

Insert:  
Council – 21st May 2026

Report by: Elections and Democratic Services  
Manager



**Wards**  
All

**Open / Exempt**  
Open

**Key Decision?**  
No

## Representation of Political Groups on District Council Committees and Panels

**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.

### Recommendations

1. to determine the allocation of seats on District Council Committees/ Panels to political groups and to the non-aligned Member in accordance with the distribution illustrated in the attached Appendix A;
2. to note the requirements for appointments to advisory/sub-groups etc, set out in paragraph 5.3; and
3. if required due to the District Council Committees/ Panels not appointing their respective Chairs and Vice Chairs, to make such appointments by further resolutions of Council at this annual Council meeting (this meeting having been adjourned to allow the relevant meetings of the District Council Committees/ Panels to take place for the purposes of making such appointments).

**Report Author(s)**

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## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 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.
- 1.2** Following the District Council elections on 7th May 2026, the purpose of this report is to consider how the outcome of, and the balance between the political parties now represented on the Council, affects the political proportionality rules.

## **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 –
- a) that not all the seats are allocated to the same political group;
  - b) that the majority of seats are allocated to the political group which forms a majority of the Council's membership;
  - c) that subject to a) and b) above, the number of seats allocated on ordinary committees allocated to each political group is the same proportion to the total of all seats on committees as is borne by the number of Members of a political group to the membership of the Council; and
  - d) that subject to a) to c) above, the number of seats allocated to each political group is the same proportion to the number of seats as is borne by the number of Members of that group to the membership of the Council.
- 2.2** 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. The apportionments set out in this report are in accordance with the principles of proportionality and so can be determined by simple majority.

## **3. CONSTITUTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS**

- 3.1** The new constitution of political groups on the Council is currently as follows:-

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>No. of Members</b>
Liberal Democrat	20
Conservative	15
Reform	10
HDC Independent Group	4
Green	2

- 3.2** One Labour and Co-operative Member is not aligned to a political group. Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the rule states that only political

groups of two or more Members can be formally recognised and therefore included in the calculations under the political balance rules.

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

	%
Liberal Democrat	38.46
Conservative	28.85
Reform	19.23
HDC Independent Group	7.69
Green	3.85

**3.4** Officers have prepared an indicative proportionality for the use of Group Leaders in considering their Group nominations.

**3.5** To total proportion of all of the groups as compared to the total membership of the Council is 98.08%. The remaining 1.92% relates to the non-grouped Member.

#### **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 67.

**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 Chair or Vice-Chair 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 Chair 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 Committee, Licensing and Protection Committee and the Employment Committee to include the relevant Executive Councillor within their respective membership.

**4.4** 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 67. Using the proportionality percentage referred to in paragraph 3.2 and rounding up or down as appropriate, produces the following entitlement –

	<b>Seats</b>
Liberal Democrat Group	26
Conservative Group	19

Reform Group	13
HDC Independent Group	5
Green Group	3

- 5.2** As the Labour and Co-operative Member cannot form a political group this member is treated as non-aligned and after the proportionality calculation on number of seats for the political groups (66), there is one seat remaining. This remaining seat is allocated to the non-aligned Member as designated at the discretion of Council. Having regard to paragraph 4.4 this fulfils this requirement of the Constitution.
- 5.3** Applying the principles of the Act and, similarly, rounding the figures as necessary, gives the distribution as set out in Appendix A. Further detail on the proportionality calculation to establish the political balance is also set out at Appendix B.
- 5.4** 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	Proportion of Members from Political Groups				
	Liberal Democrats	Conservative	Reform	HDC Independent Group	Green
3	2	1	0	0	0
4	2	1	1	0	0
5	2	2	1	0	0
6	3	2	1	0	0
7	3	2	2	0	0
8	3	2	2	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 Member in accordance with the distribution illustrated in Appendix A 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.

**6.3** Given the allocation of seats on Committees and Panels following the recent election, there is a risk of deadlock in the appointment of committee chairs and vice-chairs. Pursuant to Article 4.2(e) of the Constitution, Council has the power to agree and/or amend the terms of reference for committees and panels, decide on their composition and make appointments to them. Accordingly it is empowered to resolve any deadlock. It is conducive to the conduct of business of the Council to have such deadlock resolved at the earliest opportunity, being this Annual Council meeting.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**7.1** Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Local Government Act 2000

Localism Act 2011

District Council Constitution

**7.2** Appendix A – Schedule of Allocations

Appendix B – Guidance on proportionality to establish political balance