

# Report to Council

<b>Report Title</b>	Revised Political Balance
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 29 January 2025
<b>Report Author</b>	Matthew Boulter
<b>Corporate Director</b>	Executive Director Corporate Services/Monitoring Officer
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Cabinet Member for Resources
<b>Wards Affected</b>	Ockendon;
<b>Identify exempt information and exemption category</b>	N/a
<b>Appendices (if any)</b>	1. Revised Political Balance Calculations – January 2025

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report requests the Council confirm the revised political balance calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees following the resignation of Councillor Ryan Polston as an elected Member on 6 January 2025.

## 2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, the Committee is recommended to agree:

- 2.1 The political balance and allocation of seats, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.
- 2.2 Members agree any changes to appointments to committees in response to the revised political balance.

## 3. Commissioner's Comments

- 3.1 No Further Comment.

#### **4. Proposals – the rationale and evidence for the recommendations**

4.1 Following notification from Councillor Ryan Polston to the Proper Officer of his resignation as an elected Member on 6 January 2025, the new political make-up of the council is:

- Labour: 26
- Conservatives: 13
- Non-Political Alliance of Independent Councillors (NPAIC): 7
- Ungrouped Members: 2
- Vacant Seats: 1

4.2 Appendix 1 of this report shows the impact of this change on political balance. In summary the seat entitlement for the political groups will be:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Previous Seat Entitlement (November 2024)</b>	<b>New Seat Entitlement (January 2025)</b>
Labour	45	43
Conservative	21	21
NPAIC	12	12
Ungrouped Members	3	5

4.3 The table above represents the strict application of the calculations contained in Appendix 1 and shows that Labour reduce their seat entitlement by 2 seats, both of which have been assigned to the ungrouped Members in the calculations.

4.4 There is a statutory duty to comply with political balance.

#### **5 Alternative Options Considered**

5.1 Political balance is calculated to show the objective division of committee seats across committees. Groups may wish to confirm alternative arrangements to seat allocation, which is known as ‘manual adjustment’.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Full Council is required to note and agree any changes to political balance and its impact on committee appointments. Presenting a revised political balance report at Full Council is a statutory requirement.
- 6.2 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.

**7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 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 on cost centres PR060 & PR063.

Implications Verified by: Rob Chimani, Interim Finance Business Partner,  
14 January, 2025

**8. Risks**

<b>RISK DESCRIPTION &amp; CONSEQUENCE</b>	<b>MITIGATIONS</b>	<b>RESIDUAL RISK STATUS (after mitigations)</b>
Proper and appropriate political representation is key to good governance and decision making. Failure to acknowledge and deal with any political balance changes could lead to improper governance.	The change to political balance and the allocation of seats to committees in this instance is minimal with only two seats impacted and does not present any significant risk to be managed at this stage. This report deals appropriately with the requirements of the law and constitution.	<b>Green</b>

Implications Verified by Kelly McMillan, Chief Risk Advisor  
Date 13 January 2025

## **9. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 9.1 Pursuant to sections 15 - 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council is under a duty to review the representation of different political groups on Committees and, as soon as practicable after such review, determine the allocation to different political groups and give effect to allocations. This is to ensure that the overall political composition of the Council is, as far as reasonably practicable, reflected in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees.
- 9.2 Following the notification to the Proper Officer that one Member has resigned, a review must take place as soon as practicable where such notification is more than one month after the last review (reg. 17 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990).
- 9.3 If following a review, it is 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. The recommendations set out in this report comply with this requirement.

Implications Verified by Helen Nicol, Assistant Director Legal & Governance

Date: 17 January 2025

## **10. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)**

- 10.1 There are no direct implications for this report.

Implications Verified by Natalie Smith, Head of Community Development  
Date 13 January 2025

## **11. Other Relevant Implications**

- 11.1 None.

## **12. Background Documents**

- 14.1 None