



Extraordinary Full Council

13 January 2026

Report from the Corporate Director Finance & Resources

Representation of Political Groups on Committees

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Council
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
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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 As a result of the formation of a new political group following five members having resigned from the Labour Group and joining the Green Party, there is now a requirement for the Council to undertake a review of the representation of different political groups on its committees.
- 1.2 The current membership of the Council consists of 57 councillors, which has been used as the basis for this review. Following the review, the Council will have a duty to make allocations and then 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 Council meeting in November 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 to which the same rules apply will be reviewed at the first available meeting of the General Purposes Committee and the Licensing Committee.
- (5) To note (given their size) the designation of the newly established group of Green councillors as the second Opposition Group on the Council for the purpose of the Members Allowance Scheme.

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 resignation of five members from the Labour Group and them forming a new group representing the Green Party is now as follows:

- 42 Labour Group councillors (reduced from 47) – representing 73.68% (reduced from 82.46%) of the total council membership.
- 6 Conservative Group councillors – representing 10.53% of the total council membership (no change)
- 5 Green Party councillors – representing 8.77% of the total council membership (new group)
- 3 Liberal Democrat councillors – representing 5.26% of the total council membership (no change)
- 1 independent councillor – representing 1.75% of total council membership (no change)

3.2.5 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.

3.2.6 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 entitled to on these committees, following this review, has been revised as follows:

- Labour Group – 28 (reduced from 32) seats.
- Green Group – 4 seats (new entitlement)
- Conservative Group – 4 seats (no change)
- Liberal Democrat Group – 2 seats (no change)

3.2.7 According to the political balance rules, a political group for this purpose is a group of two or more members. 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.

3.2.8 Given the breakdown outlined in terms of the proportion of seats to be allocated between the eligible political groups, this has resulted in seats on each of the 5 ordinary committees to which the political balance rules apply, being agreed and allocated between the respective Groups (following this review) as follows.

Table 1

Ordinary Committees	Size	Labour Group 42 73.68%	Conservative Group 6 10.53%	Green Group 5 8.77%	Liberal Democrats Group 3 5.26%
General Purposes Committee	8	6 (↓ from 7)	0	1 (new seat allocated)	1
Planning Committee	8	6 (↓ from 7)	1	1 (new seat allocated)	0
Audit & Standards Committee	7	5 (↓ from 6)	1	1 (new seat allocated)	0
Corporate Parenting Committee	5	4	1	0	0
Licensing Committee	10	7 (↓ from 8)	1	1 (new seat allocated)	1
Total seats	38	28 (↓ from 32)	4	4	2
Entitlement (based on a proportion of total members)		28	4	4	2

3.2.9 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.

3.2.10 Table 2 below confirms the size and make-up of these Committees, with the newly established Green group now entitled (given the size of each committee) to be allocated a seat on both Scrutiny Committees as well as the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

Other Committees	Size	Labour Group 42 73.68%	Conservative Group 6 10.53%	Green Group 5 8.77%	Liberal Democrats Group 3 5.26%
Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	11 (plus 4 voting co-opted members and 2 non-voting co-opted members)	8 (↓ from 9)	1	1 (new seat allocated)	1
Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee	11	8 (↓ from 9)	1	1 (new seat allocated)	1
Audit & Standards Advisory Committee	7 (plus up to 4 voting co-opted members)	5 (↓ from 6)	1	1 (new seat allocated)	0

3.2.11 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.

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

3.2.13 Given the size of the new group of Green councillors, this will mean they now replace the Liberal Democrats Group in being formally designated as the second Opposition Group on the Council for the purposes of the Members Allowance Scheme.

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

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