

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Representation of Political Groups on District Council Committees and Panels.
Meeting/Date:	Council – 19 May 2021
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor R Fuller, Executive Leader.
Report by:	Elections and Democratic Services Manager.
Ward(s) affected:	All.

Executive Summary:

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations describe arrangements for achieving a balance on Committees etc, to reflect the representation of political groups and independent Members on the District Council. The Act requires the District Council to review the representation of different political groups at the time when the Authority holds its Annual Meeting and as soon as practicable and over one month after the last review if the Proper Officer receives a request to undertake a further review of the allocation of seats given a change to membership of a political group.

The proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet and its membership will be determined by the Executive Leader

The Council is

RECOMMENDED

to determine the allocation of seats on District Council Committees/ Panels to political groups and to the non-aligned Members in accordance with the distribution illustrated in the attached Appendix and to note the requirements for appointments to advisory/sub-groups etc, in paragraph 5.3.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations describe arrangements for achieving a balance on Committees etc, to reflect the representation of political groups and independent Members on the District Council. The Act requires the District Council to review the representation of different political groups at the time when the Authority holds its Annual Meeting and as soon as practicable and over one month after the last review if the Proper Officer receives a request to undertake a further review of the allocation of seats given a change to membership of a political group.

2. PRINCIPLES OF PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.1 Members are reminded that in performing the duty to review representation, the Council must, so far as reasonably practicable, only determine the allocation of seats having regard to the following principles –
- ◆ that not all the seats are allocated to the same political group;
 - ◆ that the majority of seats are allocated to the political group which forms a majority of the Council's membership; and
 - ◆ that the number of seats allocated is in the same proportion as is borne by the number of Members of a political group to the membership of the Council.
- 2.2 Currently it is open to the Council to approve alternative arrangements otherwise than in accordance with the principles of proportionality providing that the alternative arrangements are approved without any Member voting against them.

3. CONSTITUTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS

- 3.1 Following the four by-elections held on 6th May 2021, the constitution of political groups on the Council is currently as follows:-

Name of Group	No. of Members
Conservative	30
HDC Independent Group	10
Liberal Democrat	7
Labour	3

There is now 1 Member of the Council who is not aligned to a political group.

- 3.2 Following the election of Councillor Dr Nik Johnson to the post of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor his office of councillor is now deemed vacant. There is therefore one vacancy on the District Council that remains.

3.3 The membership of groups in proportion to the total membership of the Council is therefore as follows:-

	%
Conservative	57.69%
HDC Independent Group	19.23%
Liberal Democrat	13.46%
Labour	5.77%

The Independent Members represent 1.92% of the membership of the Council. Similarly, this also applies to the vacancy on the Council.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

4.1 Under the Local Government Act 2000, the proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet or to any Sub-Groups or Sub-Committees, which the Cabinet may appoint. Appointment of the Cabinet also lies with the Executive Leader of the Council. The number of seats to which the Council can appoint to is 72

4.2 The following requirements of the Act also need to be adhered to by the Council in determining the membership of Panels, etc. –

- ◆ the Cabinet may not include either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council;
- ◆ Overview and Scrutiny Panels may not comprise any Member of the Cabinet;
- ◆ the Executive Leader, Deputy Executive Leader and any Member of the Cabinet shall not be elected as Chairman of any Committee or Panel other than any that may be appointed by the Cabinet.

4.3 The Constitution also provides for the Development Management Committee, Licensing and Protection Committee, the Employment Committee and the Licensing Committee to include the relevant Executive Councillor within their respective membership.

The Constitution provides that every Member of the Council shall be appointed to serve on a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Panel, or Committee of the Council or the Cabinet.

5. PROPORTIONALITY

5.1 Excluding the Cabinet, the aggregate number of seats on Committees is now 72. Using the proportionality percentage referred to in paragraph 3.2 and rounding up or down as appropriate, produces the following entitlement –

	Seats
Conservative Group	42
HDC Independent Group	14
Liberal Democrat Group	10
Labour	4

Independent Members	1
Vacancy	1

- 5.2 Applying the principles of the Act and, similarly, rounding the figures as necessary, gives the distribution as set out in the Appendix.
- 5.3 The principles of proportionality apply similarly to advisory/sub-groups appointed or nominated by committees and regard must be given to the following examples of entitlements to seats:-

No. of Members on Sub-Group, etc	Proportion of Members from Political Groups				
	Cons	HDC Ind Group	Lib Dem	Labour	Ind
3	2	1	0	0	0
4	2	1	1	0	0
5	3	1	1	0	0
6	3	1	1	1	0
7	4	1	1	1	0
8	5	1	1	1	0
9	5	2	1	1	0
10	6	2	1	1	0

- 5.4 The Cabinet may not delegate any of its functions to non-Cabinet Members. Therefore any Sub-Group of the Cabinet that is exercising any decision-making powers delegated to it by the Cabinet must only include Cabinet Members. This does not prevent any Advisory Group appointed by the Cabinet that has no decision-making powers and whose terms of reference are merely advisory from including non-Cabinet Members.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 6.1 The Council is invited to determine the allocation of seats on District Council Committees to political groups and to the non-aligned Members in accordance with the distribution illustrated in the attached Appendix and to note the requirements for appointments to advisory/sub groups etc, in paragraph 5.3. The proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet and its membership will be determined by the Executive Leader
- 6.2 The opportunity otherwise is available currently to allocate seats in accordance with an alternative arrangement, with the exception of the Cabinet, provided this arrangement is approved by the Council with no Member voting against.

7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A - Schedule of Allocations

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Local Government Act 2000


Localism Act 2011

District Council Constitution

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