

The Chief Executive's Report on Political Proportionality

Review of Political Proportionality

We have been notified that Cllr Jo Beavis no longer a member of the registered Conservative Group on Essex County Council. We have not been notified that Cllr Beavis has joined any other registered Group on Essex County Council. The political composition of the Council is now as follows:

Group	Number of members
Conservative	53
Liberal Democrat	8
Labour	6
Non-aligned group	6
Independent (not in a political group)	2

The annual review of political proportionality has been undertaken in accordance with the statutory political balance rules. The law requires the Council to allocate committee seats to registered political groups in accordance with those rules. The rules are as follows:

1. The majority party must have the most seats on every committee. Where there are co-opted voting members this is a majority of all seats, not just those held by councillors.
2. The total number of ordinary committee seats must be proportionate. Where the Conservative Group has 71% of Council seats it should have 71% of the ordinary committee seats. Overview and Scrutiny Committees and joint committees do not count as 'ordinary committees'.
3. Each individual committee must be as proportionate as possible. Subject to the impact on other groups, a group with 71% of Council seats should have as close to 71% of the seats on each committee as possible.

These rules can sometimes conflict, depending on the number and size of the political groups. If this happens the first rule is the most important, then the second and then the third.

The political balance rules do not always completely determine the balance of each committee. Sometimes the Council unavoidably has some discretion as to how to apply those rules. For example, if there are committees of the same size which must be balanced differently under the rules, there is discretion as to which committee those should be applied to. Any discretion is exercised by full Council.

The changes do not on this occasion result in any changes to the political balance of the Council, which remain as determined in October 2018.

Recommended:

That the political balance and committee seat allocations to registered political groups be unchanged for the 2019/20 year and as shown in Appendix 1.

Essex County Council

Allocation of Seats on Committees as at 14 May 2019

Ordinary Committees (which must be overall proportionate and, individually, as proportionate as possible)					
Committee	Size	Conservative	Lib Dem	Labour	Non-Aligned
Development and Regulation	12	8	2	1	1
Audit, Governance and Standards	10	7	1	1	1
Investment Steering	7	5	0	1	1
Foreign Travel Committee	5	4	1	0	0
Other bodies (which must be individually proportionate)					
Committee	Size	Conservative	Lib Dem	Labour	Non-Aligned
Corporate Policy and Scrutiny	14	10	2	1	1
People and Families Policy and Scrutiny (includes 4 Co-optees)	14 + 4	10	2	1	1
Place and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny	14	10	2	1	1
Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny	12	9	1	1	1