

Extraordinary Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	19 March 2025
Report Title	Recalculation of Political Balance and Allocation of Committee seats as a result of changes to political groups
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery – Director of Resources
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	Jo Millard – Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That Council is asked to agree the political balance calculation from the possible options as set out in Appendix II or an unanimously agreed alternative. 2. That Council is asked to allocate seats to those Committees in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out changes to the Political Balance and Committee Seat Allocations and memberships as a result of a recent by-election and changes to the membership of political groups.

2 Background

- 2.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires Local Authorities to review the allocation of seats on Committees at the annual meeting, or as soon as possible after it. Once the Council has agreed the allocation of Committee places between the political groups the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the Committees. This was last agreed at Council in January 2025 (Appendix I).
- 2.2 Where changes to the membership of political groups take place between elections, the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require the Council to recalculate the political balance and the allocation of committee seats ‘as soon as practicable’ after notice of changes to groups is delivered to the proper officer.
- 2.3 Due to a recent changes in political groups, the political balance has been recalculated as set out in Appendix II.
- 2.4 The following principles apply to the allocation of seats:

- (a) That not all seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
- (b) That the majority of seats on each Committee is allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belong to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
- (c) Subject to (a) and (b), that, when allocating seats to a political group, the total number of their seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council, must reflect their proportion of the authority's membership; and
- (d) Subject to (a) and (c), that the number of seats on each Committee is as far as possible in proportion to the group's membership of the authority.

- 2.5 There are 134 seats to be allocated under the Committee System. The seat entitlement of each group, on each Committee is thus based on the group's percentage representation on the Council as detailed in Appendix II. Whilst an initial version of this can be calculated mathematically, this usually results in a discrepancy between the strict entitlement of each group and the overall number of Committee seats to be allocated, requiring 'manual' adjustment to ensure that the number seats allocated to each group is fair.
- 2.6 To ensure overall political balance Members must negotiate with each in order that Committees are not over or under-subscribed.
- 2.7 The overall requirement for total places to be balanced only applies to ordinary committees so sub-committee places do not need to be included in the overall calculation, but the membership of sub-committee places should be proportionate as far as is reasonably practical.
- 2.8 The Joint Transportation Board and the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group are not committees covered by Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 15 of the Local Government Housing Act does not apply. The membership of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group was determined by the Policy and Resources Committee at its June 2024 meeting and will be determined at the first Policy and Resources Committee following Annual Council.
- 2.9 Group Leaders have been requested to provide nominations to the places on Committees to which their respective groups are entitled; this has resulted in over allocations and under allocations across various committees. In addition, as there are two groups with identical membership numbers, and an odd number of seats assigned, it will be necessary for those two groups to either agree who will give the additional seat up or use a tried and tested method at the meeting to award the additional seat. The outcome of who is to give up the additional seat may impact on other groups allocations.
- 2.10 Members are able to agree a position that does not reflect the strict apportionment of political balance, but is has to be published in advance and agreed unanimously to be formally adopted. An illustrative example of this type of allocation is included in Appendix II.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 That Council is asked to agree the political balance calculation from the possible options as set out in Appendix II or an unanimously agreed alternative.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 In view of changes to the membership of political groups, there is no lawful alternative to the recalculation of political balance but if Members wish to propose an alternative to allocate committee seats, they may do so.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 All Group Leaders have been asked to advise Democratic Services of their nominations to seats on Committees for their respective Groups.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The recommendations in this report contribute to the council priority to renew local democracy and make the council fit for the future.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Financial, Resource and Property within their remits.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Deputy Head of Legal has been consulted on this report. The relevant legal provisions are set out in the body of the report.
Crime and Disorder	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Crime and Disorder within their remits.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency within their remits.
Health and Wellbeing	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Health and Wellbeing within their remits.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults within their remits.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Risk Management and Health and Safety within their remits.

Equality and Diversity	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Equality and Diversity within their remits.
Privacy and Data Protection	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Privacy and Data Protection within their remits.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Political Balance Calculation agreed at Council January 2025.
- Appendix II: Political Balance Calculations and illustrations as a result of changes in political groups.

8 Background Papers

Link to Council January 2025:

[Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 29 January 2025, 7.00 pm](#)