

Report to COUNCIL

Review of political balance on committees

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Reason for Decision

The Council has received notification that Councillor Aftab Hussain has joined the Labour Group and Councillor Hurley has resigned from The Independent Group further to Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

In light of this the Council is asked to review the political composition of committees and to note the composition of the political groups as previously notified under Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and under Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for the remainder of the municipal year.

Recommendations

- (a) The composition of the political groups as shown in paragraph 1.1 be noted.
- (b) The number of seats on the various Committees for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year as detailed in paragraph 1.5 be approved including those committees which are not strictly politically balanced as agreed earlier in the year – the Scrutiny Boards.
- (c) Any outstanding appointments where Group are entitled to a committee seat to be delegated to the Chief Executive in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.

Political Balance Review

1 Background

The Council is asked to review the political composition of committees and to note the composition of the political groups as previously notified under Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

1.1 Political Groups

Council is asked to note that the composition of the political groups under Regulation 8 (1) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, is:-

(i)	The Labour Group	33	Members
(ii)	The Liberal Democrat Group	10	Members
(iii)	The Conservative Group	8	Members
(iv)	Failsworth Independent Party	3	Members
(v)	Independent Group	2	Members
(vi)	Oldham Group	3	Members

There is one Independent Member not within a group

1.2 Political Balance

There are four statutory principles of political balance which have to be applied in filling appointments to Committees. These are contained in S15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The principles have to be applied in priority order as follows:-

- (a) that not all seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
- (b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group are a majority of the Authority's membership;
- (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant Authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that Authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority; and
- (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the same number of all seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority.

The political group sizes as a percentage of the total membership of the Council are:-

Labour Group	$33/60 \times 100 = 55\%$	$105 \text{ seats} \times 55\% = 57.75$	58 seats
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Liberal Democrat Group	10/60 x 100 = 16.66%	105 seats x 16.66% = 17.49	17 seats
Conservative Group	8/60 x 100 = 13.33%	105 seats x 13.33% = 13.99	14 seats
Failsforth Independent Party	3/60 x 100 = 5%	105 seats x 5% = 5.25	5 Seats
Independent Group	2/60 x 100 = 3.33%	105 seats x 3.33% = 3.50	4 seats
Oldham Group	3/60 x 100 = 5%	105 seats x 5% = 5.25	5 seats

There is one Independent Member not within a Group.

- 1.3 The application of these percentages to the number of seats on individual Committees gives the following allocation of seats:-

COMMITTEE SIZE	Labour (L)	Liberal Democrat (LD)	Conservative (C)	FIP	IND Group	Oldham Group
15	8.25	2.50	2.00	0.75	0.49	0.75
14	7.7	2.33	1.86	0.70	0.46	0.70
13	7.15	2.17	1.73	0.65	0.43	0.65
12	6.6	2.00	1.60	0.60	0.39	0.60
11	6.05	1.83	1.46	0.55	0.36	0.55
10	5.5	1.67	1.33	0.50	0.33	0.50
9	4.95	1.50	1.19	0.45	0.29	0.45
8	4.4	1.33	1.07	0.40	0.26	0.40
7	3.85	1.17	0.93	0.35	0.23	0.35
6	3.3	1.00	0.79	0.30	0.19	0.30
5	2.75	0.83	0.67	0.25	0.16	0.25
4	2.2	0.67	0.53	0.20	0.13	0.20
3	1.65	0.50	0.40	0.15	0.09	0.15

- 1.4 Under the political balance rules after these percentages have been applied to the total number of seats on Committees of the Council any remaining seats must be allocated to members who are not Members of any political group.

Applying political balance as detailed above, the allocation of seats, to the current committee structure, would be as follows:-

Committee	Seats	L	LD	C	FIP	Ind Group	Oldham Group
Licensing	15	8	2	2	1	0	1
Planning	14	8	2	2	0	0	0
Audit Committee	9	5	2	1	0	0	0
Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	0	0	0
Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	0	0	0

Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	0	0	0
Children and Young People Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	0	0	0
Employment Committee/Local NJC	7	4	1	1	0	0	0
Appointments Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Commons Registration	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Charitable Trust Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Standards Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Traffic Regulation Order Panel	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Appeals Committee	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Total	105	58	17	15	1	0	1

* In accordance with political balance rules, Labour should have a majority of seats but this is proposed to be waived.

The above calculation leaves 13 committee places to be allocated

1.5 Adjustment of Seats

In accordance with the rules of political balance the number of seats must be allocated to accord with the rules above. It is therefore proposed that the number of seats on the various Committees for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year be fixed as follows:-

Committee	Seats	L	LD	C	FIP	Ind Gp	Ol d Gp
Licensing	15	8	2	2	1	1	1
Planning	14	8	2	2	1	0	1
Audit Committee	9	5	2	1	0	1	0
Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	1	0	1
Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	1	1	0
Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	0	1	1
Children and Young People Scrutiny Board*	8	4	1	1	1	0	0
Employment Committee/Local NJC	7	4	1	1	0	0	1
Commons Registration	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Appointments Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Charitable Trustee Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Standards Committee	5	3	1	1	0	0	0

Traffic Regulation Order Panel	5	3	1	1	0	0	0
Appeals Committee	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Total	105	58	17	15	5	4	5

* in accordance with political balance rules, Labour should have a majority of seats on Committee but this is proposed to be waived. On adjustment the Conservative Groups is showing a slight increase. The change from the last political balance report in December 2023 is that the Independent Group will lose a seats on the Planning Committee and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board but take a seat on the Audit Committee . The Oldham Group will take a seat on the Planning Committee . The independent member will have a seat on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board.

The Health and Well Being Board is not included in the calculation above. Although the Committee is appointed by Council, the Local Authority (Public Health and Well Being Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 provide for the disapplication of Section 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 . At the Annual Council meeting this year it was resolved that the standards sub-committee consist of 3 members and be non politically balanced with one member from each group represented on the Standards Committee to be on the Standards sub-committee.

- 1.6 Substitutes are to be appointed by the political groups in accordance with the Substitute Scheme contained in the Constitution. Substitutes for Overview and Scrutiny Boards may be nominated up to a maximum of the number of Members of that Group serving on the Board. For the Planning Committee, up to 14 substitutes are to be nominated in accordance with the political balance of each Committee.

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- 1.7 Council is asked to review the political composition of the Committees; to determine the allocation of seats to political groups; and to make the appointments to fill the seats in accordance with Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations.

2 **Options/Alternatives**

- 2.1 To approve the report
Not to approve the report

3 **Preferred Option**

- 3.1 To approve the report

4 **Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant officers and councillors.

5 **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 n/a

6 **Legal Services Comments**

- 6.1 There are no legal comments (Paul Entwistle).

7 **Human Resources Comments**

- 7.1 There are no human resources issues.

8 **Risk Assessments**

- 8.1 A risk assessment is not required.

9 **IT Implications**

- 9.1 There are no IT implications.

10 **Property Implications**

- 10.1 There are no property implications.

11 **Procurement Implications**

- 11.1 There are no procurement implications.

12 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no environmental or health and safety implications.

13 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

13.1 There are no community cohesion implications.

14 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

14.1 No

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 No

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 n/a

19 **Background Papers**

The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

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