

To: Council
Date: 26 July 2021
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Review of allocation of seats to political groups

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To review the allocation of seats to political groups following notification of the formation of a new political group, the Independent Group.
Cabinet Member with responsibility:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships
Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the revised allocations of seats to political groups as shown in Appendix 1; 2. Approve the following changes to the membership of committees appointed at the Annual Council meeting in accordance with the wishes of political groups in view of the revised allocations: Cllr Latif to come off the Audit and Governance Committee, Cllr Lygo to come off the General Purposes Licensing Committee, and Cllr Snowton to come off the Standards Committee; 3. Delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance to appoint members to the seats allocated to the Independent Group based on the wishes of that group, or if no nominations are received within 21 days, to appoint members to those seats based on the allocations agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2021 and the wishes of political groups. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Revised allocation of seats to political groups 2021/22 (updated July 2021)

Introduction and background

1. Council at its annual meeting on 19 May 2021 agreed the structure of non-executive committees for the 2021/22 Council year, allocated seats to political groups based political proportionality and appointed members to committees.
2. On 21 June 2021 the Head of Law and Governance received notification of the formation of a new political group called the Independent Group comprising Cllr

Malik and Cllr Haines, with Cllr Malik as the Group Leader and Cllr Haines as the Deputy Group Leader.

3. The notification of a new political group, coming over one month after the previous review of seat allocations, triggers a review of the representation of different political groups on politically balanced committees under Section 17 of The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Review of the allocation of seats to political groups

4. The political balance of the Council and its committees has been reviewed in accordance with the principles of political proportionality set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989:
 - Where there is more than one political group, all seats must not be allocated to the same group.
 - The majority of seats must be allocated to the group with the majority on the Council.
 - When considering all seats available for allocation the total of those given to each group should match their representation on the Council overall.
 - The number of seats on each individual committee allocated to groups should match their representation on the Council overall.
5. Applying these principles may not result in a precise mathematical allocation of seats. In these cases the allocations are rounded up at 0.5 and above.
6. As set out in the report to the Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2021 titled Appointment of Committees for the Council Year 2021/22, in the event that achieving political proportionality on all committees results in an overall over-allocation of seats to a particular group, the group with the over-allocation will be asked which seat(s) they wish to relinquish. Any such seats will then be reallocated to group(s) with an overall under-allocation of seats. This process may involve some discussion between political groups.
7. The principles of political proportionality and the process of allocating seats to groups has been applied. Council is asked to approve the revised allocation of seats to political groups shown in Appendix 1.
8. Three seats are allocated to the Independent Group, one on each of the Audit and Governance Committee, General Purposes Licensing Committee and Standards Committee. At the Annual Council meeting two of these seats were allocated to the Labour Group (Audit and Governance and General Purposes Licensing) and one to the Lib Dem Group (Standards).

Changes to committee membership

9. The Labour Group has confirmed that Cllr Latif will no longer sit on the Audit and Governance Committee and Cllr Lygo will no longer sit on the General Purposes Licensing Committee.
10. The Lib Dem Group has confirmed that Cllr Snowton will no longer sit on the Standards Committee.
11. Council is asked to approve these changes to committee membership.

Appointments where political group fails to express wishes

12. The Independent Group has indicated to the Proper Officer that it does not intend to nominate members to the seats that the Council is required to allocate to that Group, and as of 16 July 2021, no nominations had been notified by that Group. Regulation 15 of The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 provides that where a political group fails to express its wishes in relation to a seat that has been allocated to it within three weeks of the allocation being made and notified to that group, the authority may make such appointment to that seat as they think fit.
13. This report seeks delegated authority for the Head of Law and Governance to appoint to the three seats allocated to the Independent Group based on the wishes of the Independent Group in the first instance, or if no nominations are received from that group within 21 days, to appoint to those seats based on the allocations approved by Council at its annual meeting on 19 May 2021 prior to the formation of the Independent Group. In the latter scenario, the seats on Audit and Governance and General Purposes Licencing would be re-allocated to the Labour Group and the seat on the Standards would be re-allocated to the Lib Dem Group at the expiration of the 21 day period. Those groups could then choose to re-nominate the members that are now coming off those committees or other members as they see fit.

Financial implications

14. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal issues

15. The allocation of seats on politically balanced committees is governed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. The legal issues including the Council's duty to appoint to committees in accordance with the principles of political proportionality and the wishes of political groups are contained within the report.

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Background Papers: None

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