

The Chief Executive's Report on Political Proportionality

Political Proportionality

Councillor David Finch, the Leader of the Conservative Group, has given notice that Councillor Andy Erskine has joined the Conservative Group on the Council. Councillor Erskine was previously a member of the Non-aligned Group. This triggers a review of the political balance of the Council's committees and other bodies.

Review of Political Proportionality

The political composition of the Council is now as follows:

Group	Number of members
Conservative	45
Liberal Democrat	9
Labour	8
UKIP	6
Non-aligned group	4
Green	2
Independent	1

The review of political proportionality has been undertaken in accordance with the statutory political balance rules as the law requires. Those rules are as follows:

1. The majority party must have a majority of 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. So where the Conservative Group has 60% of Council seats it should have 60% of the ordinary committee seats. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Joint Committees do not count as 'ordinary committees'.
3. Each individual committee must be as proportionate as possible. For example, a group with 60% of Council seats should, so far as possible, have 60% of the seats on each committee.

These rules can sometimes conflict, depending on the number and size of the political groups. If this happens the first rule takes priority, followed by 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 have to 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 size of the Conservative Group has increased by one and the Non-Aligned Group has reduced by one. The sole resulting change is that the Conservative Group is entitled to an additional seat, in place of the UKIP Group. This could be either on the Investment Steering Committee or on the Audit Committee. It is proposed that the change is made to the Audit Committee.

Recommendation:

- (1) That the revised political balance of the Council be noted.
- (2) That the seat allocations to political groups be changed so that the seat allocations on the Audit Committee are as follows:

Conservative 5 Liberal Democrat 1 Non-aligned 1