

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	10 December 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	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 following the result of the by-election in the Muscliff and Strouden Park Ward on 24 October 2024.
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 Table 1 to this report be noted; (b) the number of seats on each committee, as set out in Table 2 to this report, be approved; (c) the allocation of committee seats to each political group, as set out in Table 3 to this report, be approved; (d) the appointment of Councillors to Committees and Boards in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, as detailed in Table 4 to this report, be approved; (e) the allocation of seats to each political group on the outside bodies, as detailed in Table 5 to this report, be approved; (f) the appointment of Councillors to the outside bodies in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, as detailed in Table 6 to this report, be approved; (g) subject to (c) above the appointment of the unaligned Members to the Committees and Boards as shown in table (d) be approved.
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):	Councillor Millie Earl, Leader of the Council
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive

Report Authors	Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Council is asked to consider the political balance of the Council following the by-election for the vacancy in the Muscliff and Strouden Park Ward on 24 October 2024.
2. Councillor Toby Slade was duly elected as Councillor and the proper officer has received notice that Councillor T Slade has joined the Conservative political group.
3. Set out in Table 1 below is the revised political balance of the Council reflecting these changes.

Table1	No of Seats	% of total seats	Seat entitlement
Liberal Democrat	28	36.84	41.26
Conservative	13	17.11	19.16
Labour	10	13.16	14.74
Christchurch Independents	8	10.53	11.79
Green	6	7.89	8.84
Poole People	5	6.58	7.37
Independents	2	2.63	2.95
Poole Engage	2	2.63	2.95
Non-aligned	2	2.63	2.95
Total	76		112

4. The seat entitlement calculation (rounded to the nearest whole number) is based on the total number of seats on all applicable committees. Table 2 below, sets out the proposed number of seats on each committee. The total number of seats is 112.

Table 2

Committee	Seats
Western BCP Planning Committee	11
Eastern BCP Planning Committee	11
Licensing Committee	14
Standards Committee	7
Appeals Committee	7
Audit and Governance Committee	9
Overview and Scrutiny Board	13
Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Investigation and Disciplinary Committee	7
Total	112

5. 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.
6. Councillors are advised that 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 thus distorts the political balance rules.
 7. In such an instance, the proposal can only be accepted if no member votes against the proposal.

Allocation of Committee Seats to Political Groups

8. The Council is asked to consider the proposed changes to the allocation of seats to each political group as detailed in Table 3 below. The last column in the table below identifies that there is no variance when compared to the calculations set out in Table 1. These calculations are therefore not at variance with the political balance provisions. The effect of required changes to achieve political balance is to allocate a seat on the Audit and Governance Committee to the Conservative Group from the Independents Group.

Table 3

Political Group	Western BCP Planning Committee	Eastern BCP Planning Committee	Licensing Committee	Standards Committee	Appeals Committee	Audit & Governance Committee	Overview and Scrutiny Board	Environment and Place O&S Committee	Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee	Children's Services O&S Committee	Investigation and Disciplinary Committee	Total	Variance (+/-)
Liberal Democrat	4	4	5	3	2	4	5	3	4	4	3	41	+ 0
Conservative	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	19	+ 0
Labour	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	15	+ 0
Christchurch Independents	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	12	+ 0
Green	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	9	+ 0
Poole People	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	7	+ 0
Independents	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	+ 0
Poole Engage	0	0	0	0	1 ^(a)	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	+ 0
Non-aligned	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	+ 0
Total	11	11	14	7	7	9	13	11	11	11	7	112	

9. Seats on committees, which are allocated to political groups, are to be filled by councillors of the respective political group in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group.
10. As previously reported and approved by Council, the Leader of the Poole Engage Political Group, which consists of two members, advised that whilst recognising the important work of the Appeals Committee neither member of the group was able to attend the scheduled meetings and gave notice that they were unable to appoint to the seat in question^(a).
11. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 makes provision, where a political group is unable to appoint a member of that group to an allocated seat, for the council to 'make such appointment as they think fit'. In such circumstances, the seat may be allocated to a named councillor without regard to the political balance requirements. This same position was taken in November 2023 and May 2024 and Councillor Chris Rigby was appointed to this seat. It is proposed that Councillor Rigby continues to be allocated the seat on the Appeals Committee.

Appointment of Councillors to Committees

12. Table 4 below includes the membership of committees in accordance with the wishes of the political groups. The political groups may at any time alter the Group's membership of Committees, but any seats allocated to unaligned Members must be approved by full Council. Where a political group has not advised of their proposed members to serve on each committee or board, this will be shown as a vacancy.
13. It should be noted that Part 4D of the Constitution Procedure Rules – (Meeting Procedure Rules) – Sub Part A – Council Meetings states “1.4 All councillors should be expected to sit on at least one committee or panel of the Council.”

