



## Annual Council Meeting 17 May 2023

### Report from the Corporate Director of Governance

## 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
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### 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 The current membership of the Council consists of 57 councillors, which has been used as the basis for the annual review. On the basis of this review, the Council will then having 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 (as set out at Item 9 of this agenda) 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 seat(s).
- 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 stands at 57, the composition of political groups as a percentage of overall membership is as follows:
  - 49 Labour Group councillors – representing 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.
- 3.5 According to the political balance rules, a political group for this purpose is a group of two or more members.

3.6 Table 1 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 entitled to based on the number of group members.

3.7 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 is as follows:

- Labour Group – 33 seats
- Conservative Group – 3 seats
- Liberal Democrat Group – 2 seats

3.8 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 both Groups, with the proposed division as follows.

Table 1

<b>Ordinary Committees</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Labour Group</b> <b>49</b> <b>85.97%</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>Strict Entitlement (based on a proportion of total members)</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</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 and the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

3.10 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 49 85.97%</b>	<b>Conservative Group 5 8.77%</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats Group 3 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 2 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 led to any change in the overall allocation of seats on Committees following the previous review undertaken at the Annual Council meeting in May 2022. 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 9.

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

#### **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.

Report sign off:

***Debra Norman***

Corporate Director of Governance