

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 13(c)
26 JANUARY 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Fiona McMillan, Director of Law and Governance	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	N/A	
Contact Officer(s):	Pippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Director	Tel. 452460

REVISED POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY, COMMITTEE SEAT ALLOCATION, AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Director of Law and Governance</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
<p>It is recommended that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees the allocation of seats on committees subject to political balance arrangements (Appendix 1 to the report) to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Conservatives to lose one seat, Peterborough First to gain one seat • Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee – Conservatives to lose one seat, Peterborough First to gain one seat 2. Appoints the Chair of the Council's Committees as follows: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Children and Education Scrutiny Committee - Councillor Over Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Mohammed Farooq Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Councillor Harper</p> 	

1. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the impact on the political balance of the Council and the appointment of Chair to the Communities Scrutiny Committee, Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee, and the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee.

2. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 In December 2021 Councillor Chris Harper resigned from the Peterborough City Council Conservative Group and joined the newly-formed Peterborough First Group. Peterborough First also includes the three previous members of the Werrington First Group; Councillor John Fox, Councillor Judy Fox and Councillor Stephen Lane.
- 2.2 As a result, a review of the Council's political proportionality is required. As Councillor Harper held the position of Chair on both the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee and the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee, Council is also required to review these positions.

3. ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

- 3.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes a duty on the City Council to review the allocation of seats on its committees between political groups as soon as reasonably possible following any change to the political groups.
- 3.2 Political groups are allocated seats proportionate to their size, subject to the majority group being first given a majority of seats on the committees.

4. NUMBER OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

- 4.1 In order to allocate seats, the Council must first decide the total number of seats on each committee. For the purpose of calculating the entitlement of each political group to seats on committees, it is proposed that the following be included:

Committee	Seats
Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee	11
Communities Scrutiny Committee	11
Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee	11
Children and Education Scrutiny Committee	11
Employment Committee	7
Licensing Committee (Regulatory)	11
Planning and Environmental Protection Committee	11
Appeals and Planning Review Committee	11
Corporate Parenting Committee	11
Audit Committee	7
Constitution and Ethics Committee	7
TOTAL	109

5. POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

- 5.1 Once it has decided the number and size of committees, Council needs to decide how many seats each group is to have on its committees. In accordance with the legislation, the following principles should apply to the allocation of seats as far as reasonably practicable:
- 1) That not all the seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
 - 2) That the majority of the seats on each committee are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - 3) Subject to (1) and (2) above, 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
 - 4) Subject to (1) to (3) above, that the number of seats on each committee is as far as possible in proportion to the group's membership of the authority.

- 5.2 The political balance of the Council can be calculated by using the following formula.

$$\frac{\text{No of Group Members} \times 100}{60}$$

- 5.3 Following the above changes to Groups numbers, the political balance of the Council is as follows:

Group	Conservative	Labour	Lib Dems	Peterborough First	Green	Total
Councillors (in Groups)	28	17	8	4	3	60
Proportionality %	46.67%	28.33%	13.33%	6.67%	5.00%	100%

5.4 The calculation to determine the strict entitlement of political groups to seats on committees is:

$$\frac{\% \text{ from table 1}}{100} \times \text{Total No of seats available (109) – see above}$$

6. APPLYING THE RULES

6.1 The majority of seats on each committee has to be allocated to the political group that forms the majority of the authority's membership to comply with the second principle (paragraph 4.1(2)). As there is currently not a political group with over 50% of the Council's seats, this rule is not relevant.

6.2 The seats will need to be shared out proportionately across the committees to ensure that the third principle (paragraph 4.1(3) above) is applied. The fourth principle is then applied to ensure that the seats then allocated are not unfairly weighted. A Group's seat on a committee will be allocated automatically in terms of whole numbers.

6.3 The allocations of seats between the political groups for each committee are set out in **Appendix 1** based on a total of 109 seats. This allocation as outlined is the current political make-up of all the committee's concerned.

6.4 Some Committees are automatically exempt from the internal political balance rules. These Committees are as follows:

- The Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003); and
- The Health and Wellbeing Board.

7. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE SEATS

7.1 The changes proposed to the committee seat allocation, as set out in Appendix 1, are as follows:

- Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Conservatives to lose one seat, Peterborough First to gain one seat
- Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee – Conservatives to lose one seat, Peterborough First to gain one seat

8. COMMITTEE CHAIR

8.1 It is proposed to make the following changes to committee Chair positions:

- Children and Education Scrutiny Committee - Councillor Over
- Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Mohammed Farooq
- Planning and Environmental Protection Committee – Councillor Harper

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 All the relevant legal implications are addressed within the report.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.4 There is no change to the Council's carbon impact arising from this report.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 Peterborough City Council's Constitution

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 **Appendix 1** – Allocations of seats on committees subject to political balance.