

The Chief Executive's Report on Political Proportionality

Review of Political Proportionality

We have been notified that Cllr Andy Wood is no longer a member of the registered Conservative Group on Essex County Council. We have also been notified that Cllr Wood has joined the registered Liberal Democrat Group on Essex County Council. The political composition of the Council is now as follows:

Group	Number of members
Conservative	54
Liberal Democrat	8
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 72% of Council seats it should have 72% 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 72% of Council seats should have as close to 72% 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 Liberal Democrat Group has increased by one, the impact on the political balance is as follows:

- a. The Liberal Democrat Group is entitled to an extra seat on the Development and Regulation Committee
- b. The Conservative Group is entitled to one fewer seat on the Development and Regulation Committee
- c. The balance on the Policy and Scrutiny committees is unchanged.

In all other respects the committee allocations are as they were appointed at the annual meeting in May 2018.

Recommended:

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