

**Meeting:** Council  
**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024  
**Classification:** Part 1  
**Title of Report:** Review of Committee Proportionality

**Executive Director:** Claire Shuter, Executive Director, Strategy & Change  
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## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review the balance on its committees in any circumstances set out in the Regulations under the 1989 Act. The formation of the Southend Independent Group on the Council has triggered a review of committee proportionality and the results of this exercise are set out in this report.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **To note the entitlement to places on committees following the review of committee proportionality (paragraph 3.3).**
- 2.2 **To approve the revised appointments to the committees and working parties required (to be circulated at the meeting)**
- 2.3 **To appoint to the position of chair of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.**

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The rules governing the allocation of seats on committees are set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the associated Regulations. Following the formation of the Southend Independent Group on the Council, a review of committee proportionality has been undertaken in accordance with the legal requirements.

### Council Make Up

3.2 The political composition of the Council is now as follows:

20 Labour	(39.22%)
16 Conservative	(31.37%)
5 Independent	(9.80%)
4 Liberal Democrat	(7.84%)
2 Southend Independent	(3.92%)
2 Green	(3.92%)
2 Non-Aligned	(3.92%)
51	

### Entitlement to Seats on Committees

3.3 There are 131 seats in total on the committees. The seat entitlement is as follows:

Labour – 51 seats	(20 / 51 x 131 = 51.37)
Conservative - 41 seats	(16 / 51 x 131 = 41.10)
Independent - 13 seats	(5 / 51 x 131 = 12.84)
Liberal Democrats – 10 seats	(4 / 51 x 131 = 10.27)
Southend Independent – 5 seats	(2 / 51 x 131 = 5.14)
Green – 5 seats	(2 / 51 x 131 = 5.14)
Non-Aligned – 6 seats	(2 / 51 x 131 = 5.14)

(The Non-Aligned allocation has been adjusted to comply with the law – see paragraph 3.5 below)

### The Principles for Allocation of Seats

3.4 The principles for the allocation of places on committees between political groups are set out in Section 15(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These principles are as follows and rank in priority order:

1. There shall be no one-party committees (S.15(5)(a)).
2. The majority party on the Council must have a majority of seats on all committees (S.15(5)(b)).
3. The places on committees must be distributed proportionally among the political groups according to their respective size (S.15(5)(d)).
4. S.15(5)(d) is subject to a further requirement in S.15(5)(c) that the distribution of places on individual committees must be adjusted so that proportionality is observed across all committees taken as a whole, even if this means departing from proportionality on a particular committee.

3.5 Regulation 16 (3) of the Local Government (Political Groups) Regulations (made pursuant to paragraph 3 (2) of schedule 1 of the 1989 Act) deals with the treatment of Councillors who do not belong to a political group on the Council. The Regulations stipulate that if there are any seats remaining unallocated to a political group after applying the principles in S.15(5) of the 1989 Act, then the Council must allocate those seats to a Councillor who is not a member of a political group.

### Adjustments Required

- 3.6 Discussions have taken place with the affected Group Leaders and the Non-Aligned Councillors on the required adjustments to the committees. The formation of the new group will also necessitate adjustments to the membership to some of the working parties. A list of the revised appointments to the committees and working parties for approval will be circulated at the Council meeting
- 3.7 The Leader of the Council has given notification to the Chief Executive that Councillor Robinson will replace Councillor Gilbert as the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Major Projects and Regulatory Services. Councillor Robinson will no longer be able to hold the post of chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and therefore Council will need to appoint to that position.

### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. As part of the budget setting process, provision has been made to meet the cost of special responsibility allowances.

### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1. The legal implications are set out in the body of the report

### **6. Appendices**

- 6.1 The committee lists referred to in the report will be circulated at the meeting.

### **7. Report Authorisation**

<b>This report has been approved for publication by:</b>		
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Executive Director(s)	Claire Shuter	27/08/2024
Deputy S151 Officer	Pete Bates	27/08/2024
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	27/08/2024