

Report to COUNCIL

Review of Political Balance on Committees

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Reason for Decision

Since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, on 18th December (adjourned until 20th January 2025), the Chief Executive has received notification that Councillors Adams, Arnott and Sheldon have resigned from the Conservative Group. Councillors Adams and Arnott will henceforth sit as Independent Members, whilst Councillor Sheldon joined the Oldham Group on 27th March, having sat as an Independent Member since his resignation from the Conservative Group in January 2025.

Considering 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 2024/25 municipal year. The effect, in terms of committee places is that the Conservatives will cede seats on the Planning Committee, Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board, Employment Committee and the Highway Regulation Committee to the four Independent Members (Councillors Adams, Arnott, Ball and Wilkinson) and their seat on the Commons Registration Committee to the Oldham Group. The Independent Members will cede their seat on the Audit Committee to the Oldham Group.

Recommendations

- (a) That the revised composition of the political groups as shown in paragraph 1.1 be noted.

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- (b) The number of seats on the various Committees for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year be as detailed in paragraph 1.5.
 - (c) Any outstanding appointments to be delegated to the Chief Executive in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group.
 - (d) That nominations for one seat on each of the Planning Committee, Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board, Employment Committee and the Highway Regulation Committee be sought from the four Independent Members who are not aligned to a political group and nominations for seats on the Commons Registration Committee and the Audit Committee be sought from the Oldham Group.

Appointment of Committees and Composition of Political Groups

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. On 31st December 2024, Councillors Adams, Arnott and Sheldon have resigned from the Conservative Group. Councillors Adams and Arnott will sit as Independent Members and Councillor Sheldon has joined the Oldham Group Therefore, the Conservative Group has been reduced from eight to five members. The new leader of the Conservative Group is Councillor Woodvine.

1.1 Political Groups

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

(i)	The Labour Group	27	Members
(ii)	The Liberal Democrat Group	9	Members
(iii)	The Oldham Group	9	Members
(iv)	Conservative Group	5	Members
(v)	Failsworth Independent Party	2	Members
(vi)	Royton Independents	2	Members
(vii)	The Independent Group	2	Members

There are 4 Independent Members not aligned to a political group.

- The Labour Group comprises: Councillors Shah (Leader), Taylor, Mohon Ali, Aslam, Bashforth, Brownridge, Charters, Chauhan, Cosgrove, Davis, Dean, Goodwin, Harrison, A. Hussain, F. Hussain, J. Hussain, S. Hussain, Iqbal, Islam, Jabbar, Malik, McLaren, Moores, Mushtaq, Nasheen, Rustidge and Shuttleworth.
- The Liberal Democrat Group comprises: Councillors Sykes (Leader), Al-Hamdani, Bishop, Hamblett, Harkness, Kenyon, Marland, Murphy and Williamson.
- The Oldham Group comprises: Councillors Ghafoor (Leader), Akhtar, Zaheer Ali, Azad, Chowhan, Ibrahim, Kouser, Sheldon and Wahid
- The Conservative Group comprises: Councillors Woodvine (Leader), Byrne, Lancaster, Quigg and Sharp.
- The Failsworth Independent Party comprises: Councillors Hobin (Leader) and Hindle.
- The Royton Independents comprises; Councillors Hurley (Leader) and Hughes.
- The Independent Group comprises Councillors Hince (Leader) and Navesey
- Councillors Adams, Arnott, Ball and Wilkinson are independent members not aligned to a political 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:-

- (i) That not all seats on the body are allocated to the same political group.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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,
- (iv) Subject to paragraphs (i) to (iii) 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	$27/60 \times 100 = 45\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 45\% = 56.25$	56 seats
Liberal Democrat Group	$9/60 \times 100 = 15\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 15\% = 18.75$	19 seats
Oldham Group	$9/60 \times 100 = 15\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 15\% = 18.75$	19 seats
Conservative Group	$5/60 \times 100 = 8.33\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 8.33\% = 10.41$	10 seats
Failsworth Independent Party	$2/60 \times 100 = 3.33\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 3.33\% = 4.16$	4 Seats
The Independent Group	$2/60 \times 100 = 3.33\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 3.33\% = 4.16$	4 seats
Royton Independents	$2/60 \times 100 = 3.33\%$	$125 \text{ seats} \times 3.33\% = 4.16$	4 seats

There are 4 Independent Members not within a Group. Unallocated seats will be offered to them.

