

## COUNCIL

12 October 2020

# POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

### Report of the Monitoring Officer

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	N/A	
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### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Notes the changes to the make-up of the political groupings of the Council
2. Allocates seat(s) on relevant committee(s) appointed by Council to political groups.

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To request that Council notes the changes to the composition of the political grouping of the Council and allocates seats on relevant committees appointed by Council to political groups.
- 1.2 There are currently 53 seats/voting places on the Council, as set out in the table below:

Committee	No. of places
Audit and Risk Committee	7
Conduct Committee	6
Planning and Licensing Committee	12
Employment and Appeals Committee	7
Adults and Health Scrutiny	7
Children and Young People's Scrutiny	7

Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>

## 2. POLITICAL BALANCE

- 2.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the Act) imposes a duty on the Council at its Annual meeting to review the allocation of seats on its committees between political groups.
- 2.2 At the Annual Council meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Council agreed to the proportionality and subsequent allocations were made to Committee Places.
- 2.3 At a further Council meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Council agreed to apply in allocating seats on Committees etc. set out in Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, only to political groups and not non-aligned members
- 2.4 On the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Councillor Blanksby informed the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer that he no longer wished to be a member of the Conservative Group and would be an independent, non-aligned member of the Council.
- 2.5 The allocation of seats is required to conform to the principles of proportionality contained in sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. There is a duty to give effect to the following principles, as far as reasonably practicable, in the order shown:
- a) Not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group
  - b) A majority of the seats on a body are allocated to a group if it comprises a majority of the total membership of the authority;
  - c) Subject to (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on ordinary committees allocated to each group bears the same proportion to the total of all seats on ordinary committees as is borne by the number of members of that group to the total membership of the authority; and
  - d) Subject to (a) to (c) above, that the number of seats on a body allocated to each group bears the same proportion to the number of seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the total membership of the authority.
  - e) For political balance, a group is required to have at least two members in order to be formally constituted as a political group.
- 2.6 The political proportionality rules that apply in allocating seats on Committees etc. set out in Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 apply only to political groups and not non-aligned (un-grouped) Members.
- 2.7 The composition of the Council is shown in the following table. Using 53 as the total number of voting places across all Committees, the final column shows the total number of places each group is entitled to, using the calculated proportions.

Group	No. of Cllrs	As a % of 25*	Number of seats	Rounded number of seats
Conservatives	16	64	33.92	<b>34</b>
Independent Group	6	24	12.72	<b>13</b>
Liberal Democrat	3	12	6.36	<b>6</b>
	25	100%	53	<b>53</b>
Non-grouped	2	0	0	0
	27	100%	53	<b>53</b>

\* The 2 Members who are not part of a group are not accounted for in the political balance calculation (As set out in Regulations and the 1972 Act hence 25 rather than 27).

- 2.8 The principle that the majority of seats on all Committees and Sub- Committees are allocated to the political group that has a majority of the Council's membership has been applied.
- 2.9 Calculating the composition as set out in the table above then, following discussions with the Group Leaders would mean that Cllr Blanksby is to be removed from the Planning and Licensing Committee and another Conservative Group Member appointed. Councillor Blanksby would also be removed from the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The recalculation of committee places would entitle the Independent Group to an additional appointment on the Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.10 Appendix A shows the allocation and appointments made at the Council meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 The information presented in the report has been compiled in consultation with the relevant Group Leaders.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 In line with the relevant legislation, the Council must review the Political Balance and allocation of seats at its Annual Council or when changes occur.
- 4.2 The alternatives are set out in the report

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **6. LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council must allocate seats on committees so as to give effect to the political balance rules.

6.2 Constitutionally, the Council is required to review the representation of Groups at its Annual Meeting each year and as soon as practicable after an event, which alters the political balance between the Groups and to determine the allocation of seats to be filled by appointments by the Council. This is in accordance with Sections 15 to 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Section 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (Requirement to Constitute Political Groups).

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed because there are no service, policy or organisational changes being proposed.

## **8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

## **9. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no health and well-being implications arising from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix A - Approved Nominations to Committees- Council- 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**