

Committee: Annual Council
Title: Political Balance
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Summary

1. This report considers the political composition of the Council and recommends that seats on the main committees be allocated to the four political groups as detailed in the report.
2. Following the election held on 2 May 2019, new political groups have been formed comprising 26 Residents for Uttlesford, 7 Liberal Democrats, 4 Conservatives and 2 Uttlesford Independents.

Recommendations

3. That the Council reviews its political composition and achieves political balance by allocating seats on its committees as detailed in the report.

Financial Implications

4. None.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None.

Impact

- 6.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Communication/Consultation | |
| Community Safety | |
| Equalities | |
| Health and Safety | |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Sustainability | |
| Ward-specific impacts | |
| Workforce/Workplace | |

Situation

7. The Local Government Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities local authorities to review the representation of the 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 seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

8. Ahead of any decision by the newly elected Council, it has been assumed the number of seats on ordinary committees of the Council (excluding Standards Committee) will be as follows:

| Committee | Number of Seats |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Governance, Audit and Performance | 10 |
| Licensing and Environmental Health | 10 |
| Planning | 12 |
| Scrutiny | 10 |
| Total | 42 |

9. Based on the 42 seats, the number of seats available to each group is as follows:

| Group | Percentage | Calculated Seats | Number of Seats |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Residents for Uttlesford | 66.67% | 28.01 | 28 |
| Liberal Democrats | 17.95% | 7.56 | 8 |
| Conservative | 10.26% | 4.32 | 4 |
| Uttlesford Independents | 5.13% | 2.18 | 2 |
| Total | 100% | 42 | 42 |

Licensing and Environmental Health Committee

10. The Licensing Committee cannot be taken into account for the purposes of the calculation because it was not established under the Local Government Act 1972. However, it seems sensible to offer the ten places to be allocated on the same basis of proportionality, and the Licensing Committee has therefore been included in the calculation of the number of seats.

Standards Committee

11. The Council's Constitution recognises that that the rules of political balance contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 apply but acknowledges that a politically balanced Standards Committee would be undesirable. It provides that subject to no member present voting against the proposal each political group on the Council would have at least one member on the Standards Committee. The aim is to achieve an even balance on the Committee.
12. Article 9 of the Constitution provides for three nominations for each political group, until the point when the Committee reaches a maximum of 9 members. As there are now 4 political groups it is proposed that membership of the Standards Committee should be allocated as follows:

| Political Party | Number of Seats |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Residents for Uttlesford | 3 |
| Liberal Democrats | 2 |
| Conservatives | 2 |
| Uttlesford Independents | 1 |
| Total | 8 |

Proposal for Allocation of Seats

13. The allocation of the 50 seats is therefore proposed as follows:

| Committee | No. Seats Available | Residents for Uttlesford | Liberal Democrat | Conservative | Independent |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Governance, Audit and Performance | 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Licensing and Environmental Health | 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Planning | 12 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Scrutiny | 10 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Standards | 8 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 8 | 31 | 10 | 6 | 3 |

Risk Analysis

14. There are no risks associated with this report.