

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 13(c)
26 JULY 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Rochelle Tapping, Director of Legal and Governance	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	N/A	
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REVISED POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY AND COMMITTEE SEAT ALLOCATION

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Director of Legal 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). 2. Revise the following appointments to the Fire Authority for the 2023/2024 municipal year: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Appoint four members to the Fire Authority and four substitute members from the same political parties as those appointed (Appendix 2 - to follow). 	

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 allocation of Committee seats.

2. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 In June 2023 Councillors Howard, Mohammed Farooq and Saqib Farooq resigned from the Conservative group. In July 2023 all three of these Councillors joined the Peterborough First group. As a result, a review of the Council's political proportionality is required.

2. ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Political groups are allocated seats proportionate to their size, subject to the majority group being first given a majority of seats on the committees.

3. NUMBER OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

- 3.1 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, Resources, and Communities Scrutiny Committee	11
Climate Change and Environment 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

4. POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

4.1 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.

4.2 The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 clarifies that where Councillors are not aligned to any political group, they should be treated as a group for the purpose of the proportionality calculation.

4.3 The political balance of the Council can therefore be calculated by using the following formula.

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

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

Group	Conser vative	Labour	Peterbo rough First	Lib Dems	Green	Non-Aligned	Total
Councill ors (in Groups)	23	14	11	8	3	1	60.00
Proporti onality %	38.33	23.33	18.33	13.33	5.00	1.67	99.99

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

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

5. APPLYING THE RULES

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

6. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE SEATS

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

- Conservative group to lose 5 seats:
 - Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee
 - Growth, Resources, and Communities Scrutiny Committee
 - Appeals and Planning Review Committee
 - Audit Committee
 - Corporate Parenting
- Peterborough First group to gain 5 seats:
 - Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee
 - Growth, Resource, and Communities Scrutiny Committee
 - Appeals and Planning Review Committee
 - Audit Committee
 - Corporate Parenting

Council had previously agreed to allow for the Labour Group to retain a seat that should otherwise be allocated to the non-aligned Member. There is no change proposed to this arrangement.

7. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY

7.1 The change in the Council's political proportionality has also resulted in change to the political allocation of seat to the Council from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

There are 17 seats on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority, 4 of which are allocated to Peterborough City Council representatives and 13 of which are allocated to Cambridgeshire County Council representatives. The seats are allocated on a proportionate basis.

These 4 seats had been allocated to:

7.2

- Conservatives x2 (Cllr Over, Cllr Warren)
- Labour (Cllr Jamil)
- Liberal Democrats (Cllr Andrew Bond)

With the updated proportionality, this changes to:

7.3

- Conservatives x2 (Cllr Over, Cllr Warren)
- Labour (Cllr Jamil)
- Liberal Democrats

7.4

Councillor Andrew Bond has, therefore, been removed from the Fire Authority, with Peterborough First taking up the new seat, as set out in **Appendix 2** (to follow).

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 The recommendation links to the following Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Economy & Inclusive Growth

- Environment – there are no Carbon Impact implications arising from this recommendation.

Sustainable Future City Council

- How we Work, How we Serve, How we Enable – the revision of the Council's committee seat allocation to reflect the political proportionality of the Council will enable the Governance to run in a robust and transparent manner.

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.

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
Appendix 2 - Appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority (to follow)