



**General Purposes Committee**  
19 January 2026

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

**Review of Representation of Political Groups and  
Appointments**

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| <b>Wards Affected:</b>   | All  |
| <b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>  | Not Applicable   |
| <b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b><br>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | Open   |
| <b>No. of Appendices:</b>  | None   |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>  | 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 a requirement for the Council to undertake a review of the representation of different political groups on its committees.
- 1.2 The Council will be undertaking this review at an Extraordinary Council meeting arranged for 13 January 2026 and as soon as practicable after that, the General Purposes Committee will then be required to review and determine the representation of political groups on its Sub-committees and then make appointments giving effect to the wishes of the political groups allocated the seats.
- 1.3 The current membership of the Council consists of 57 councillors, which has been used as the basis for this review.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

That on the basis of the current membership of the Council, the Committee:

- 2.1 Agrees the size of each sub-committee to be appointed by the Committee;
- 2.2 Agrees the allocation of seats to political groups on each of the sub-committees in accordance with political balance rules; and
- 2.3 Appoints Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Members and Substitutes to each Sub-committee under Item \* of the agenda giving effect to the wishes of the political group(s) allocated the seats.

## **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**

- 3.2.1 As General Purposes Committee has three relevant Sub-committees, it has a statutory duty to review and determine the representation of political groups on these as soon as practicable after any review undertaken by Full Council. The Committee then has a duty to make appointments to the Sub-committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group allocated seats.
- 3.2.2 The allocation of seats is determined by applying the political balance principles prescribed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and supplemented by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. These principles are set out below and are designed to ensure that the political composition of committees and sub-committees, as far as reasonably practicable, replicates the political composition of Full Council.
- 3.2.3 The political balance principles are:
  - (i) That not all the seats on the sub-committee are allocated to the same political group.
  - (ii) That the majority of the seats on the sub-committee are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the Council's membership.
  - (iii) Subject to paragraphs (i) and to (ii) above, that the number of the seats on the sub-committee which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that sub-committee

as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Council.

3.2.4 There is a 4th principle (that each political group is allocated the same proportion of the total seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council (38 in total) as the proportion of the members of the Council that belong to that group). This covers the appointment of ordinary committees and will be applied to these bodies at the Extraordinary Council meeting. The legislation does not apply this principle to the appointment of sub-committees.

3.2.5 Whilst the overall membership of the Council remains as 57 councillors, the composition of political groups as a percentage of overall membership has changed following firstly the resignation of a member from the Labour Group and them joining the Conservative Group and the subsequent resignation of five other members from the Labour Group and them forming a new group representing the Green Party. This means the composition of political groups now stands as follows:

- 42 Labour Group councillors – representing 73.68% of the total council membership.
- 6 Conservative Group councillors – representing 10.53% of the total council membership.
- 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.
- 1 independent councillor – representing 1.75% of total council membership.

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

3.2.7 The application of the three principles listed in 3.2.3 above therefore results in the following allocation of seats on those Sub Committee appointed by General Purposes Committee:

| <b>General Purposes Sub Committees</b> | <b>Size</b> | <b>Labour Group<br/>42<br/>73.68%</b> | <b>Conservative Group<br/>6<br/>10.53%</b> | <b>Green Group<br/>5<br/>8.77%</b> | <b>Liberal Democrats Group<br/>3<br/>5.26%</b> |
|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Pension Fund Sub Committee             | 7           | <b>5<br/>(↓ from 6)</b>               | 1  | <b>1<br/>(new seat allocated)</b>  | 0  |
| Senior Staff Appointments              | 5           | 4                                     | 1  | 0                                  | 0  |
| Senior Staff Appeals                   | 5           | <b>4</b>                              | 1  | 0                                  | 0  |

- 3.2.8 As the main General Purposes Committee has been constituted as an ordinary committee of the Council, the additional political balance principle (set out in 3.2.4 above) was applied to the allocation of seats on that body. This has resulted in the Labour Group needing to reduce their allocation by one seat on the main committee and this being offered to the Green Group, with no change in the allocation of the other Opposition seat which remains with the Liberal Democrats Group. However, the political balance rules applying to the appointment of Sub Committees by General Purposes Committee requires this calculation to be based only on the size of each individual sub-committee.

In terms of those Sub Committee's appointed by the General Purposes Committee, this has resulted in the number of seats the Labour Group is entitled to on the Pension Fund Sub Committee being reduced by 1 and that seat needing to be offered to the Green Group. Given their size, no changes are required in terms of the allocation of seats on the Committee's other Sub Committee's.

- 3.2.9 Subsequent to allocating seats, the General Purposes Committee has a duty to make appointments to their specified sub committees giving effect to the wishes of the political group(s) allocated the seats. The appointments to be made by the respective political groups will be set out in the paper listed as Item \* on the agenda.

#### **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 The proposed allocation of seats on each Sub Committee has been subject to consultation with each individual group on the Council.

#### **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, 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