

The Chief Executive's Report on return of Members Elected and Political Proportionality

Brightlingsea By-Election Return of Members Elected

Political Proportionality

Alan Goggin has been returned as the Member for the Brightlingsea Division at the By-Election held on 9 October 2014 triggered by the resignation of Roger Lord. Councillor Finch, the Leader of the Conservative Group, has given notice that Councillor Goggin will be a member of the Conservative Group on the Council. 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	43
Labour	9
Liberal Democrat	9
UKIP	8
Non-aligned group	4
Green	2

The 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 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 57% of Council seats it should have 57% 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. A group with 57% of Council seats should have 57% 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 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 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 Conservative Group has increased by one and the UKIP Group has reduced by one. This means that:

- a. The UKIP Group is no longer entitled to two seats on the Place and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Labour Group is entitled to an extra seat on the Committee in place of UKIP.
- b. The UKIP Group is no longer entitled to three seats on the Essex Fire Authority and the seat needs to be reallocated to a group with the greater entitlement, namely the Conservative Group.
- c. All other seat allocations remain unchanged.
- d. The allocation is shown below, with changes being made indicated in brackets:

	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Non-aligned	Green	Total
Economic Growth and Place Services Scrutiny	8	2(+1)	2	1(-1)	1	0	14
Essex Fire Authority	12(+1)	2	2	2(-1)	1	1	20

Recommended:

- (1) That the revised political balance of the Council be noted.
- (2) That Councillor Alan Bayley be replaced on the Place and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Councillor (name to be inserted at the meeting) a Labour Group member nominated by the Leader of the Labour Group.
- (3) That Councillor Kerry Smith be removed from the Essex Fire Authority and replaced by Councillor (name to be inserted at the meeting) nominated by the Leader of the Conservative Group.