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**Political Balance and Committee Allocations Report**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services Contact <a href="mailto:c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> email: Contact Tel: (01527) 64252
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Sustainability
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 It should be noted that there is a constitutional requirement for each Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to have a specific named substitute. Group leaders are therefore asked to identify who the specific named substitute is for each of their members on the Board as soon as possible in the municipal year.
- 3.6 For all other committees, substitutes will be notified to the Democratic Services Officers, as required, on the instruction of the Group concerned.
- 3.7 The Committee Terms of Reference, from Part 5 of the constitution, are reviewed each year at the Council meeting alongside the political balance. The current Committee terms of reference are attached at Appendix 2 for Members to confirm.
- 3.8 This Appendix does not include reference to the terms of reference for the Shareholders Committee. This is because an amendment to the terms of reference has been proposed separately in a report to the Annual Council meeting detailing proposed changes to the Constitution.

**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, 7 Liberal Democrat group members, 6 Labour Group members, 6 Independent 2025 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. Whilst there has been no change to the political balance since the figures were last reviewed, there is also a requirement for the political balance to be reviewed at the Annual Council meeting.

**6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

6.1 A review of the Council's political balance is required at the Annual Council meeting. The review will help to ensure that the Council remains 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 2026 (to follow)

Appendix 2 – Committee Terms of Reference