

Review of political balance and appointment to committees 2024 to 2025

Report number:	AGM/WS/24/001	
Report to and date:	Annual Council	14 May 2024
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Decisions Plan: This report refers to non-executive matters and therefore is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: None

Recommendations: It is recommended that Council approves:

- 1. The committees for the 2024 to 2025 municipal year and the terms of reference for those committees as per the West Suffolk Council Constitution, Part 3b, section 2: "Responsibility for Council (non-executive) Functions".**
- 2. The political balance and allocation of seats and substitutes on committees as per Appendix A to Report number: AGM/WS/24/001.**
- 3. The appointment of members and substitutes on committees as per Appendix B to Report number: AGM/WS/24/001.**

- 4. Delegation for Group Leaders to amend the appointed members to seats and substitutes and to notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes.**

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 As per the West Suffolk Council Constitution, at each Annual Meeting, the Council will:
- a. Decide which committees to establish for the municipal year.
 - b. Decide the size and agree terms of reference for those committees.
 - c. Decide the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules.
 - d. Receive, or arrange the delegation of, nominations and appointment of councillors to serve on each committee.

2. Proposals within this report

Establishing committees and their terms of reference

- 2.1 The Council's committees and the terms of reference for those committees are included in the West Suffolk Council Constitution, Part 3, section 2: "Responsibility for Council (non-executive) Functions". This is available at [Part 3 - Section 2 - Responsibility for Council Non Executive Functions December 2022.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#) or from the Democratic Services team within the Legal and Governance Service at West Suffolk Council.
- 2.2 Council is requested to approve the number of seats and terms of reference as contained in Part 3, section 2 of the Constitution.

Allocation of seats and substitutes in accordance with the political balance rules

- 2.3 The allocation of seats and substitutes to committees must respect the requirement to ensure that relevant committees are politically balanced, in that they reflect the number of councillors who belong to each political group within the Council.
- 2.4 The rules on allocating seats are that, as far as possible:
- a. Not all seats on a committee can be given to a single political group
 - b. The majority group must be allocated the majority of seats on a committee
 - c. Subject to a. and b., the proportion of seats on ordinary committees allocated to a group must be proportionate to the total number of seats held by that group
 - d. Subject to a. b. and c., the proportion of seats on all committees allocated to a group must be proportionate to the total number of seats held by that group

- 2.5 The committees to which these rules apply are as follows:
- Development Control Committee (16 seats and 8 substitutes)
 - Licensing and Regulatory Committee (15 seats and 7 substitutes)
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee (16 seats and 8 substitutes)
 - Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (10 seats and 6 substitutes)
 - Standards Committee (6 seats and 3 substitutes)
 - Officer Appointments Committee (6 seats and 3 substitutes)
 - Officer Appeals Committee (6 seats and 3 substitutes)

2.6 The calculation to allocate seats to political groups requires the rounding up or down of calculated figures to give whole numbers. It is therefore difficult to create a perfect allocation of seats and some adjustments may be needed to create an equitable allocation between political groups. This can include adjusting the number of councillors that sit on each committee.

2.7 The Group Leaders have reviewed the members of their group appointed to each committee and the proposed allocation of seats and substitutes to committees is attached at Appendix A to this report.

The appointment of councillors to committees

2.8 The Group Leaders have been asked to nominate which members from their group will be nominated to the seats and substitute places on the committees and the proposed appointments is attached at Appendix B to this report.

2.9 Changes to committee appointments and substitute appointments may be required during the year and delegation to Group Leaders will allow them to notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

3.1 None, as the matters under consideration are required by the Constitution.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

4.1 Group Leaders have been consulted on the appointments of members from their group.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 Failure to agree the political balance may mean that the committees of the Council will not be able to meet to make decisions.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 None

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Appendix A: Allocation of seats and substitutes to Committees
- 7.2 Appendix B: Membership to Committees 2024 - 2025

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 [Part 3 - Section 2 - Responsibility for Council Non Executive Functions December 2022.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)