

Report To: Full Council

Date of Meeting: 24th January 2024

Report Title: Review of political balance and committee allocations

Report By: Mary Kilner, Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer

Key Decision: N

Classification: Open

Purpose of Report

To agree the allocation of committee seats to political groups, the appointment of Councillors to committees, and Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year following a change in the political balance of the Council.

Recommendations

- 1. Following a review of the political balance on the Council, that the seats on the committees of the Council be allocated to political groups, and Councillors be appointed to those committees, in accordance with the nominations* of the political groups, as shown in appendix A (which is to follow)**
- 2. The Council appoints Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the committees as shown in appendix A (which is to follow)**

*(nominations may be made at the meeting)

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Council has a duty to review political balance on an annual basis and when there is a change in membership of political groups.
2. The Council has a duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to allocate committee seats to the political groups in line with the principles set out in Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

1. The rules determining the calculation of political balance and the allocation of seats on committees are set out in Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
2. Following a change in the membership of political groups the Council is required to review the political balance and determine the allocation of committee seats to each political group in-line with the principles set out in Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
3. Seats must be allocated to give effect to the following principles:
 - a. Not all seats on a committee should be allocated to the same political group;
 - b. a political group with an overall council majority (if there is one) should get a majority of the seats on each committee;
 - c. subject to (a) and (b), the total number of seats allocated to a group on all of the council's committees added together should be in proportion to that group's strength on the council; and
 - d. subject to (a), (b) and (c), the number of seats allocated to a group on each of the committees should also be in proportion to that group's strength on the council.
4. The Council must give effect to the principles above so far as reasonably practicable. To be formally constituted a political group must have at least two members.
5. The Council currently has ten committees which require a proportional allocation of seats to the political groups, as below.

Committee	Seats
Licensing Committee	15
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Planning Committee	10
Museum Committee	10
Standards Committee	5
Audit Committee	5
Environment and Safety Committee	5
Council Appointments Committee	5
Employment Committee	4
Employment Appeals Committee	4

Total	74
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6. Following a review of the political balance a proportional allocation of all committee seats is 26 to the Conservative Group, 20 to the Hastings Independent Group, 15 to the Labour Group, and 13 to the Green Group, as below.

	Conservative	Hastings Independent Group	Labour	Green
Size of group	10	8	6	5
Percentage of seats on the Council	34.4828%	27.5862%	20.6897%	17.2414%
Proportional allocation of all committee seats based on that group's representation on the Council	25.51724138	20.4137931	15.31034483	12.75862069
Rounded up/down	26	20	15	13

7. In accordance with Section 16(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council has a duty to exercise its power to give effect to each political group's nominations for committee membership, as set out in appendix A (to follow).
8. Councillors are reminded that they must complete the required training before sitting on regulatory committees. Regular attendance at quarterly training sessions is a requirement of sitting on the Planning Committee.

Wards Affected

n/a

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	N
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	N
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	N
Human Rights Act	N

Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	N
Anti-Poverty	N
Legal	N

Additional information

Appendix A - Nominations for membership of committees (to follow)

Officer to Contact

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