

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Council**  
2024

15th May

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### **Political Balance and Committee Allocations Report**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact email: <a href="mailto:c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> Contact Tel: (01527) 64252
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Council is asked to RESOLVE that:-**

- 1) for the ensuring Municipal Year, the Committees set out in the table in Appendix 1 of the report be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in that table until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier.**
- 2) Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute members in accordance with nominations to be made by Group Leaders.**
- 3) the terms of reference for the Boards and Committees as set out at Appendix 2 be confirmed.**

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The political balance is reported for Members' consideration at Annual Council meetings.

- 2.2 Further reports in respect of the political balance may be presented for Council's consideration during the municipal year should there be a change to the political composition of the authority.

**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Council is required by law and/or its own Constitution to appoint various Boards and Committees, agree their terms of reference and to agree the allocation of seats which are subject to the rules of political proportionality. It must review the political balance on an annual basis.
- 3.2 The rules of political proportionality mean that the political balance of the Council needs to be reflected in the political composition of individual Boards and Committees. In addition, the total number of seats allocated to each group must reflect the political balance of the Council.
- 3.3 The proposed allocation of seats on each Board/Committee is done on a strict mathematical basis.
- 3.4 When the Council reviewed the constitution in June 2015, it agreed the principle of substitute members on the Planning and Licensing Committees undertaking the same training as the full members of the Committees. In order that such training can be run effectively by including all Councillors for whom it is most relevant, group leaders are asked to identify who will act as substitute members for the Licensing and Planning Committees for this municipal year.
- 3.5 For all other committees, substitutes will be notified to the Democratic Services Officers, as required, on the instruction of the Group concerned.
- 3.6 During the 2023/24 municipal year, difficulties were experienced in terms of convening Licensing Sub-Committee meetings that were quorate.
- 3.7 Three Members are appointed as members of each Licensing Sub-Committee meeting plus an additional reserve Member and these members are allocated from the overall membership of the Licensing Committee.
- 3.8 Meetings of Licensing Sub-Committees are held during the day, which is designed to accommodate the working commitments of taxi drivers and holders of premises licences.
- 3.9 Unfortunately, during the 2023/24 municipal year, some members of the Licensing Committee struggled to attend meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee during the day due to work and other commitments.

Members are asked to consider their availability to attend meetings during the day when determining whether to serve as members of the Licensing Committee in 2024/25.

3.10 The Committee Terms of Reference, from Part 5 of the constitution, are attached at Appendix 2 for Members to confirm.

3.11 This Appendix does not include reference to the terms of reference for the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committees A and B. This is because the terms of reference for those sub-committees have been reviewed and an amendment has been proposed, as detailed in a separate report to the Annual Council meeting concerning review of the Council's constitution. Members will be invited in that separate report to endorse those terms of reference.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no specific financial implications.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Sections 15 -17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 place a duty on Councils to allocate the seats on certain committees in proportion to the size of the political groups on the Council.

5.2 The definition of a Political Group for these purposes is that it has a minimum of 2 members. The current composition of the Council is 11 Conservative group members, 8 Labour Group members, 6 2023 Independent group members, 5 Liberal Democrat group members and 1 non-aligned member.

5.3 A review of the political balance must take place as soon as is reasonably possible after a change occurs to the Council's political balance.

#### **6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

6.1 This review of the Council's political balance is required following changes to political group membership at the authority. The review will help to ensure that the Council remains effective and sustainable.

##### **Climate Change Implications**

6.2 There are no specific climate change implications.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

6.3 There are no specific equalities and diversity implications.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Given there is a legal duty on Councils to allocate the seats on certain Committees in proportion to the size of the political groups on the Council, Members do need to agree the political balance.

7.2 There is a risk that if a political balance is not agreed for the Council this could cause reputational damage.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Political Balance May 2024

Appendix 2 – Committee Terms of Reference

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Lead Portfolio Holder	Councillor Charlie Hotham, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	May 2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	April 2024
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer	April 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	April 2024