

26 May 2021		ITEM: 10
Annual Council		
Allocation of Committee Seats and Committee Appointments		
Wards and communities affected: None	Key Decision: Not Applicable	
Report of: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
Accountable Assistant Director: Ian Hunt, Assistant Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer		
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report requests the Council to confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees and to appoint the nominations of political groups to committees. The report also requests the Council to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of certain committees.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

1.2 That the nominations of the political groups to seats on committees be approved, as set out in Appendix 2 (to be tabled when nominations are received).

1.3 That the non-voting co-opted members of the Planning Committee, the Standards and Audit Committee, the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee be appointed, as set out in Appendix 2.

1.4 That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees be appointed, as set out in Appendix 3 (to be tabled when nominations are received).

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Political Groups on the Council are formed in accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 when two

or more councillors notify the Chief Executive, as Proper Officer, of their wish to be treated as a group.

- 2.2 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes a duty on the local authority at the annual meeting, or as soon as possible after it, to review the allocation of seats on the committees of the Council between the political groups. The Council may carry out such a review and any other time and may do so if requested by a political group.
- 2.3 The following principles apply to the allocation of seats:
 - (a) That not all the seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) That the majority of seats on each committee are allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - (c) That, subject to (a) and (b), when allocating seats to a political group, the total number of their seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council, must reflect their proportion of the authority's membership; and
 - (d) Subject to (a) to (c), that the number of seats on each committee is as far as possible in proportion to the group's membership of the authority.
- 2.4 Sub-committees, with the exception of the Licensing Sub-Committee, are also governed by the political balance rules, but it is not necessary to add up all the sub-committee seats and then allocate them in proportion. As far as this is practicable, the allocation of seats on each sub-committee should reflect the proportional representation of the political groups on the Council.
- 2.5 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that, once the Council has determined the allocation of committee places between the political groups, the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the committees.
- 2.6 Any non-aligned members are to be appointed to available seats on committees by the Council.
- 2.7 The Cabinet and the Health and Wellbeing Board are not required to be proportional and so are outside of the political balance calculation.
- 2.8 The Leader of the Council appoints the Cabinet and, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, will also make nominations to the 5 places available on the Health and Wellbeing Board, with the latter to be agreed by the Council.
- 2.9 It is open to the Council when carrying out a review to adopt some arrangement other than that prescribed by the Act and the Regulations. Notice of such a proposal would have to be given in the Summons, and a decision would need to be made with no one voting against it. The remainder

of this report therefore assumes that the Council will not want an alternative arrangement to that prescribed by law.

Political proportionality

- 2.10 The political balance of the Council can be calculated by using the simple formula below (to two decimal places):

$$\frac{\text{No. of Group Members} \times 100}{49}$$

- 2.11 Following the elections on 6 May the political proportionality of the council is as follows:

Group	Councillors	%
Labour	16	32.65%
Conservative	29	59.18%
Thurrock Independents	3	6.12%
Independent	1	2.05%
Total	49	100

- 2.12 The calculation to determine the strict entitlement of political groups to seats on committees is as follows:

$$\frac{\% \text{ from Table 1}}{100} \times \text{Total No. of seats available (81 seats)}$$

- 2.13 Those members who are not members of political groups have no legal entitlement to an allocation of seats on committees. However, the political groups are entitled to their proportion of seats and once their entitlement has been reached, the remaining seats may be filled by members not belonging to a political group. Such Members are classed as being non-aligned.
- 2.14 The LGA Independent Group has taken the view that in the true spirit of the Act, that morally or democratically, non-aligned councillors are entitled to fair representation. Groups are not entitled to have more than their share and thus they cannot exclude councillors that are not grouped i.e. single party councillors or non-aligned Independent councillors. For example in an authority of 49 councillors with one non-grouped councillor, the council must make 1/49 of the places available.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The number of seats on committees that are available to be allocated amongst the political groups represented on the Council is 81.

3.2 Each of the political groups (formed when 2 or more councillors notify the Chief Executive, as Proper Officer, of their wish to be treated as a group) are entitled to a certain number of seats on committees. This is based upon their percentage representation on the Council as a whole, as detailed in Table 1 at paragraph 2.11 above.

3.3 The calculation to determine the entitlement of political groups to seats on committees is as follows:

$$\frac{\% \text{ from Table 1}}{100} \times \text{Total No. of seats available (81 seats)}$$

3.4 After undertaking the above calculation for each of the political groups represented on the Council, the entitlement to seats is as follows:

- Labour 26 seats
- Conservative 48 seats
- Thurrock Independent 5 seats
- Independent 2 seats

3.5 Each of the political groups and the non-aligned Member are only entitled to their proportion of seats.

3.6 In order to ascertain the number of seats to be allocated to political groups on each committee, the following calculation is required to be undertaken:

$$\frac{\% \text{ from Table 1}}{100} \times \text{No. of committee places available}$$

3.7 After applying the above calculation to each of the committees that have been established at Agenda Item 9, a 'strict seat entitlement' is arrived at for each party.

