

Full Council

14 December 2021

Review of Political Balance

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: J Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

- (a) That following a review of the Political Balance, the allocation of committee seats, as set out in the Appendix to this report be approved;
- (b) That the following nominations to vacancies on committees be approved in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Group:

Cllr M Barron – Appeals Committee
Cllr M Barron – Licensing Committee
Cllr M Roe – Place & Resources Overview Committee

Reason for Recommendation:

To approve the allocation of committee seats following a formal review of the political balance of the Council, as a consequence of Cllr M Barron moving from the Liberal Democrat Group to the Conservative Group.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 27 November 2021, Matt Prosser, as Proper Officer, received formal notification from Cllr M Barron that he was moving with immediate effect

from the Liberal Democrat Group to the Conservative Group. Subsequent to this notification the Chief Executive received a request from Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Conservative Group, to undertake a review of the political balance of the Council. A review has therefore been undertaken in line with the Political Balance regulations.

2. Financial Implications

None.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

None.

4. Climate implications

None.

5. Other Implications

None.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

N/A

8. Appendices

Appendix – Political Balance Chart

9. Background Papers

None.

10. Review of Political Balance

- 10.1 As a result of Cllr M Barron moving to the Conservative Group, the Group now has 44 members and the Liberal Democrat Group now has 28 members. The percentage allocation of 139 ordinary committee seats has therefore been reviewed in the light of this change.

Conservative Group overall percentage allocation of seats = 53.66%
Liberal Democrat Group overall percentage allocation of seats = 34.15%

This gives the Conservative Group an overall committee seat allocation of 75 committee seats and the Liberal Democrat Group an overall seat allocation of 47.

- 10.2 When reviewing political balance and the allocation of committee seats the Council must take into consideration the 4 principles as set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as far as reasonably practicable:

- (a) *Preventing domination by a single group:* All the seats on a committee should not be allocated to the same political group.
- (b) *Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committees:* If one political group has a majority in the Full Council, that political group should have a majority on each committee.
- (c) *Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares:* Subject to the above two principles, the total number of seats on all the committees of the Authority allocated to each political group should be in the same proportion as that political group's seats on the Full Council.
- (d) *Ensuring as far as practicable fairness on each committee:* Subject to the above three principles, the number of seats on each committee of the Authority allocated to each political group should be in the same proportion as that political group's seats on the Full Council.

- 10.3 In order to comply with the above principles, and in particular the principle set out in paragraph (b), the Leader of the Conservative Group and the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group have agreed that the Conservative Group will be allocated an additional seat to both the Appeals Committee and the Licensing Committee and that the Liberal Democrat Group will subsequently lose a seat on each of these committees. The Liberal Democrat Group retain a seat on the Place & Resources Overview

Committee. The result of the review of the Political Balance is therefore that the Conservative have been allocated 76 committee seats and the Liberal Democrat Group have been allocated 47 committee seats. None of the committee seat allocations to the other political groups or the Labour & Co-operative member have been changed as a result of this review.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.