



Council 14 December 2010

Review of Political Balance and Appointment of Committees and Panel

1. Background

- 1.1 Following a request and the completion of the appropriate forms, the LLINK Group has been disbanded and Councillors Beckwith, Nettleton and Redhead have formed an Independent Group with Councillor Nettleton as Leader. Councillor Ereira-Guyer wishes to be referred to a member of the Green Party.
- 1.2 The Council is required by the Constitution to review the political balance and allocation of seats to committees (and Democratic Renewal Panel) following the dissolution of the LLINK Group.
- 1.3 The revised political balance of the Council is as indicated in the following table:-

	CON	IND	LIB/DEM	LABOUR	GREEN
Members	36	3	3	2	1
Expressed as %	80.00%	6.67%	6.67%	4.44%	2.22%

- 1.4 The Council will need to formally approve the formula for the allocation of seats to the political groups on those Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced.
- 1.5 The table below shows the exact entitlement of places and the places currently held by each Group.

Seats Available	Committee	CON		IND		LIB/DEM		LABOUR		GREEN	
		Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places
16	Development Control	12.80	13	1.07	1	1.07	1	0.71	1	0.35	-
13	Licensing & Regulatory	10.40	10	0.87	1	0.87	1	0.58	1	0.28	-
7	Officer Appointments	5.60	6	0.47	0	0.47	-	0.31	-	0.15	1
13	Overview & Scrutiny	10.40	10	0.87	1	0.87	1	0.58	1	0.28	-
10	Performance & Audit Scrutiny	8.00	8	0.67	2	0.67	-	0.44	-	0.22	-
13	Policy Development	10.40	10	0.87	1	0.87	1	0.58	1	0.28	-
7	Staffing Appeals	5.60	6	0.47	-	0.47	-	0.31	1	0.15	-
Total 79			63	plus	6	plus	4	plus	5	plus	1
Exact overall entitlement based on the overall percentage on full Council (7.3)		63.20		5.27		5.27		3.51		1.75	

1.6 The Democratic Renewal Panel is not required to be politically balanced but the allocation of seats is, by custom and practise, undertaken on this basis. The allocation of seats according to the formula and the places **currently** held is as follows:-

Seats Available	Committee	CON		IND		LIB/DEM		LABOUR		GREEN	
		Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places	Exact Fig	Actual Places
7	Democratic Renewal Panel	5.60	6	0.47	-	0.47	1	0.31	-	0.15	-
7			6		-		1		-		-
ENTITLEMENT			5.60		0.47		0.47		0.31		0.15

1.7 The Standards Committee comprises:-

- (a) three Borough Councillors;
- (b) three Independent Members (people who are not Councillors or officers of the Council or any other body having a Standards Committee); and
- (c) three members of parish/town Councils wholly or mainly in the Council's area (Parish Members).

1.8 The Borough Council's representation on the Standards Committee currently comprises one Member from each of the Conservative, Labour and Independent Groups.

- 1.9 The Council's Constitution states that the Mayoral Advisory Committee shall comprise 7 Members of the Authority appointed annually by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in accordance with the nominations of Group Leaders. The composition of the Committee shall reflect the political group representation on the Council. The Committee currently comprises 6 Conservative Members and the Green Party Member.

2. Overview Current Position

- 2.1 Overall the actual places at present on the Committees (listed in paragraph 1.5) compared to the allocation based on the formula, is as follows:-

GROUP	FORMULA PLACES	ACTUAL PLACES
CONSERVATIVE	63.20	63
INDEPENDENT	5.27	6
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	5.27	4
LABOUR	3.51	5
GREEN	1.75	1
TOTAL	79.00	79

- 2.2 Exact compliance with the formula indicates that the Independent and Labour Groups have one too many places and the Liberal Democrat Group and Green Party Member are entitled to one more.
- 2.3 If a comparison of actual places against the formula is undertaken on a committee by committee basis then:-

(a) Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

The Liberal Democrat Group is entitled to replace a Member of the Independent Group, but this was an agreement between the Group Leaders at the last review of places;

3. Options

- 3.1 With the LLINK Group being disbanded there is a need to review the allocation of seats to the Committees. This review has no impact on the allocation of seats to Conservative Group but impacts on the allocation to 'other' Groups.
- 3.2 Overall the exact entitlement to seats does not correspond to those places currently held by the Groups. However, the formula in paragraph 1.5 above clearly shows that seats cannot be allocated on a formula basis to the non Conservative Groups without negotiation and agreement between the Group Leaders.

- 3.3 There is approximately 5 months of the current Council to operate before the elections in May 2011 and it is considered expedient to continue with the allocation of places on Committees as detailed in paragraph 1.5 above.
- 3.4 It should be noted that allocating actual places to committees/Panel is initially based on the formula but is undertaken in consultation with Group Leaders and the final appointments are made based on nominations from the Group Leaders.

4. Suggested Resolutions

4.1 It is suggested that:-

- (1) the current allocation of seats on the Committees of the political groups of the Borough Council as indicated in paragraph 1.5 of Report B370 be retained;
- (2) the current allocation of seats on the Democratic Renewal Panel of the political groups of the Borough Council, as indicated in paragraph 1.6 of Report B370 be retained;
- (3) the current allocation of seats on the Standards Committee as indicated in paragraph 1.8 of Report B370 be retained;
- (4) the allocation of seats on the Mayoral Advisory Committee as indicated in paragraph 1.9 of Report B370 be approved; and
- (5) the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to appoint Members and substitute Members of these Committees and Democratic Renewal Panel in (1), (2), (3) and (4) above on the basis of nominations from the relevant Group Leaders.

For further information please contact:-

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