

Divisions affected – All

**COUNCIL
20 MAY 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 groups following the Council election on 1 May 2025.
 - 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-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).

Review of political balance

4. Following the election on 1 May 2025 the number of councillors has increased to 69. There are 97 seats on committees to allocate.

5. Four political groups have been formed on the Council. The political balance calculation is now based on the following political group sizes:

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

6. The political proportionality calculations are shown in Annex 2 and are summarised as follows:

- 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 strict proportion of 50.16.
- 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. It was identified that 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 will be shared between the groups in a way which maintains the overall balance. This results in 16 seats for both groups.
- The Green Group would be entitled to 9.84 seats under strict proportionality. The Group has been allocated one seat on each of the nine committees on which it has the highest proportion.

Appointments

7. The political group leaders have nominated councillors for the committee positions as listed in Annex 1.

8. There are a number of additional appointments that are not subject to the Regulations on political balance. It is the practice though, to allocate positions proportionally and a proposed breakdown is shown in Annex 1.

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: Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal and Governance,
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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

Annex 2 – Political proportionality calculations

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