

 Brent	<p align="center">Annual Meeting of the Council</p> <p align="center">29 April 2021</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Chief Executive</p>
<p align="center">Representation of Political Groups on Committees</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Political Balance Rules
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Katie Smith, Head of Executive and Member Services Tel: 0208 937 1399 katie.smith@brent.gov.uk James Kinsella, Governance Manager, Executive & Members Services Tel: 020 8937 2063 james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk or

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report fulfils the Council's duty to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain committees at its Annual Meeting or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 1.2 Given there is a current vacancy on the Council, as a result of the by-election taking place in Brondesbury Park Ward on 6 May 2021, this review has been based on a Council membership totalling 62 rather than 63 councillors. A further review will need to be undertaken at the July Council meeting to reflect the outcome of the by-election. Having undertaken this annual 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

Full Council is asked:

- (1) To agree the size of each committee;
- (2) To agree (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;
- (3) To make appointments to those committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated the seats; and
- (4) To note that the political balance on sub-committees will be reviewed at the first meeting of the General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Committee held following the Annual Meeting.

3.0 Detail

Representation of Political Groups

- 3.1 The Council is required to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain committees at, or as soon as practicable, after its Annual Meeting.
- 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 On the basis that the overall membership of the Council currently stands at 62, the composition of political groups as a percentage of this is as follows:

58 Labour Group councillors (93.54%) and three Conservative Group councillors (4.84%).
- 3.5 According to the political balance rules, a political group for this purpose is a group of two or more members. The Council's membership also includes one Liberal Democrat councillor, representing 1.62% of the total composition of the Council. In light of the rules relating to political balance, it will not,

however, 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; 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; 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 (as a result of the current vacancy) now stands at 58 (which constitutes 93.54% of the total membership of the Council), the proportion of seats the group is strictly entitled to remains at **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 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 September 2020) have to be allocated to the opposition group.

Ordinary Committees	Size	Labour Group 58 93.54%	Conservative Group 3 4.84%	Liberal Democrat 1 1.62%
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
Total seats	38	33	5	0

Strict Entitlement (based on a proportion of total members)		36	2	0
Final Allocation (based on the political balance rules)		33 (-3)	5 (+3)	0

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 and the Audit & Standards Advisory 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 three Committees.

Other Committees	Size	Labour Group 58 93.54%	Conservative Group 3 4.84%	Liberal Democrat 1 1.62%
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

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. This review has not lead to any change in the overall allocation of seats on Committees following the last review undertaken at the

previous Annual Council meeting in September 2020. The appointments to each committee being made by the respective political groups will be set out within the report to be considered as Agenda Item 10 on the Council summons).

- 3.12 The political balance rules do not apply to the Health and Wellbeing Board but it has been previously agreed that this Board comprise four Cabinet Members and one 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 The s149 public sector equality duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.2 The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (outlined above) cover the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report at this stage.

Background Papers

None.

Report sign off:

Debra Norman

Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations