



**Full Council**  
7 July 2025

**Report from the Corporate  
Director Finance & Resources**

**Representation of Political Groups on Committees**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Council
<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 Rules
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Amira Nassr, Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance Tel: 0208 937 5436 <a href="mailto:amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk">amira.nassr@brent.gov.uk</a>  James Kinsella, Governance & Scrutiny Manager, Democratic Services Tel: 020 8937 2063 <a href="mailto:james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk">james.kinsella@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 As a result of a change in membership impacting on the current number of Labour councillors serving on the Council, there is now a requirement for the Council to undertake a review of the representation of different political groups on certain committees.
- 1.2 The current membership of the Council consists of 57 councillors, which has been used as the basis for this review. Following this review, the Council will then have 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, which remains unchanged from the previous review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025.
- (2) To 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.
- (3) To make appointments, where identified as required, 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 available meeting of the General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Committee.

### **3.0 Detail**

#### **3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

- 3.1.1 The allocation of seats on each of the Council's committees to which the political balance rules apply supports delivery of the borough plan by enabling the Council's decision making bodies to operate transparently and effectively whilst also supporting and promoting confidence in the good governance of the council.

#### **3.2 Background**

##### *Representation of Political Groups*

- 3.2.1 The Council is required to review and determine the representation of different political groups on certain committees as soon as possible following any change in Council membership and the balance of political groups.
- 3.2.2 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 seat(s).
- 3.2.3 The Committees that the political balance rules apply to have similar duties in relation to any sub-committees they may have.

- 3.2.4 Whilst the overall membership of the Council remains as 57 councillors, the composition of political groups as a percentage of overall membership following the recent change in membership of the Labour Group is as follows:
- 48 Labour Group councillors (reduced from 49) – representing 84.22% (reduced from 85.97%) of the total council membership.
  - 5 Conservative Group councillors – representing 8.77% of the total council membership.
  - 3 Liberal Democrat councillors – representing 5.26% of the total council membership.
- 3.2.5 According to the political balance rules, a political group for this purpose is a group of two or more members. As a result of a change in membership affecting the Labour Group, the Council's membership now also includes one independent councillor representing 1.75% of the total composition of the Council, which has triggered the need for the review.
- 3.2.6 Table 1 below sets out the 5 ordinary committees of the Council to which the political balance rules apply; 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 entitled to based on the number of group members.
- 3.2.7 There are a total of **38** ordinary committee seats to which the political balance requirements will formally apply. Based on the overall council membership, the breakdown regarding the proportion of seats each political group is therefore entitled to on these committees remains as follows:
- Labour Group – 33 seats
  - Conservative Group – 3 seats
  - Liberal Democrat Group – 2 seats
- 3.2.8 In light of the rules relating to political balance it will not be possible to treat the single independent member as having formed a political group for the purposes of the review and, on this basis, they are not entitled to the allocation of any of the available seats.
- 3.2.9 Given the breakdown outlined in terms of the proportion of seats to be allocated between the eligible political groups, this has resulted in one seat on each of the 5 ordinary committees to which the political balance rules apply, being allocated between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups. The allocation of seats between Committees has been agreed between the respective Groups, with the proposed division as follows.

Table 1

<b>Ordinary Committees</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Labour Group</b> <b>48</b> <b>84.22%</b>	<b>Conservative Group</b> <b>5</b> <b>8.77%</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats Group</b> <b>3</b> <b>5.26%</b>
General Purposes Committee	8	7	0	1
Planning Committee	8	7	1	0
Audit & Standards Committee	7	6	1	0
Corporate Parenting Committee	5	4	1	0
Licensing Committee	10	9	0	1
<b>Total seats</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Entitlement (based on a proportion of total members)</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

3.2.10 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.

3.2.11 Table 2 below confirms the size and make-up of these Committees, with the Conservative and Liberal Democrats groups both entitled (given the size of each committee) to be allocated a seat on both Scrutiny Committees.

<b>Other Committees</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Labour Group</b> <b>48</b> <b>84.22%</b>	<b>Conservative Group</b> <b>5</b> <b>8.77%</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats Group</b> <b>3</b> <b>5.26%</b>
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	11 (plus 4 voting co-opted members and 2 non-voting co-opted members)	9	1	1
Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee	11	9	1	1
Audit & Standards Advisory Committee	7 (plus up to 4 voting co-opted members)	6	1	0

3.2.12 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 led to any change in the overall allocation of seats on Committees, following the previous review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2025 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.

3.2.13 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, with the Conservative Group as the Principal Opposition Group allocated the available seat.

#### **4. Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

4.1 The proposed allocation of seats between Committees has been subject to consultation with each political group.

#### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

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

#### **6.0 Legal Considerations**

6.1 These are addressed in the main body of the report.

#### **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

7.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Act), the Council has a duty when exercising their functions to have 'due regard' to the need:

- a) To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity; and
- c) Foster good relations between those who share a "protected characteristic" and those who do not.

7.2 This is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

7.3 The purpose of the duty is to enquire into whether a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic. In other words, the indirect discriminatory effects of a proposed decision. Due regard is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

7.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report at this stage.

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

10.1 None directly arising from this report.

Report sign off:

***Minesh Patel***

Corporate Director Finance &  
Resources