



**Full Council**  
19 February 2020

**Report from the Director of Legal HR  
Audit & Investigations**

**Representation of Political Groups on Committees**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Non-key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	One: Appendix 1: Political Balance Regulations
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	James Kinsella, Governance Manager, Executive & Members Services Tel: 020 8937 2063 Email: <a href="mailto:james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk">james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</a> or Tel:

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 As a result of the three Council by-elections held in the Alperton, Barnhill and Wembley Central wards on 23 January 2020 there is now a requirement for the Council to undertake a further review of the representation of different political groups on certain committees. Having undertaken the review, the Council then has a duty to make appointments (where necessary) to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Full Council:

- (i) agree the size of each existing committee remains unchanged as set out at paragraph 3.8 and that the new Council Tax Setting Committee will have 5 seats as set out at paragraph 3.10;
- (ii) confirm (where the rules of political balance apply) the allocation of seats on committees to each of the Council's political groups as set out in the report;

- (iii) make appointments, where required, to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats;
- (iv) note that the political balance on sub-committees will be reviewed at the first available meeting of the General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Committee.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### *Representation of Political Groups*

- 3.1 The Council is required to review the representation of different political groups on certain committees, as soon as practicable, in specified circumstances. These circumstances include a change in Council membership and the balance of political groups.
- 3.2 As soon as practicable after the review, the Council then has a duty to determine the allocation to the different political groups of all seats on the relevant committees. The allocation is determined by applying the “political balance rules” prescribed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and supplemented by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. These rules are set out in Appendix 1 to this report and are designed to ensure that the political composition of the Council’s decision-making and deliberative committees, as far as possible, replicates the political composition of Full Council. Subsequently, the Council has a duty to make appointments to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats.
- 3.3 The Committees that the political balance rules apply to have similar duties in relation to any sub-committees they may have.
- 3.4 The Membership of the Council stands at 63 councillors with the composition of political groups following the recent by-elections as follows:  
  
59 Labour Group councillors (93.65%) and 3 Conservative Group councillors (4.76%).
- 3.5 According to the political balance rules, a political group for this purpose is a group of two or more members. As a result of the by-election in Alperton ward, the Council’s membership now also includes one Liberal Democrat councillor, representing 1.59% of the total composition of the Council. In light of the rules relating to political balance, it will not be possible to treat this single member as having formed a political group for the purposes of the review.
- 3.6 The table below sets out the 5 ordinary committees of the Council which the political balance rules apply to along with:
  - the size of each committee (excluding any non-voting co-opted committee members in accordance with the political balance rules);
  - the total number of seats required to be allocated; and

- the number of seats each political group is strictly entitled to based on the number of group members and any adjustments required by the political balance rules.

3.7 There are a total of **38** ordinary committee seats to which the political balance requirements will formally apply. Whilst the membership of the Labour Group now stands at 59 (which constitutes 93.65% of the total membership of the Council), the proportion of seats the group is strictly entitled to remains (as with the last review undertaken in May 2019) **36**. However, as the political balance rules do not allow all the seats on a committee to be allocated to the same political group, at least **5** seats have to be allocated to the other political group. This will result, as before, in a final allocation of **33** seats to the Labour Group.

3.8 The Conservative Group are strictly entitled (based on the size of the group) to an allocation of **2** seats. However, as the Labour Group can only be allocated **33** and not 36 seats, the **3** remaining seats (as with the previous review undertaken in May 2019) have to be allocated to the opposition group.

<b>Ordinary Committees</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Labour Group</b>	<b>Conservative Group</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
		<b>59</b> <b>93.65%</b>	<b>3</b> <b>4.76%</b>	<b>1</b> <b>1.59%</b>
General Purposes Committee	8	7	1	0
Planning Committee	8	7	1	0
Audit & Standards Committee	7	6	1	0
Corporate Parenting Committee	5	4	1	0
Licensing Committee	10	9	1	0
<b>Total seats</b>	<b>38</b>			
<b>Strict Entitlement (based on a proportion of total members)</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Final Allocation (based on the political balance rules)</b>		<b>31 (-3)</b>	<b>5 (+3)</b>	<b>0</b>
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3.9 There are other committees which the political balance rules apply to, but only principles (a), (b) and (d) (see Appendix 1, paragraph 3). Namely, the existing Scrutiny Committees, the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee and the Council Tax Setting Committee.

3.10 The table below confirms the size and make-up of these Committees. The Conservative Group is entitled to be allocated the single opposition group seat on all four Committees.

<b>Other Committees</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Labour Group 59 93.65%</b>	<b>Conservative Group 3 4.76%</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat 1 1.59%</b>
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	11 (plus 4 voting co-opted members and 2 non-voting co-opted members)	10	1	0
Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee	11	10	1	0
Audit & Standards Advisory Committee	7 (plus up to 5 voting co-opted members)	6	1	0
Council Tax Setting Committee	5	4	1	0

3.11 Subsequent to allocating seats, the Council has a duty to make appointments to the specified committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats. Notwithstanding the establishment of the Council Tax Setting Committee, this review has not lead to any change in the overall allocation of seats on Committees following the last review undertaken in May, but should the political groups be minded to change their membership on any of the committees, these will be detailed under the Appointments to Committees item on the agenda.

3.12 The political balance rules do not apply to the Health and Wellbeing Board but it has been previously agreed that this Board will comprise 4 Cabinet Members and 1 opposition Member and this will continue following this review.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

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

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 These are addressed in the body of the report.

#### **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 None.

#### **Background Papers**

None.

Report sign off:

**DEBRA NORMAN**

Director of Legal, HR Audit &  
Investigations