(a) 6 member committee – applies to all **Overview & Scrutiny committees and the Standards & Audit Committee**

- Lab 32.65 / 100 x 6 = 1.96 = **2 seat(s)**
- Con 59.18 / 100 x 6 = 3.55 = **4 seat(s)**
- TI 6.12 / 100 x 6 = 0.37 = **0 seat(s)**

(b) 7 member committee – applies to the **General Services Committee**

• Lab	$32.65 / 100 \times 7 =$	2.29 =	2 seat(s)
• Con	$59.18 / 100 \times 7 =$	4.14 =	4 seat(s)
• TI	$6.12 / 100 \times 7 =$	0.43 =	0 seat(s)

The unclaimed seat on this committee is dealt with in manual adjustment covered in 3.10 below.

(c) 8 member committee – applies to the **Corporate Parenting Committee**

• Lab	$32.65 / 100 \times 8 =$	2.61 =	3 seat(s)
• Con	$59.18 / 100 \times 8 =$	4.73 =	5 seat(s)
• TI	$6.12 / 100 \times 8 =$	0.49 =	0 seat(s)

(d) 9 member committee – applies to the **Planning Committee**

• Lab	$32.65 / 100 \times 9 =$	2.94 =	3 seat(s)
• Con	$59.18 / 100 \times 9 =$	5.33 =	5 seat(s)
• TI	$6.12 / 100 \times 9 =$	0.55 =	1 seat(s)

(e) 15 member committee – applies to the **Licensing Committee**

• Lab	$32.65 / 100 \times 15 =$	4.90 =	5 seat(s)
• Con	$59.18 / 100 \times 15 =$	8.88 =	9 seat(s)
• TI	$6.12 / 100 \times 15 =$	0.92 =	1 seat(s)

3.8 Non-Aligned Member –The Independent Member, as shown in Appendix 1, has the opportunity to claim 2 seats across committees. This is dealt with in the manual adjustment set out below.

3.9 **Appendix 1** shows the rounded and strict (statistical) allocation of seats to each political group. Manual adjustment is required to ensure that each group does not exceed its rounded entitlement through the strict statistical allocation.

3.10 From the figures set out in **Appendix 1**, manual adjustments are required. Group Leaders have been consulted and the following agreed:

- The Conservative Group will release 2 Licensing Committee seats and 1 Corporate Parenting Committee seat.
- The Labour Group will release 1 Licensing Committee seat.
- The Thurrock Independent Group will take 2 Licensing Committee seats and 1 Corporate Parenting Committee seat.

- The Ungrouped Member will take the remaining 1 Licensing Committee seat, as well as the unclaimed 1 seat on General Services Committee.

3.11 Group Leaders have been consulted in respect of the calculations set out at **Appendix 1**, together with the manual adjustments that are required in order to ensure that seats on committees are correctly allocated to each of the political groups.

3.12 Group Leaders have also been requested to provide nominations to the places on committees to which their respective groups are entitled.

3.13 The nominations of political groups to seats on committees and the nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of committees will be circulated at the meeting.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The Council is required to make the required appointments to those committees that have been established to facilitate the efficient discharge of its functions, as set out in Agenda Item 9.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report with the Leaders of each of the political groups represented on the Council. Their agreement has been obtained to the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees and their respective nominations are put before Council for approval.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Appointing members to those committees established at Agenda Item 9, in accordance with the political balance of the Council and associated allocation of seats on committees, will enable the Council to properly discharge its functions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Dammy Adewole**
Senior Management Accountant – Central Services

The cost of servicing these committees will be met through the existing budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
**Assistant Director of Legal Services and
Monitoring Officer**

These are set out in the body of the report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

The Council is under a statutory duty to ensure that equality and diversity is a key part of the decision making process of the Council. Therefore, attention is drawn to the importance of ensuring that appointments to committees are underpinned by appropriate training on the statutory equality framework. The introduction of essential member training provides the assurance that members of committees will be able to fulfil their obligations with a full understanding of equality and diversity issues. This is fundamental to the Council being able to meet its statutory responsibilities. However, consideration must be given to members not completing the training or not attending, and the steps to be taken in these circumstances, once the member has been appointed.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None.

9. Appendices to the report

There are the following appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Allocation of seats

Appendix 2 – Nominations of political groups to seats on Committees (to be circulated at the meeting)

Appendix 3 – Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees (to be circulated at the meeting)

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