



**Rochford District
Council**

REPORT TITLE:	Political Balance, Allocation of Committee Seats and Committee Appointments
REPORT OF:	Acting Director of Governance

REPORT SUMMARY

The Council is required to:

- a) approve the allocation of seats on Committees
- b) receive the nominations from political groups to Committees
- c) by convention, appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees

RECOMMENDATION/S

- R1. That the allocation of seats as set out in Appendix A be approved;**
- R2. That the nominations from the political groups to Committees as set out in Appendix B be approved;**
- R3. That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees as set out in Appendix B be appointed.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council is required to make appointments to those Committees that have been established by Agenda Item 10 for the effective discharge of its functions.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 A 'political group' is one which has been constituted in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and consists of at least two Members. It is therefore separate from the concept of a political party (though it may well consist of members of the same political persuasion).
- 2.2 If the membership of a political group drops below two, the particular political group ceases to exist (Regulation 8(2)). A Member may cease to be a member of a particular political group if they are no longer a councillor (Reg.10). Members may apply to join an existing political group (Reg.9).
- 2.3 The reason why political groups are almost invariably formed is that where political balance is required as regards the seat allocation on council bodies then regard is to be had to political groups (not political parties).
- 2.4 The calculation of the proportionate allocation of seats subject to the political balance rules is based upon political groups and this is clearly significant as regards the control of power on those council bodies.
- 2.5 Notices relating to political groups (including changes as to the name of the group, its membership, the name of the Group Leader and the name of a Deputy Group Leader) are required to be in the prescribed written form and delivered to the proper officer of the Council.
- 2.6 Changes in political groups can therefore affect the calculation of the political balance on particular Council bodies.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The number of seats on Committees that will be allocated amongst the political groups represented on the Council is shown in Appendix A.
- 3.2 Each of the political groups are entitled to the specified number of seats in Appendix A. This is based on their percentage representation on the Council as a whole.
- 3.3 The calculation to determine the entitlement of political groups to seats on Committees is as follows:

$$\frac{\% \text{ from table 1 (Appendix A)}}{100} \times \text{Number of Committee seats available}$$

The strict entitlement to seats is shown in Appendix A.

- 3.4 Each of the political groups are only entitled to their proportion of seats and once this entitlement has been reached, any remaining seats may then be filled by those Councillors not belonging to a political group. Councillors who are not members of a political group have no legal entitlement to an allocation of seats on a committee. However, in the spirit of the Act they should be given their fair representation.
- 3.5 Appendix A shows a rounded allocation of seats to each political group. This is then manually adjusted to ensure that the number of seats allocated to a particular political group matches and does not exceed their entitlement.
- 3.6 Officers have sought nominations from Group Leaders to the places on committees to which their respective groups are entitled. Agreement from Group Leaders on the allocation of any additional seats will be sought.
- 3.7 The nominations of political groups to seats on committees and nominations for Chair and Vice Chair positions are set out in Appendix B.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Group Leaders have been consulted.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Name/Title: Tim Willis, Interim Director of Resources

Tel/Email: 01277 312500/tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

- 5.1 The cost of servicing the governance arrangements at the Council will be met from existing resources within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/2025. The cost of servicing committees will be met through existing budgets.

6.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Acting Director of Governance
Tel & Email: 01277 312741/claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

- 6.1 The Council has statutory obligations within an existing legal framework to review and determine the allocation of seats on committees of the Council between the political groups and appoint nominees to those seats.
- 6.2 The Council's Constitution provides that the Annual Meeting will note the allocation of seats on committees to members of political groups and to members who are not in any political group, appoint members to those allocated seats in accordance with nominations from the political group leaders and to the remaining committee seats from among those members who are not in any political group.

7.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health
Tel & Email 01277 312500 kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- 7.2 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- 7.3 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.4 Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.5 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.6 The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Name:** Claire Mayhew
Title: Acting Director of Governance
Phone: 01277 312500
Email: claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Allocation of seats – to follow.
Appendix B - Nominations from the political groups to Committees & Nominations for
Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees - to follow.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Annual Council	May 2023
Annual Council	May 2022
Annual Council	May 2021