

ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Council considers the allocation of seats to committees and panels in accordance with the principles set out in the report, and in doing so, reviews Council's agreed position set out in the table at paragraph 4.4 of the report; and
- 1.2 That the Council appoints councillors to individual committees and panels, as identified in Appendix 1 (to follow), for the remainder of the four year period ending May 2027.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, it is necessary to review the representation of political groups on committees, when the authority holds its Annual Meeting. For this purpose, "committees" includes the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels but excludes the Cabinet.
- 2.2 There are four statutory principles of political balance which have to be applied in filling appointments to committees. These are contained in Section 15(5) of the Act.
- 2.3 The principles that have to be applied are as follows:-
 - (a) that not all seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group are a majority of the Authority's membership;
 - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant Authority which are allocated to each political group bears 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 paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the same number of all seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority.
- 2.4 Once the Council has determined the allocation of committee places between the political groups, the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the committees.
- 2.5 Those members who are not members of political groups have no legal entitlement to an allocation of seats on committees. However, once the political groups' entitlement has been reached, the remaining seats may be filled by members not belonging to a political group. Such Members are classed as being non-aligned.
- 2.6 These provisions need not be applied if a different position is agreed without any member of the authority voting against.
- 2.7 It should be noted that, although the legislative position refers to "political" groups, this also includes the Independent Group. Although not affiliated with a political party, the Independent Group have formed a group in accordance with the legislation.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Following the quadrennial District Council elections on 4 May 2023, the political balance of the Council remains unchanged as at May 2024, as follows:-

Conservative Group 26 (54.17%)

Liberal Democrat Group 14 (29.17%)

Independent Group 4 (8.33%)

Green Group 3 (6.25%)

Labour 1 (Non-aligned)

4. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS

- 4.1 There are 84 seats to which appointments should be made under the principles of proportionality.

- 4.2 The application of the percentages outlined at paragraph 3.1 provides for the following allocation of seats to political groups across the overall Council position:-

Conservative Group 46

Liberal Democrat Group 25

Independent Group 7

Green Group 5

Unallocated 1

- 4.3 Having regard to the overall position outlined at paragraph 4.2, the application of the percentages outlined at paragraph 3.1 requires the rounding up or down of calculated figures to give whole numbers on individual committees. The Council should, as far as practicable, ensure fairness on each committee and across the wider allocation in making these adjustments.

- 4.4 In May 2023, the Council resolved the following allocations, which meet the proportionality requirements, aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares:-

Committee/Panel	Seats	Cons	Lib Dems	Inds	Greens	Non-aligned
Appeals Committee	13	7	4	1	0	1
Audit Committee	9	5	2	1	1	-
General Purposes and Licensing Committee	13	7	4	1	1	-
HR Committee	9	5	3	1	0	-
Planning Committee	13	7	4	1	1	-
Housing and Communities O&S Panel	9	5	3	0	1	-
Place and Sustainability O&S Panel	9	5	2	1	1	-
Resources and Transformation O&S Panel	9	5	3	1	0	-
Total	84	46	25	7	5	1

4.5 In May 2023, the Council also resolved to allocate a seat to the non-aligned Member on the Appeals Committee. The Council's Constitution makes provision for the allocation of seats to Members who are not members of a political group, as nearly as possible in proportion to the number of those members on the Council. As there is one remaining seat that could be allocated to the non-aligned Member, outside of those that should be allocated to the political groups, this provision is satisfied by the allocations above.

4.6 The nominees of the political groups to the committees and panels will be circulated to follow at Appendix 1. It should be noted that if Members seek to make any amendments, this may affect the calculations and subsequently the nominees.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from the report.

Appendix 1 (to follow) – Committee and Panel Memberships

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Background Papers:

Local Government and Housing Act 1989