
**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES
AND MONITORING OFFICER**

REVISED POLITICAL BALANCE - ALLOCATION OF COMMITTEE SEATS

Reason for this Report

1. The Council is requested to review and determine the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups in accordance with the Political Balance Rules.

Background

2. At its Annual Meeting on 27 May 2021, Council determined the establishment of its Committees, together with their size and terms of reference, and the allocation of seats on committees to political groups in accordance with legislation.
3. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to allocate Committee seats to political groups in proportion to the size of the groups on the Council as far as is reasonably practicable.
4. After any change in the political composition of the Council, as soon as reasonably practicable, the Council is required to review and determine the allocation of committee seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules.
5. Following the resignation of former independent Councillor Fenella Bowden, the Council revised its allocation of Committee seats at the September 2021 Council meeting.

Issues

Political Balance

6. Following a by-election held on 11 November 2021, Labour Councillor Julie Sangani was elected as Councillor for the Heath ward. The revised political composition of the Council is set out in Table A:

TABLE A - Composition of the Council as at 12 November 2021:

Groups and Independents	Number of Councillors	Political Balance
Labour	39	52.00%
Conservative	21	28.00%
Liberal Democrat	11	14.67%
Propel	3	4.00%
Independent Member (Ely)	1	1.33%
	Total	100.00%

Allocation of Seats

7. The total number of seats on the Committees which are subject to the political balance requirements is 144, as detailed in **Appendix A**. Based on the current composition of the Council (shown in Table A), the proportional allocation of seats on those Committees is as set out in Table B:

TABLE B – Allocation of Seats in accordance with Political Balance

Groups and Independents	Number of Committee seats
Labour	75
Conservative	40
Liberal Democrats	21
Propel	6
Independents	2
Totals	144

8. The proportional allocation of seats has changed and has been re-balanced, in consultation with party group leaders and whips, as shown in **Appendix A**, with proposed changes being as follows:
- a. The Ely Independent Member is to transfer 2 seats (one on Democratic Services Committee and the other on Council Appeals Committee) to the Labour Group.
 - b. There are no changes to the Conservative, Liberal Democrat or the Propel group allocations.
9. This revised allocation shown in **Appendix A** means that the overall political balance remains within + 0.24 and - 0.32 of a committee seat for all political groups.
10. The nominations and appointments to Committees required to reflect the revised allocation of seats recommended in this report are included in the separate Council report on 'Committee Membership', under agenda item 21.

Legal Implications

Political balance

11. Sections 15 to 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (“the 1990 Regulations”) lay down requirements designed to ensure that there is political proportionality on Committees. The rules apply to all ordinary committees, advisory committees, scrutiny committees, the Democratic Services Committee, Governance and Audit Committee and joint committees where the Council appoints three or more seats. The rules do not apply to the Standards and Ethics Committee or the Licensing Committee. However, by custom and practice, the Council has elected to apply the political proportionality rules to the Licensing Committee; and has appointed one Member from each of the three largest political groups to the Standards and Ethics Committee to ensure political balance.
12. After any change in its political composition, as soon as reasonably practicable, the Council is required to review the political make up of its Committees, and determine the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the principles set out in Section 15 of 1989 Act, those principles being:
 - (a) not all seats on a Committee should be allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) the majority group on the Council should form the majority on the Committee;
 - (c) subject to (a) and (b), that the proportion of seats allocated to each political group on the total of all Committees should be the same as the proportion of Council Members who belong to that group; and
 - (d) subject to (a)–(c), that the proportion of seats allocated to each political group on each Committee should be the same as the proportion of Council Members who belong to that group.
13. Where not all Members of an authority belong to a political group, then any seats remaining unallocated after the proportional allocation of seats to the political groups, are allocated to those Members not belonging to a political group (Regulation 16 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, ‘the 1990 Regulations’).
14. A political group is identified when two or more members of the Council who wish to be treated as a political group write to the Proper Officer to inform him of that fact and of their name and the identity of their leader. A person joins a particular political group by sending a notice signed by him/her and the leader of the group. People may cease to be members of the group by notifying the Proper Officer (the Monitoring Officer) of their resignation, joining another group, or being ousted by a notice signed by a majority of the members of the group.
15. Full Council is responsible for determining the allocation of Committee seats in accordance with the rules on political balance, as set out above.