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)	Oldham Group (OG)	Conservatives (C)	Failsworth Independents (FIP)	The Independent Group (TIG)	Royton Independents (RI)
16	7.20	2.40	2.40	1.33	0.53	0.53	0.53
15	6.75	2.25	2.25	1.24	0.50	0.50	0.50
14	6.30	2.10	2.10	1.16	0.46	0.46	0.46
13	5.85	1.95	1.95	1.08	0.43	0.43	0.43
12	5.40	1.80	1.80	0.99	0.39	0.39	0.39

11	4.95	1.65	1.65	0.91	0.36	0.36	0.36
10	4.50	1.50	1.50	0.83	0.33	0.33	0.33
9	4.05	1.35	1.35	0.74	0.29	0.29	0.29
8	3.60	1.20	1.20	0.66	0.26	0.26	0.26
7	3.15	1.05	1.05	0.58	0.23	0.23	0.23
6	2.70	0.90	0.90	0.49	0.19	0.19	0.19
5	2.25	0.75	0.75	0.41	0.16	0.16	0.16
4	1.80	0.60	0.60	0.33	0.13	0.13	0.13
3	1.35	0.45	0.45	0.24	0.10	0.10	0.10

- 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	OG	C	FIP	TIG	RI	Ind
Planning	16	7	2	2	1	1	1	1	0
Licensing	15	7	2	2	1	1	1	1	0
Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	11	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	11	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	11	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	11	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Audit Committee	9	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Employment Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Appointments Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Commons Registration	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Charitable Trust Committee	6	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Standards Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Highway Regulation Committee	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

(formerly TRO Panel)									
Appeals Committee	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	125	56	20	20	10	2	2	2	0

The above calculation leaves 13 committee places to be allocated.

1.5 Adjustment of Seats

In accordance with the rules of political balance, so far as practicable, 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 2024/25 Municipal Year be fixed as follows:-

Committee	Seats	L	LD	OG	C	FI P	TI G	RI	Ind
Planning	16	7	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Licensing	15	7	2	2	1	1	1	0	1
Place, Economic Growth and Environment Scrutiny Board	11	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	1
Governance, Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board	11	5	2	2	1	0	0	1	0
Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Board	11	5	1	2	1	0	0	1	1
Children and Young People Scrutiny Board	11	5	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Audit	9	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Employment Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Commons Registration	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Appointments Committee	7	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	
Charitable Trustee Committee	6	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Standards Committee	7	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Highways Regulation Committee (formerly TRO)	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Appeals Committee	5	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	
Total	125	56	19	19	11	4	4	4	8

- a. 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
- b. Annual Council on 22nd May 2024 appointed a District Lead for each District Area and 2 Deputy District Leads for North and East District.

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- c. It was previously agreed that the standards sub-committee, dealing with assessments or hearings will consist of 5 members with 2 Members from the Labour Group and one each from the Liberal Democrat Group, Conservative Group and the Oldham Group who have seats on the Standards 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. Substitutes are not permitted for Licensing. For the Planning Committee, up to 16 substitutes are to be nominated in accordance with the political balance of each Committee. Council is also asked to appoint substitutes to the Highways Regulation Committee, the Audit Committee and to the four Overview and Scrutiny Boards.
- 1.7 Council is asked to note the revised 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 Implications**
- 6.1 There are no legal comments.
- 7 **Equality Impact – including implications for Children and Young Persons**
- 7.1 N/a
- 8 **Key Decision**
- 8.1 No
- 9 **Key Decision Reference**
- 9.1 n/a
- 10 **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 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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11. **Appendices**
None