

The Chief Executive's Report on Political Proportionality

Review of Political Proportionality

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

Group	Number of members
Conservative	55
Liberal Democrat	7
Labour	6
Non-aligned group	6
Independent	1

A review of political proportionality has been undertaken in accordance with the statutory political balance rules as 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 73% of Council seats it should have 73% 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 73% of Council seats should have as close to 73% 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.

In summary, the Conservative Group has decreased by one and the Council now has one member who is not in a political group, the impact on the political balance is as follows:

- a. The balance on the ordinary committees is unchanged
- b. The Liberal Democrat Group is entitled to an extra seat on the following Policy and Scrutiny Committees:
 - i. People and Families
 - ii. Corporate
 - iii. Place Services and Economic Growth
- c. The Conservative Group is entitled to one fewer seat on the Policy and Scrutiny Committees listed above.

In all other respects the committee allocations are as they were in 2017/18

Recommended:

That the revised political balance and committee seat allocations to registered political groups be noted.