

REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

Final Decision-Maker	Council
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Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Following the Borough Council elections on 4 May 2023, it is necessary to undertake a review of the allocation of seats on Committees. The Council is asked to determine the calculation for entitlement to seats on individual Committees and the requisite adjustments as set out in Appendix 1 or Appendix 2 depending on the number of Policy Advisory Committees to be appointed.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to Council:

1. That the calculation for entitlement to seats on individual Committees and the requisite adjustments as set out in Appendix 1 or Appendix 2 as appropriate be determined; and
2. That it be noted that should only three Policy Advisory Committees be required, the consequential amendments to the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 will be made by the Proper Officer.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Annual Council Meeting	20 May 2023

REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	There are no direct impacts on corporate priorities arising from this, but the Committees when in place discharge the functions delegated to them having regard where appropriate to the Council's strategic objectives.	Democratic Services Officer
Cross-Cutting Objectives	There are no direct impacts on cross-cutting objectives arising from this, but the Committees when in place discharge the functions delegated to them having regard where appropriate to the Council's cross-cutting objectives.	Democratic Services Officer
Risk Management	See section 5 below.	Democratic Services Officer
Financial	The Committees appointed having regard to the political balance requirements form part of the agreed Leader and Cabinet Model of governance and as such there are no additional financial implications.	Democratic Services Officer
Staffing	There are no staffing implications.	Democratic Services Officer
Legal	The Council must allocate seats on Committees to the different political groups to reflect the size of each political group – Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It is possible to have Committees that are not politically balanced provided that when alternative arrangements are put to the vote, no Member of the Council votes against them. The appointments to the	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)

	Committees should reflect the wishes of the political groups – Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (as amended).	
Information Governance	No personal information is provided as part of this report.	Democratic Services Officer
Equalities	The review will ensure an equitable political representation in the membership of Committees.	Democratic Services Officer
Public Health	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer
Crime and Disorder	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer
Procurement	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to ensure political proportionality in the membership of Committees. Following the Borough Council elections on 4 May 2023, the composition of the Council is as follows:

Conservative	25
Liberal Democrat	12
Independent	6
Green Independent Alliance	6
Labour	6
Total	55

2.2 This necessitates a review of the allocation of seats on Committees. The review must take into account the change in the composition of the Council, any changes to the number of Committees and the basic principles of seat allocation prescribed by Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Work is continuing on the detailed responsibilities of the Cabinet portfolios and the impact on the number and terms of reference of the Policy Advisory Committees. The revised allocation of seats on Committees is set out in Appendix 1 (based on three Policy Advisory Committees) and Appendix 2 (based on four Policy Advisory Committees), together with details of the adjustments required as appropriate. Two Appendices have been produced, as in accordance with Parts A and B of the Council Constitution, the Proper Officer will assign the portfolios to the relevant Policy Advisory Committees in consultation with the Leader. Therefore, the number and scope of the Cabinet portfolios contributes to the determination of how many Policy Advisory Committees are required.
- 3.2 Should only three Policy Advisory Committees be required, the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 will be amended by the Proper Officer to reflect this change.
- 3.3 Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides for exceptions to the political balance requirements. Essentially, the Council can amend the political balance of a Committee provided that notice of the intention to give such consideration has been given to all Members of the Council and that when the alternative arrangements are put to the vote at the Council meeting, no Member of the Council votes against them.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Following the Borough Council elections on 4 May 2023, it is necessary to undertake a review of the allocation of seats on Committees. Group Leaders are being consulted on the allocation of seats on Committees and the adjustments required. It is recommended that the calculation for entitlement to seats on individual Committees and the requisite adjustments as set out in Appendix 1 or Appendix 2 as appropriate be determined.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The review of the allocation of seats on Committees will ensure an appropriate political balance in the membership of Committees. Failure to allocate seats in line with the basic principles prescribed by Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 would be in breach of statutory requirements and may result in error or legal challenge.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Group Leaders are being consulted on the allocation of seats on Committees and the adjustments required.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once the allocation of seats has been decided upon, there is a duty to give effect to the allocation by making appointments to them in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders on behalf of their respective Political Groups.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Review of Allocation of Seats on Committees (based on 3 Policy Advisory Committees)

Appendix 2: Review of Allocation of Seats on Committees (based on 4 Policy Advisory Committees)

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None