

<b>8 July 2020</b>		<b>ITEM: 9</b>
<b>Council</b>		
<b>Revised Political Balance</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> None	<b>Key Decision:</b> Not Applicable	
<b>Report of:</b> Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Ian Hunt, Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sean Clark, Director of Finance, Governance and Property		
<b>This report is public.</b>		

## Executive Summary

This report requests the Council confirm the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees following Councillors Spillman and Duffin becoming Conservative councillors on 11 May 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 2.2 and 2.4 and agree those adjustments proposed by group leaders at the meeting.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The political balance of the Council was last confirmed at its meeting on 26 February 2020 following a Member becoming an independent Councillor. The new political balance is:

Conservatives: 28  
 Labour: 16  
 Thurrock Independent: 3  
 Independent: 2

## **Manual Adjustment**

2.2 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 2 seats across committees
- Thurrock Independents gain 3 seats across committees

2.3 In previous times when a political balance report has been brought to Council group leaders have gifted or bartered seat allocations to create a varied seat entitlement.

2.4 Group Leaders have been informed of the adjustments needed to align with the new political balance and 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**  
**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: **Ian Hunt**  
**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.

A review should be undertaken where the overall political balance of the Council changes during the course of the municipal year.

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. This report highlights the implications of that review.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**  
**Strategic Lead for Community Development and Equalities**

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:**

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Legal and Democratic Services