

Report subject	Review of the political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats on Committees to each political group and the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Outside Bodies
Meeting date	7 May 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Council is asked to consider and approve the review of the political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats on Committees to each political group, the appointment of Councillors on Committees and appointments to outside bodies as part of the annual review and following the outcome of the by-election on 2 May 2024.</p> <p>The detailed calculations relating to the above will be included in Appendix A to the report and will be circulated to Councillors following the by-election on 2 May 2024.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the revised political balance of the Council, as set out in Appendix A, Table 1 be approved; (b) the allocation of seats to each political group as set out in Appendix A, Table 2 be approved; (c) the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Boards, taking into account the membership, as detailed in Appendix A, Table 3, and any nominations submitted by political groups, be approved; (d) the allocation of seats to each political group to the outside bodies as detailed in Appendix A, Table 4, be approved and the Group Leaders advise the proper officer of their representatives; (e) Subject to (d) above the Council is requested to approve the appointment of unaligned members to the relevant outside bodies.
Reason for recommendations	To ensure compliance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations in reviewing and approving the political balance of the Council and the allocation of seats together with any other associated issues

Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services Neil Fraser, Deputy Head of Democratic Services Sarah Culwick, Deputy Head of Democratic Services
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Council is required to review the political balance of the Council on an annual basis and following any change in its membership. In addition, as there is a by-election on 2 May 2024 the revised membership calculations based on 76 Councillors will be undertaken and circulated to all Councillors as Appendix A to this report as soon as practicably possible following that by-election. The Appendix will set out the following:
 - Table 1 - the political balance calculation and proposed allocation of seats.
 - Table 2 - the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards to Political Groups and non-aligned Councillors.
 - Table 3 – the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Boards.
 - Table 4 – the allocation of seats to Political Groups and non-aligned Councillors on Outside Bodies to which the political balance rules apply.
2. The seat entitlement, based on Committees and Boards, will be calculated following the by-election. The Council may wish to consider the number of seats on bodies to maintain overall political balance.
3. The following principles are contained within Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and have been amended under the regulations to take account of the fact that not all the seats are held by members of political groups. They need to be applied in the following order and as far as practicably possible:
 - (a) Not all the seats on a committee are allocated to the same political group.
 - (b) Where a group has a majority of seats on the Authority it should have the majority of seats on each committee.
 - (c) The third rule provides that, without being inconsistent with the first two rules, the number of seats allocated to each political group on all the ordinary committees taken together be as near as reasonably practicable proportionate to their proportion of seats as a proportion of the authority as a whole.
 - (d) Finally, so far as is consistent with the above each group should be allocated seats on each committee to reflect their proportion of seats on the authority.

Summary of financial implications

4. There are no financial implications associated with this report which is based on retaining the existing committee structure.

Summary of legal implications

5. The Council is required to comply with the relevant legislation and regulations when considering and approving the political balance of the Council and the allocations of seats.
6. The Act and Regulations make provisions where a proposal is not as far as possible politically representative. This includes instances where a Group gives up a seat which they are entitled to hold in favour of another and distorts the political balance rules. In such an instance such a proposal can only be accepted if no member votes against them.

Summary of human resources implications

7. There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

8. There are no sustainability implications associated with this report.

Summary of public health implications

9. There are no public health implications associated with this report.

Summary of equality implications

10. There are no equality implications associated with this report. It would be a matter for the political groups to consider any equality issues through their own appointment process.

Summary of risk assessment

11. There are no risk implications associated with this report.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix A to be circulated following the receipt of all political group notifications which will set out:

- Table 1 – the political balance calculation and proposed allocation of seats.
- Table 2 – the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards to Political Groups and non-aligned Councillors.
- Table 3 – the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Boards.
- Table 4 – the allocations of seats to Political Groups and non-aligned Councillors on Outside Bodies to which the political balance rules apply.