overall allocation of seats has left the Conservative Group with an extra seat. To ensure that each group has their full entitlement to seats, it is therefore proposed that the Groups negotiate to ensure that the Independent Group has an additional seat on one of the committees.

3.2 According to NNDC's Constitution, Chapter 5 section 6.2 'Working Parties shall in law be Committees of the Council' and consequently the political balance rules will also apply to working parties – unless they are Cabinet sub-committees. Cabinet sub-committees are not required to be politically balanced but it is the practice at NNDC that they are and for this reason they are included in the table (marked with an asterisk)

4. Conclusion

Council is asked to allocate seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules.

5. Implications and Risks

In line with the relevant legislation, the Council must review the political balance and allocation of seats following the formation of a new political group. There is no alternative.

6. Financial Implications and Risks

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Sustainability

There no sustainability issues arising from this report.

8. Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed because there are no service, policy or organisational changes being proposed.

9. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

There are no Crime and Disorder implications arising from this report.