

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

Committee: Annual Council
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1.0 ISSUE

1.1. To receive details of the political balance of the Council and the implications for the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1. That Council notes the details of the political balance of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 and approves the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies as detailed, or agrees an alternative (on a Nem Con basis, if necessary).

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

- 3.1. Attached at Appendix 1 is a table showing the allocation of places on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies in accordance with the requirements of the proportionality rules. Under Section 15(5)(a) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (see below), all seats on a Committee/Sub-Committee cannot be allocated to the same Political Group. Since Councillor Ross Trent has elected to join the Liberal Democrat Group following the Ely West By-Election on 18 April 2024, the calculations remain unchanged from last year.
- 3.2. Group Leaders have been advised of the number of places available on each Committee to be filled by their Groups, and of any necessary adjustments to be made between the political Groups in their overall seat allocations.
- 3.3. At the Annual Council meeting held on 14 May 2013, the dissolution of the Council's Scrutiny Committee was approved. Similarly, the revised Committee structures approved by the Council on 15 April 2014, 11 April 2017, 11 April 2019, 23 February 2021 and 20 February 2024 did not include a Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4. Agenda Item 15 deals with the appointments to be made to fill those places on Committees and other Member bodies.

4.0 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989

4.1. Section 15(5) of the Act sets down the principles for the allocation of seats on Committees between the political Groups on the Council. The principles are applied in sequence and provide a safeguard to enable any distortion caused by rounding up or down to be remedied. The principles require, in effect, that:

- (a) all seats are not allocated to the same political Group.
- (b) the majority of seats are allocated to the political Group having a majority of the authority's membership.
- (c) subject to (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the TOTAL of all committees allocated to a political Group bears the same proportion as the proportion of the seats held on full Council (this principle allows any accumulated distortion caused by rounding up or down in (d) below to be remedied).
- (d) subject to (a) to (c) above, the number of seats on each Committee allocated to a political Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on full Council.

4.2 The effect of rounding up or down across the overall number of seats to be allocated on Committees can be quite significant which is why the principles explicitly provide for any distortion to be rectified

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Proportionality calculations & allocation of places on Committees, Sub-Committees

Background Documents

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15)

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990