

To: Council
Date: 27 November 2023
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Appointment of Committees for the Council Year 2023/24

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	For Council to appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the remainder of the Council year 2023-24
Legislation:	Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15)
Recommendation(s): Council is recommended to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in <i>Appendix 2: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2023-24;</i> 2. Appoint to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and (where received and detailed in Appendix 3) in line with the nominations made by political groups, as shown in <i>Appendix 3: Committee nominations 2023-24;</i> 3. Appoint a member of the Independent Group to the General Purposes Licensing and Licensing and Gambling Acts Committees as no nomination has been received from the party. In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the nomination must therefore be made by Council. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Committee Structure 2023/24
Appendix 2	Political Proportionalities on Committees 2023/24
Appendix 3	Committee Nominations 2023/24

Introduction and background

1. This report invites Council to review the political proportionality and appointments to the committee of council following changes to the political make up of the Council in line with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Constitution.
2. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15) (“The Act”) provides a statutory basis for the allocation of committee seats to political groups based on principles of political proportionality. To enable this the Council has to provide for:
 - a. Political Groups to be formed and Group Leaders elected.
 - b. Seats on committees to be allocated to political groups in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
3. The political balance of the Council and its committees has been reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Appendix 2 shows the political proportionalities on the committees the Council is asked to appoint to.
4. Appendix 3 shows the nominations to the seats on committees.
5. The report and appendix proposes allocations in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This means no ungrouped members have been allocated a seat and that the seats are allocated to the groups based on the entitlement resulting from the calculation. Council must either:
 - a. Approve the recommendations of this report; or
 - b. In the event that it wishes to approve alternative arrangements, they must be approved with no member of the Council voting against in order to waive the political proportionality requirements under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Political Groups

6. Individual members are required to indicate a wish to be a member of a particular political group (or cease to be a member of a political group). Political groups comprise two or more members who have indicated that they wish to be a member of that group by signing a notice to the proper officer, the Head of Law and Governance. The Group Secretaries of established groups will normally hold and co-ordinate these notices (commonly known as political group forms). The notice must include the name of the Group Leader and may include the name of the Deputy Group Leader.
7. Once political groups have been formed, changes to the membership and leadership of groups can be made by notice to the Head of Law and Governance. A change of group leader must be notified by a majority of group members.

Political balance calculations

8. Council has a duty to appoint to most committees using the principles of political proportionality set out in the Act. These principles should be read hierarchically:
 - 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.
9. Applying these principles may not result in a precise mathematical allocation of seats. In these cases the allocations will rounded up at 0.5 and above.
 10. 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.
 11. Non-grouped independent members are not treated as political groups but do affect overall proportionality. As such they should be offered any seats that remain unallocated once all groups have received their full proportional allocation of seats.
 12. Where nominations are not made to a seat allocated to a political group within the statutory time limits the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 then provides that such seats shall be allocated to by Council.
 13. Appendix 2 shows the numbers of committee seats allocated to political groups for the 2024/24 council year on the basis of the methods, calculations and conventions described in paragraphs 8-11. A total of 85 committee seats are included in political balance calculations.

Appointments to Council Committees

14. Appendix 3 shows the nominations to committee seats made by political groups, in accordance with the seat allocations shown in Appendix 2. Council is recommended to appoint the nominated members to committees as set out in Appendix 3.
15. There will be a standing item on Council agendas to enable political groups to propose any changes to their committee appointments, should they wish to do so.

Appointments to Scrutiny Panels and Review Groups

16. The Scrutiny Committee may establish informal standing panels or review groups (otherwise known as 'task and finish' groups) and appoint members to them in accordance with 'operating principals' agreed by the Committee. Membership of these bodies will be cross-party and can be drawn from all non-executive members but the principles of political proportionality do not strictly apply. Nominations to these bodies will be handled separately, once those bodies have been established by the Scrutiny Committee.

Financial issues

17. There are no financial issues to consider. The recommendations in this report do not have any financial impacts.

Legal issues

18. The legal issues including the Council's duty to appoint to committees in accordance with the provisions of S15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are contained within the report. Alternative arrangements may be approved by

Council but it can only be done with no member present voting against such arrangements. Otherwise, proportionality must be followed.

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Background Papers: None
