

26 February 2020		ITEM: 10
Council		
Revised Political Balance		
Wards and communities affected: None	Key Decision: Not Applicable	
Report of: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
Accountable Assistant Director: Tim Hallam, Acting Assistant Director of Law and Governance		
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property		
This report is public.		

Executive Summary

This report requests the Council confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees following Councillor Allen becoming an independent councillor 3 February 2020.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That the political balance and allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.**
- 1.2 **Council note the manual adjustment requirements outlined in 2.8 and 2.9 and agree those adjustments proposed by group leaders at the meeting.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The political balance of the Council was confirmed at its annual meeting on 22 May 2019 following the local elections. A change to this balance was reported to Council in January 2020 and this has now further altered to the following:

Conservatives: 26
 Labour: 16
 Thurrock Independent: 5
 Independent: 2

New Political proportionality

- 2.2 Appendix 1 of this report shows the impact of this change of party membership to the political balance. In summary there is no change to the political balance on committees from those reported on 29 January 2020.

Manual Adjustment

- 2.3 To increase accuracy in the political balance and to properly recognise ungrouped members, Members should apply a manual adjustment. The revised manual adjustment is as follows:

- Labour lose 1 seat across committees
- Conservatives gain 1 seat across committees
- Thurrock Independents lose 4 seats across committees

- 2.4 This manual adjustment is similar to the manual adjustment agreed in January 2020 with the only difference being the Thurrock Independents losing an additional 2 seats across committees.

- 2.5 Group Leaders will propose their preferred manual adjustments at the meeting to be agreed by Council.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Manual adjustments are discretionary and are based on agreement between all group leaders as to how these adjustments should be made.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 For transparency the Council are encouraged to have sight of any changes to political balance and agree or note them.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report with the leaders of each of the political groups represented on the Council. Their agreement has been obtained to the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees and their respective nominations can be put before Council for approval.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 Appointing members to committees in accordance with the political balance of the Council and associated allocation of seats on committees will enable the Council to properly discharge its functions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
**Corporate Director of Finance, Governance
and Property**

There are no direct financial implications related to the change in political balance. The cost of servicing committees will be met through the existing budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
**Acting Assistant Director of Law and
Governance**

The duties on Councils (under sections 15- 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) are to review the representation of different political groups on Committees and, as soon as practicable after such reviews, determine the allocation to different political groups and give effect to allocations. This is so as to ensure that the overall political composition of the Council is, so far as reasonably practicable, reflected in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees.

This review has to be done at or as soon as practicable after the annual meeting of full Council. A review should also be done where the overall political balance of the Council changes during the course of the municipal year. Following any change in the overall political balance, the authority is required to undertake a review and consider any implications for representation on Council Committees and Sub-Committees. This would include following a Member(s) stating that he or she wishes to join a political group (reg. 17 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990).

If following a review it's considered that any changes need to be made to Committee and/or Sub-Committee allocations then a report needs to go to full Council setting out the recommended changes.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

There are no direct implications for this report.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None.

9. **Appendices to the report**

There are the following appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Revised Political Balance Calculations

Report Author:

Matthew Boulter

Principal Governance & Democratic Services Officer

Legal and Democratic Services