

**To:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 04 December 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance  
**Title of Report:** Scrutiny Standing Panel and Review Group Arrangements

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To appoint members and chairs of Scrutiny Standing Panels and Review Groups following changes to the political composition of Oxford City Council.
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Lucy Pegg, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2023/24
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Recommendations: That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agree</b> the revised cross-party principle guide for appointments to Standing Panels and Review Groups as set out at paragraph 5 of this report; and <b>delegate authority</b> to the Scrutiny Officer to update the Scrutiny Committee Operating Principles 2023/24 to reflect the change.</li> <li>2. <b>Agree</b> the allocation of 6 seats on Standing Panels to political groups for the remainder of 2023/24 (Finance and Performance Panel, Housing and Homelessness Panel, Climate and Environment Panel, Companies Scrutiny Panel).</li> <li>3. <b>Agree</b> to appoint members and chairs of the Finance and Performance, Housing and Homelessness, Climate and Environment and Companies Scrutiny Panels in accordance with nominations made by political groups (<i>to be announced at the meeting</i>).</li> <li>4. <b>Agree</b> that the membership of the Finance and Performance Panel, including the Chair, will comprise the membership of the Budget Review Group for 2023/24.</li> </ol>	

## Introduction and background

1. As a result of recent changes to the political composition of Oxford City Council, a review of political proportionalities on committees was undertaken and a report prepared for the appointment to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and the nominations made by political groups by Full Council at its meeting on 27 November 2023.
2. As per the Council's Constitution Part 8.2, the Scrutiny Committee can establish Standing Panels and Review Groups, the membership of which will be set by the

Scrutiny Committee. At its first meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish four Standing Panels (Finance and Performance Panel; Housing and Homelessness Panel; Climate and Environment Panel; and Companies Scrutiny Panel) and one Review Group (Budget Review Group). There are no proposed changes to the name, number, remit, or meeting dates of any of these Standing Panels or Review Groups, as they were agreed for the duration of the 2023/24 municipal year.

3. The proposed changes are to the political balance and, as a result, membership of the Standing Panels and Review Groups.

### **Political Balance**

4. While Standing Panels and Review Groups are not required to reflect the Council's political make-up, the Scrutiny Committee has agreed in the current and previous years to use a cross-party principle guide for appointments to ensure Standing Panels and Review Groups are representative. The political balance guide is set out in paragraph 18 of the Scrutiny Committee Operating Principles (Annex 1 to Part 8 of the Council's Constitution).
5. Although not required by legislation, following the changes to the political composition of the Council the cross-party principle guide for appointment to Standing Panels and Review Groups has been reviewed, to ensure membership remains cross-party and representative. In accordance with the new political composition of the Council, the cross-party principle guide for appointments to Standing Panels and Review Groups is set out below; it is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee delegates authority to the Scrutiny Officer to update the Scrutiny Committee Operating Principles 2023/24 to reflect this.

**4 Members:** 1 Labour, 1 Lib Dem, 1 Green, 1 Oxford Socialist Independents

**6 Members:** 2 Labour, 1 Lib Dem, 1 Green, 1 Oxford Socialist Independents, 1 Independent Group

6. Given the larger number of political groups which now make up Oxford City Council, it is recommended that all Standing Panels and Review Groups be constituted of six Members, to allow for true cross-party representation. However, should one of the groups not wish to take up their allocation on particular Standing Panels or Review Groups then membership may revert to four Members.

### **Membership**

7. It is recommended that, provided the existing Standing Panel and Review Group Chairs for 2023/24 are renominated to sit on their respective Standing Panels and Review Groups, existing Chairs should continue in their roles for the remainder of the municipal year in the interests of continuity. In the event that an existing Chair is not renominated, the Committee will need to appoint a replacement Chair for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.
8. It is recommended that all Standing Panels and Review Groups have a membership of six Members. The Committee is recommended to agree the full membership of Standing Panels and Review Groups in accordance with the revised cross-party principle guide (see paragraph 5 above) and the nominations made by political groups.

9. As agreed at the Committee's first meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year, it is recommended that the membership of the Finance and Performance Panel and the Budget Review Group should be the same (including the Chair), given the specialist skills and knowledge developed by these Members through scrutinising the Council's finances throughout the course of the year.

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<b>Background Papers:</b> None
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