

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Report of Executive Director
(Strategy, Change and Governance)

To
Council

On
2nd March 2023

Agenda
Item No.

Report prepared by: Colin Gamble

Review of Committee Proportionality

Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 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 Residents First 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 adjustments to the allocation of places following the review of committee proportionality (paragraph 3.6).
- 2.2 To approve the revised appointments to the committees required (to be circulated at the meeting)

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 Residents First 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:

21 Conservative	(41.18%)
15 Labour	(29.41%)
5 Independent	(9.80%)
6 Liberal Democrat	(11.76%)
2 Residents First	(3.92%)
<u>2</u> Non-Aligned	(3.92%)

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Entitlement to Seats on Committees

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

Conservative – 54 Seats	(21 / 51 x 131 = 53.94)
Labour - 39 Seats	(15 / 51 x 131 = 38.53)
Independent - 13 Seats	(5 / 51 x 131 = 12.84)
Liberal Democrats – 15 Seats	(6 / 51 x 131 = 15.41)
Residents First – 5 Seats	(2 / 51 x 131 = 5.14)
Non-Aligned – 5 Seats	(2 / 51 x 131 = 5.14)

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 The impact of the political balance calculations is as follows:
- (a) The number of seats allocated to the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrats Group has not changed.
 - (b) The Labour Group needs to lose 2 seats: Policy and Resources Committee and Licensing Committee (Also to nominate councillors to fill the places on other committees vacated by Councillor Cowdrey: People Scrutiny Committee, Appeals B Committee and Standards Committee).

- (c) The Independent Group needs to lose 2 seats: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and People Scrutiny Committee. (Also to nominate councillors to fill the places on other committees vacated by Councillor Stafford: Appeals Committee A and Appeals Committee B).
 - (d) The Residents First Group needs to make appointments to the following committees: Place Scrutiny Committee, Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, People Scrutiny Committee, Development Control Committee and Licensing Committee.
 - (e) A place on each of the following committees has been allocated to the Non-aligned councillors after the adjustments which have been made: Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, People Scrutiny Committee, Appeals Committee B, General Purposes Committee and Licensing Committee.
- 3.7 Arising from the above, it is also necessary to appoint to the chair positions on Appeals Committee A and Appeals Committee B as the current chairs (Councillor Stafford – Appeals Committee A and Councillor Cowdrey – Appeals Committee B) no longer have a place on those committees.
- 3.8 Discussions have taken place with the affected Group Leaders and Councillor K Evans (for the Non-Aligned Councillors) on the required adjustments to the committees. A list of the revised appointments to the committees for approval will be circulated at the Council meeting.

4. Background Papers

None

5. Appendices

None