

Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Item for Decision:	To determine the size and allocation of seats to political groups and to approve the arrangements made for the appointment of members to Committees and Sub-Committees, and to approve the formation of a standing panel for senior officers.
Contributors	Chief Executive
Contact Officer	Sarah Jordan, Committee Manager
Financial Implications:	None
Council Priorities:	RES2
Recommendations:	It is RECOMMENDED that:- (a) Council approve the formation of a Standing Panel for senior officers as set out in paragraph 6; (b) the number of seats on the Committees and Sub-Committees for the 2009/2010 Municipal year be approved as detailed in the report; and (c) the arrangements to allocate the total number of seats on all Committees and Sub-Committees other than by political balance, be approved.

1. Applicable Lead Member Area

1.1 Resources

2. Crime and Disorder – Section 17 Implications

2.1 There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report

3. Equalities Implications

3.1 Political balance ensures that Committees are representative of the wishes of the electorate.

4. Risk Implications

4.1 Where the allocation of seats is not in accordance with political balance the Council has to approve the allocation without dissent.

5. Introduction

5.1 The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review the representation of the different political groups on Committees and Sub-Committees, and to allocate the seats in accordance with the wishes of the political groups based on the current balance of the Council as a whole

5.2 There are three conditions to allocating seats on Committees and Sub-Committees:-

- (a) the number of seats allocated to each political group on **each individual ordinary committee** bears the same proportion to the total number of seats held on the Council;

(b) the **total** number of seats allocated to each political group on **all the ordinary committees** bears the same proportion to the total number of seats held on the Council;

(c) the **total** number of seats allocated to each political group **on all committees and sub-committees** bears the same proportion to the total number of seats held on the Council.

5.3 The political balance of the Council stands at:-

- Conservatives 25 (69.44%)
- Liberal Democrats 11 (30.56%)

5.4 For the information and guidance of Members the arrangements which will need to be approved at the current meeting are set out hereunder.

6. Formation of a Standing Panel for Senior Officers

6.1 The National Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) conditions of service for Chief Executives (revised April 2008) and Chief Officers, require that a Standing Panel be established by Council to deal with matters of remuneration, discipline, capability, and grievance relating to the Chief Executive and Heads of Service.

6.2 The Panel is to comprise three Members and be politically balanced (the membership of which is set out in agenda item 8). In order to accommodate matters needing urgent attention or matters where there may be a conflict of interest, substitutes should also be appointed as necessary and in such a way as to continue to maintain political proportionality.

6.3 The Standing Panel will, in all matters of activity, be guided by and act in accordance with, the JNC Terms and Conditions, and any other statutory protection afforded to the posts of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

6.4 In applying the political proportionality the allocations of seats on the Panel according to political balance will be as follows:-

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Con.</u>	<u>Lib. Dem.</u>
Standing Panel for Senior Officers	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
(Actual Political Balance Entitlement)		(2)	(1)

7. Committee Membership

7.1 Under the new legislative arrangements, the role of all Members is split between the main Committees. In applying the political proportionality requirement as detailed above the allocation of seats on the main committees according to political balance and based on the Committee Structure would accordingly be as set out below. Membership allocations have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number:-

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Con.</u>	<u>Lib. Dem.</u>
Policy and Resources Committee	18	13	5
Planning Committee	16	11	5
Licensing Committee	12	8	4
Audit Committee	7	5	2
Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee	<u>18</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>
	<u>71</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>22</u>
(Actual Political Balance Entitlement)		(49.30)	(21.69)

7.2 If the committee structure, set out under 7.1 above, is supported the total allocation of seats on the committees would be in accordance with the political balance requirement.

8. Sub-Committee Membership

8.1 With regard to the Sub-Committees, the Conservative Group are entitled to 31 of the 45 seats, and the Liberal Democrat Group are entitled to 14 seats.

8.2 The allocation of seats on the Sub-Committees will be as follows:-

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Con.</u>	<u>Lib. Dem.</u>
Grants Sub-Committee	7	5	2
Housing Sub-Committee	7	5	2
Rate Relief Sub-Committee	6	4	2
Trees Sub-Committee	7	5	2
Community and Culture Sub-Committee	6	4	2
Environment & Health and Housing Sub-Committee	6	4	2
Performance and Resources Sub-Committee	6	4	2
	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
	45	31	14
(Actual Political Balance Entitlement)		(31.25)	(13.75)

8.3 Again, if the sub-committee structure, set out under 8.2 above, is supported the total allocation of seats on the sub-committees would be in accordance with the political balance requirement.

9. Allocation of All Seats (Committees and Sub-Committees)

9.1 As set out in paragraph 5.2(c) above, the allocation of the total number of seats on all Committees and Sub-Committees must also have regard to the political balance rules:-

	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Con.</u>	<u>Lib. Dem.</u>
All Committees and Sub-Committees	116	80	36
(Actual Political Balance Entitlement)		(80.55)	(35.45)

9.2 The discrepancy in the allocation and entitlement is due to the rounding up and rounding down of the overall committee and sub-committee membership allocations to the nearest whole number. The Conservatives would lose a seat (80 seats against the entitlement of 81) whilst the Liberal Democrats would gain a seat (36 seats against the entitlement of 35). The proposed allocation of seats on the ordinary committees and sub-committees, as described in paragraphs 7.1 and 8.2 of this report, impacts on the overall total. It will therefore be necessary for the Council to resolve, without dissent, to allocate the total number of seats on all Committees and Sub-Committees as set out in paragraph 9.1 above, other than by political balance (recommendation (c) refers).

10. Conclusion

10.1 Upon the allocation of membership and allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees being agreed, the Council must make appointments to those Committees and Sub-Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups. This is set out elsewhere on the agenda.

11. Appendices

11.1 There are no appendices to this report.

12. Background Papers

12.1 Published Works