

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

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1.0 ISSUE

To review the allocation of seats to Political Groups on Committees following formal notification received by the Democratic Services and Elections Manager of a change in the membership of Political Groups.

The Council is required to review the representation of different Political Groups on Committees as soon as practicable following a change in the membership of a Political Group and approve the necessary amendment to committee sizes to facilitate a proportional and efficient decision-making structure.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:

- a. Notes the revised political balance of the Council as follows:
 - Conservative and Independent Group: 15
 - Liberal Democrat and Independent Group: 13
 - Total: 28
- b. Approves the revised sizes of the Committees, Sub-Committees and as detailed in Table 1 of this report or agrees an alternative (on a Nem Con basis, if necessary), and authorises the Monitoring Officer to make the consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution.
- c. Approves the allocation of seats to Political Groups as set out in Table 1 of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND/LEGAL PRINCIPLES

In accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ("the Act"), the Council is under a duty to review the representation of different political groups. The following four principles must be applied to the allocation of seats, in priority order:

- (a) That not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group.
- (b) That the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership.
- (c) That the number of seats on the ordinary committees allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total as the membership of that group bears to the Council.
- (d) That the number of seats on each body allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all seats on that body.

The Conservative and Independent Group has 15 seats and is the majority Group. Therefore, Principle (b) of Section 15 of the 1989 Act applies. This principle requires that the majority of seats on every individual committee be allocated to the majority group.

4.0 THE PROPORTIONALITY CALCULATIONS

The total number of seats on the Committees is 53. The calculations for the overall entitlement to seats (Principle c) are as follows:

Political Group	Number of Members	Proportion of Council	Entitlement (Strict)	Final Allocation
Conservative and Independent	15	53.57%	28.39	30*
Liberal Democrat and Independent	13	46.43%	24.61	23*
TOTAL	28	100%	53	53

* **Note:** The final allocation deviates from strict proportionality (Principle (c)) to satisfy the mandatory requirement of Principle (b), which dictates that a group with an absolute majority of the Council must have a majority on every individual committee.

5.0 TABLE 1: REVISED ALLOCATION OF SEATS

To satisfy Principle (b) while maintaining the global aggregate of 53 seats, the revised allocation is proposed as follows:

Committee	Total Seats	Conservative & Ind (15)	Lib Dem & Ind (13)
Finance & Assets	11	6	5
Operational Services	11	6	5
Planning	11	6	5
Audit	5	3	2
Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub	5	3	2
F & A Ethical Governance Sub	7	4	3
Personnel Appeals Sub	3	2	1
TOTAL	53	30	23

*** Note on the Aggregate:** While strict proportionality (Principle (c)) suggests a 28/25 split, the mandatory requirement for a majority on every committee (Principle (b)) necessitates a 30/23 split. In this instance, the Conservative and Independent Group is allocated 30 seats to ensure Principle (b) is satisfied across all bodies.

Committee (Others)*	Total Seats	Conservative & Ind (15)	LibDem & Ind (13)
Licensing	11	6	5
Licensing (Statutory) Sub	3	2	1

*The 'Other' committees listed are governed by separate statutory requirements (such as the Licensing Act 2003); however, the Council has applied the principles of proportionality to these bodies voluntarily to ensure consistency and democratic oversight across all functions

6.0 ARGUMENTS / CONCLUSIONS

The allocation set out in Table 1 complies with the statutory requirements of the Act. Principle (b) is satisfied as the majority group is allocated a majority of seats on committees. Principles (c) and (d) are satisfied as the total allocation of seats reflects the overall political balance of the Council.

Background Documents

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15)

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990