Financial Implications

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Remuneration payments are to be made in accordance with the rates applicable through the Members' Schedule of Remuneration, and contained within the allocated budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is recommended to approve the revised allocation of seats on Committees as set out in this report in paragraph 8 and **Appendix A**.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

19 November 2021

Appendix A – Revised Distribution of Seats Municipal Year 2021/22

Background Papers:

[Allocation of seats and appointments to committees](#) meeting of [Council dated 30 September 2021](#)

REVISED DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

Political Balance -25 November 2021																		
	Number of Seats	Labour		Change	Cons		Change	Lib Dem		Change	Propel		Change	Ely Independent		Change	Totals	
		Nº	%		Nº	%		Nº	%		Nº	%		Nº	%			
Total Number of Seats	144	75	52.08	2	40	27.78	0	21	14.58	0	6	4.17		2	1.39	-2	144	
Councillors	75	39	52.00		21	28.00		11	14.67		3	4.00		1	1.33		75	
Variation as a Percentage %			0.08			-0.22			-0.08			0.17			0.06			
Variation as seats	1.44		0.12			-0.32			-0.12			0.24			0.08			
Ordinary Committees																		
	Number of Seats	Labour		Change	Cons		Change	Lib Dem		Change	Propel		Change	**Non Grouped		Change	Totals	
		Nº	%		Nº	%		Nº	%		Nº	%		Nº	%			
Constitution Committee	12	6	50.00		3	25.00		2	16.67		1	8.33		0	0.00		12	
Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee	9	4	44.44		3	33.33		1	11.11		1	11.11		0	0.00		9	
Council Appeals	9	5	55.56	1	3	33.33		1	11.11		0	0.00		0	0.00		9	
Democratic Services Committee	12	6	50.00	1	3	25.00		2	16.67		1	8.33		0	0.00	-1	12	
Employment Conditions	8	4	50.00		3	37.50		1	12.50		0	0.00		0	0.00	-1	8	
Governance & Audit Committee	8	5	62.50		2	25.00		1	12.50		0	0.00		0	0.00		8	
Licensing	12	6	50.00		3	25.00		2	16.67		1	8.33		0	0.00		12	
Public Protection	12	5	41.67		3	25.00		2	16.67		1	8.33		1	8.33		12	
Pension Committee	5	3	60.00		1	20.00		1	20.00		0	0.00		0	0.00		5	
Planning	12	7	58.33		3	25.00		2	16.67		0	0.00		0	0.00		12	
Totals	99	51	51.52		27	27.27		15	15.15		5	5.05		1	1.01		99	
Councillors	75	39	52.00		21	28.00		11	14.67		3	4.00		2	2.67			
Variation as a Percentage %			-0.48			-0.73			0.48			1.05			-1.66			
Variation as seats	0.99		-0.48			-0.72			0.48			1.04			-1.64			
Scrutiny Committees																		
Allocation of Chairs		5	2		2		1		0		0		0		5			
Scrutiny Committees	Chair	Number of Seats	Labour			Cons			Lib Dem			Propel			**Non Grouped			Totals
			Nº	%	Change	Nº	%	Change	Nº	%	Change	Nº	%	Change	Nº	%	Change	
Children & Young People	Lab	9	4	44.44		3	33.33		2	22.22		0	0.00		0	0.00		9
Community & Adult	Cons	9	5	55.56		2	22.22		1	11.11		0	0.00	-1	1	0.11		9
Economy & Culture	Lib Dem	9	5	55.56		3	33.33		1	11.11		0	0.00		0	0.00		9
Environment	Lab	9	5	55.56		3	33.33		1	11.11		0	0.00		0	0.00		9
Policy Review & Performance	Cons	9	5	55.56		2	22.22		1	11.11		1	11.11		0	0.00		9
Totals		45	24	53.33		13	28.89		6	13.33		1	2.22		1	2.22		45
Councillors		75	39	52.00		21	28.00		11	14.67		3	4.00		1	1.33		75
Variation as a Percentage %				1.33	0		0.89			-1.33			-1.78			0.89		
Variation as seats	0.45			0.60			0.40			-0.60			-0.80					