

**Divisions Affected – N/A**

## **COUNTY COUNCIL**

**– 16 May 2022**

### **COMMITTEES AND REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE**

**Report by Report by the Director of Law & Governance**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Council is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- (a) **note how the rules operate and approve necessary adjustments to achieve the balance across and within Committees to comply with the rules.**
- (b) **appoint Councillors to the scrutiny and other committees of the Council listed in Annex 3 as required by any changes necessary as a result of applying the proportionality rules, and subject to any changes on the nomination of the political groups.**

#### **Executive Summary**

1. The Council is required by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance on its committees on an annual basis and then in any circumstances set out in Regulations under the 1989 Act. A note is attached (**Annex 1**) which summarises how the rules operate.
2. The last revision took place at the Annual Council meeting on 17 May 2022.
3. Since then, Councillor Hannah Banfield has left the Labour & Cooperative Party Group to become an Independent Non-aligned Member. A further review of political balance now needs to occur to reflect the relative proportion of each Group with regards to seats on the Council.
4. This report therefore invites Full Council to note the revised proportionality and to make any consequential amendments to appointments to committees arising from this. **Annex 2** shows the revised arithmetical product of the rules for the Council's committees.

## Corporate Parenting Committee

5. To acknowledge the significance of the Council's corporate parenting role it is proposed that a formal Corporate Parenting Committee is established, under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, comprising nine members that will meet four times each year. The terms of reference for the committee are shown at **Annex 4**. The role of the committee will be to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children in care and care leavers.

## Implications of the revised proportionality

6. The relative sizes of the Council's Political Groups, and their entitlements to seats, are now as follows:

| Political Group                                      | Liberal Democrat/Green Alliance Group | Conservative-Independent Alliance Group | Labour & Co-operative Party Group |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Group Size   | 24                                    | 22                                      | 15                                |
| Revised number of seats – legal/notional entitlement | 37                                    | 34                                      | 23                                |
| Actual current number of seats                       | 37                                    | 34                                      | 24                                |
| Number of seats over or under entitlement            |                                       |   | One over                          |

7. Cllrs Banfield and Gawrysiak are not members of a political group on the Council and have one committee place each. It is proposed to have one Independent Non-Aligned Member on the new Corporate Parenting Committee.
8. Looking at the overall proportionality in the table above, the position is that the seat allocation is in balance overall save for a surplus of one for the Labour & Cooperative Party. The precise proportions of the 98 seats for each group are:

|                                   |        |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Liberal Democrat / Green Alliance | 37.333 |
| Conservative Independent Alliance | 34.222 |
| Labour & Cooperative Party Group  | 23.333 |

The Liberal Democrat / Green Alliance and the Labour Party Cooperative Group share the highest decimal remainders. Following consultation between the two group leaders it has been agreed that the Labour & Cooperative Party Group will retain the extra seat.

As no other group has an entitlement to another seat – it is not proposed to change the above allocation. The Council may decide to make other changes

