

Divisions affected – All

COUNCIL 30 JUNE 2026

COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

Report by 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 current formation of the political groups as detailed in Annex 1;
 - b) To appoint members to the committees of the Council as listed in Annex 2.

Review of political balance

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-grouped members.
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. Annual Council on 12 May 2026 received the last report on political balance. On 19 June 2026 officers received a Notice of Joining a Political Group form confirming that Councillor Higgins has joined the Liberal Democrat group.
5. As this form has been received more than a month following the previous review of political balance, a new review must take place (The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Regulation 17(c)).

6. The group numbers are now as follows:

35	Liberal Democrat Group
12	Labour & Cooperative Group
12	Oxfordshire Alliance Group
7	Green Group

There are three Members not aligned to any political group.

7. The political proportionality calculations following this change are shown in Annex 1 and are summarised as follows:

- There are 69 councillors and 97 seats on committees to allocate proportionally.
- Due to rule (i) above, the Liberal Democrat Group must have a majority on each committee. This results in a total of 56 seats – above their proportion of 49.20.
- The Labour & Cooperative Group and the Oxfordshire Alliance Group would be entitled to 16.87 seats each under strict proportionality. Because they have the same number of seats, they have the same proportion calculation on each committee. As was the case following the election in May 2025, there were six committees on which one group should have two seats, and the other group should have one seat. The two group leaders agreed how those seats were to be shared between the groups in a way which maintains the overall balance. It is proposed to return to the same allocation of seats. The result is that both groups have 16 seats.
- The Green Group would be entitled to 9.84 seats under strict proportionality. However, there are only 9 seats remaining to allocate. The Group has been allocated one seat on each of the eight committees on which it has the highest proportion.

Appointments

8. The leaders of the political groups are requested to submit their nominees for their committee places in time to be included in the Schedule of Business to be published as Annex 2 to this report the day before the Council meeting.

Legal implications

9. Political groups are constituted and notified to the Proper Officer in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990/1553.
10. Council is responsible for appointing to Committees under s102 of the Local Government Act 1972. Under section 15 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council has a duty to allocate committee seats to achieve political proportionality. This applies to all committees of the Council where at least three seats have to be filled by the members of the Council.

Comments checked by:

Jay Akbar

Head of Legal and Governance Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Financial implications

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

Comments checked by:

Drew Hodgson, Strategic Finance Business Partner

Anita Bradley

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex 1 – Political proportionality calculations

Annex 2 – Committee membership

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