

Divisions affected – All

COUNCIL

1 APRIL 2025

COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council is RECOMMENDED
 - a) To note the review of political balance of committees to reflect the formation of the Green Group and Reform UK Group.
 - b) To appoint members to the committees of the Council as listed at Annex 1.

Background

2. Seats are allocated to political groups in accordance with the groups' proportionate strength on the Council as a whole. Any seats left over are distributed to any non-aligned Independent members who are not members of a political group.
3. The following rules, in priority order, apply for political proportionality:
 - (i) Where a group has an overall majority on the Council, that group is entitled to a majority of the seats on each committee and sub-committee.
 - (ii) Each political group is entitled to its proportion of the total number of seats on all the committees added together, according to the ratio of the number of members of the group to the number of members of the Council.
 - (iii) Subject to (i) and (ii) above, each group is entitled to its proportion of the number of seats on each individual committee.
 - (iv) For sub-committees and some other bodies, a group is entitled to its proportion of the number of seats regardless of the total number of seats involved (but still subject to the majority rule in (i) above).

4. As the Council does not have a majority administration, (i) is not applicable but (ii), (iii) and (iv) do need to be applied to the allocation of seats.

Review of political balance

5. Since the last meeting of Council on 11 February 2025, the three Green councillors in the Liberal Democrat – Green Alliance registered to form their own group. Also, Councillor Felix Bloomfield left the Conservative Independent Alliance and formed a Reform UK Group with Councillor Kevin Bulmer.
6. The political balance calculation is now based on the following political group sizes:

20	Liberal Democrats
19	Conservative Independent Alliance (CIA)
14	Labour & Cooperative Party
3	The Independent Voice of Oxfordshire
3	Green Group
2	Reform UK Group
2	Non-aligned Independent
7. The revised political proportionality calculations are shown in Annex 2 and are summarised as follows:
 - i) Green councillors hold one place too many on the committees.
 - ii) The Liberal Democrats are under-represented by one full place.
 - iii) Reform UK councillors hold one place too many.
 - iv) The Conservative Independent Alliance is under-represented by one place.
 - v) Labour and Cooperative Party Group representation is unchanged
 - vi) The Independent Voice of Oxfordshire representation is unchanged
 - vii) The seats allocated to non-aligned Independents are unchanged.

Appointments

8. The following change has been agreed by the leaders of the Conservative Independent Alliance (CIA) and Reform UK:
 - Councillor Felix Bloomfield's position on the Charlotte Coxe Trust Committee will transfer to the CIA.
9. The following change has been agreed by the leaders of the Liberal Democrat and Green groups:

- Councillor Ian Middleton will be replaced on the Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee by a Liberal Democrat councillor to be confirmed.

Legal implications

10. The rules on political balance are contained in Sections 15, 16 and 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ('the Act') and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. The applicable rules from Section 15(5) of the Act are summarised in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report and these have been applied to the calculations in the annexes. Other legal considerations are contained in the main body of this report.

Comments checked by:

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Financial implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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Annex 1 – Committee membership and other appointments

Annex 2 – Political proportionality calculations

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