Table 4

	Western BCP Planning Committee	Eastern BCP Planning Committee	Licensing Committee	Standards Committee	Appeals Committee	Audit & Governance Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Board	Environment & Place O&S Committee	Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee	Children's Services O&S Committee	Investigation and Disciplinary Committee
Liberal Democrat	Le Poidevin Chapmanlaw Sidaway Clements	Le Poidevin Clements Tarling Gillett	Chapmanlaw Harman Matthews Richardson Sidaway	Chapmanlaw Nanovo Maidment	Brown, O Le Poidevin	Andrews Slade, V Tarling Weight	Goodall Mackrow Trent Walters Weight	Chick Clements Goodall	Gillett Matthews Richardson Slade, P	Brown, O Harman Mackrow Walters	Earl * Cox ** Maidment
Conservative	Adams Challinor	Adams Williams	Filer Williams	Farr	Rampton	Beesley Vacancy	Beesley Broadhead	d'Orton- Gibson Wright	Allen Farr	Broadhead Dove	Broadhead
Labour	Cooper Dower	Martin, G	Dower Farquhar	Connolly	Dower	Connolly	Aitkenhead	Martin, J	Canavan Moriarty	Cooper Carr- Brown	Martin, J
Christchurch Independents	McCormack	Flagg Hilliard	Flagg Hilliard	Ricketts	Phipps	Phipps	Dedman	Ricketts	Dedman	Martin, D	-
Poole People	Hitchcock	Rice	Howell	-	Miles	-	Rice	Rice	-	Hitchcock	-
Green	Salmon, K	Salmon, J	Keddie	Armstrong	Rigby***	Armstrong	Salmon, K	Rigby	Salmon, J	Bull	-
Independents	-	-	Northover	-	-	-	Northover	Northover	-	-	-
Poole Engage	-	-	-	-	***	-	-	Bagwell	-	-	Butt
Non-aligned	-	-	-	-	-	-	Bartlett	-	Edwards	-	Bartlett

* Leader of the Council in accordance with the Constitution

** Portfolio Holder in accordance with the Constitution

*** The seat allocated to the Poole Engage Group is filled by Councillor Rigby. See paragraphs 8 and 9 for further details.

Allocation of Outside Body Seats to Political Groups

14. The Council is asked to consider and approve the allocation of seats to the bodies listed in Tables 5 and 6 below, which are required to be appointed, as far as practicably possible, in accordance with the political balance principles. The number of seats on each body is fixed with the exception of the Lower Central Gardens Trust Board which may be either 4 or 5 seats.
15. To achieve political balance, it is necessary to change the allocation of one seat on the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority from the Independents Group to the Poole People Group, and to reduce the number of seats on the Lower Central Gardens Trust Board from 5 to 4 by removing the seat allocated to the Poole People Group.

Table 5

	Entitlement based on 18 Seats	Dorset Police and Crime Panel	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority	Dorset Pension Fund Committee	Lower Central Gardens Trust Board*	Total	Variance (+/-)
Liberal Democrat	7	2	2	1	2	7	+ 0
Conservative	3	0	1	1	1	3	+ 0
Labour	2	1	0	0	1	2	+ 0
Christchurch Independents	2	1	1	0	0	2	+ 0
Green	1	1	0	0	0	1	+ 0
Poole People	2	0	1	1	0	2	+ 0
Independents	0	0	0	0	0	0	+ 0
Poole Engage	0	0	0	0	0	0	+ 0
Non-aligned	0	0	0	0	0	0	+ 0
Total	17	5	5	3	4	17	

* Membership on Lower Central Gardens Trust Board must be not less than 4 and not more than 5.

Table 6 - Appointment of Councillors to Outside Bodies

	Dorset Police and Crime Panel	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority	Dorset Pension Fund Committee	Lower Central Gardens Trust Board *
Liberal Democrat	Sidaway Trent	Brown, O Weight	Brown, D	Gillett Nanovo
Conservative	-	Adams	Beesley	Williams
Labour	Canavan	-	-	Martin, J
Christchurch Independents	Flagg	Hilliard	-	-
Poole People	-	Vacancy	Rice	-
Green	Keddie	-	-	-
Independents	-	-	-	-
Poole Engage	-	-	-	-
Non-aligned	-	-	-	-

Summary of financial implications

16. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Summary of legal implications

17. The Council is required to comply with the relevant legislation and regulations when considering and approving the political balance of the Council and the allocation of seats.
18. 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

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

Summary of sustainability impact

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

Summary of public health implications

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

Summary of equality implications

22. 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

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

Background papers

None

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.