

Political Balance on the Council

Council, item 12

Committee: COUNCIL
Date: 13 DECEMBER 2005
Title: POLITICAL BALANCE ON THE COUNCIL
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Agenda Item

12

Item for
decision

Summary

This report considered the current political composition of the Council and recommends that seats on the main committees be allocated to the three political groups as detailed in the report.

Recommendations

That the Council allocates seats on its main and other committees to the three political groups as detailed in the report.

Background Papers

Nil.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	That political parties liaise within their groups prior to Full Council to decide upon which Members will sit on the Committees
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Finance	N/A
Human Rights	N/A
Legal implications	To comply with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Ward-specific impacts	ALL
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

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- 2 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review the representation on them of different political groups at the Annual Meeting or as soon as practicable thereafter. It further requires them to allocate the seats on their committees to political groups represented in accordance, so far as reasonably practicable, with the following four principles of proportionality:-
- (a) that not all seats on the body concerned are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of an authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority;
 - (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

The Council

- 3 Following the Wimbish and Debden By-Election, the political composition of the Council is as follows:-

Group	Members	Percentage	Total Seats
			1.
Liberal Democrat	27	61.36%	54
Conservative	12	27.27%	24
Independent	5	11.36%	10

Allocation of Seats - Committees

- 4 The current seats available on the Council's main committees are as follows:-

Committee	Members	Group		
		LD	Con	Ind
		27	12	5
Operations	14	8.59	3.82	1.59

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Environment	15	9.2	4.09	1.7
Community	15	9.2	4.09	1.7
Development Control	14	8.59	3.82	1.59
Licensing	11	6.75	3	1.25
Review and Petitions	8	4.91	2.18	0.91
Performance Select	11	6.75	3	1.25
	88 seats			

- 5 The Liberal Democrat Group has been under represented on the Licensing Committee. The re-allocation could give that Group one more member than at present and the Conservative Group one less. However, as a result of the by-election, the Liberal Democrat Group is now entitled to one less member on the Development Control Committee and the Conservative Group gains one place.
- 6 Having regard to the training issues unsolved in these two committees, the two groups have agreed to exchange seats between the Licensing and Development Control Committee so that the current membership can be maintained. This is set out in the "Alternative Suggestion" below:-

Fit	Proportionality – Best			Alternative Suggestion		
	LD	Con	Ind	LD	Con	Ind
Operations	9	4	1	9	4	1
Environment	9	4	2	9	4	2
Community	9	4	2	9	4	2
	27	12	5	27	12	5
Development Control	8	4	2	9	3	2
Licensing	7	3	1	6	4	1
Review and Petitions	5	2	1	5	2	1
Performance	7	3	1	7	3	1
	27	12	5	27	12	5

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Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A