

**Report To:** Full Council

**Date of Meeting:** 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**Report Title:** Political balance and committee allocations 2023/24

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

**Key Decision:** N

**Classification:** Open

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## 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 2023/24 municipal year.

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## Recommendation

1. That the Council adopts the following arrangements for the appointment of committees:
  - a. The committees for the municipal year 2023/24 be as set out in appendix A
  - b. 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 B (to follow)\*
  - c. The Council appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the committees\*

\*Nominations may be made at the meeting

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## 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. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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

5. 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 B.
6. The Leader of the Council is no longer to be ex officio a member of the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee may request the Leader or Finance Portfolio Holder attend to answer questions, with adequate notice.
7. Councillors are reminded that regular attendance at quarterly training sessions is a requirement of sitting on the Planning Committee.

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## Wards Affected

n/a

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## 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

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