



ANNUAL COUNCIL

28 JUNE 2004

FORMATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS

Summary of report:

This report informs the Council of the composition of political groups making up the Council. The report explains the political balance on Council Committees consistent with the provisions of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (as amended).

Background Papers:

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (as amended).
Papers returned by Group Leaders to the Chief Executive June 2004.

Recommendations

- (1) That the Council notes the receipt of returns from political groups.
- (2) That the Council accepts the political balance calculations set out in this report, which gives 49 seats to Conservative, 25 seats to Labour, 10 seats to Liberal Democrats and 1 seat to the independent member.

Chief Executive

Date: 25th June, 2004

1. Political Groups

1.1 Returns have been received in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations, 1990 (as amended) as follows:-

(a) Conservative Group (35)

Group Leader: Councillor T.G. Ansell
Deputy Leader: Councillor J.G. O'Hare

Councillor A. Andrew
Councillor M. Arif
Councillor Aqeel Aslam
Councillor C. Ault
Councillor L.A. Beeley
Councillor J. Beilby
Councillor M.A. Bird
Councillor G. Clarke
Councillor R.J.H. Collins
Councillor B.A. Douglas-Maul
Councillor A.E. Griffiths
Councillor A.D. Harris
Councillor L.A. Harrison
Councillor E.F. Hughes
Councillor H. Khan
Councillor M. Longhi
Councillor R.A. Martin
Councillor B.V. McCracken
Councillor C. Micklewright
Councillor M. Munir
Councillor A.J. Paul
Councillor G. Perry
Councillor D.J. Pitt
Councillor M.G. Pitt
Councillor J. Rochelle
Councillor B. Sanders
Councillor K. Sears
Councillor C.D.D. Towe
Councillor D.J. Turner
Councillor W.T. Twedde
Councillor R.A. Walker
Councillor M. Yasin
Councillor Zahid Ali

(b) Labour Group (18)

Group Leader: Councillor H. Withnall
Deputy Leader: Councillor M.R. Burley

Councillor D.A. Anson
Councillor J.M. Barton
Councillor B. Cassidy
Councillor K. Chambers
Councillor S.P. Coughlan
Councillor A. D. Johnson
Councillor S.W. Madeley
Councillor T.S. Oliver
Councillor K. Phillips
Councillor I.S. Robertson
Councillor R.S. Robinson
Councillor C.E.M. Rose
Councillor T. Rowley
Councillor H.S. Sarohi
Councillor A. Underhill
Councillor P.A. Young

(c) Liberal Democrat (6)

Group Leader: Councillor I. Shires
Deputy Leader: Councillor E.E. Pitt

Councillor A.G. Bentley
Councillor J.R. Cook
Councillor D.A. Shires
Councillor V.G. Woodruff

1.1. Councillor Bott does not belong to any political group and is referred to as an independent member.

2. Ratio for allocation of Committee seats

2.1 The allocation of Council Committee places must be made in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989. Achieving political balance is a complex process which requires a compromise to be made between sets of calculations. This can result in marginal differences which may be significant to Committee representation of individual Political Groups. The required "balance" has to be achieved by the Council allocating seats on individual Committees to properly constituted Political Groups based on the size of each group in relation to the size of the Council and so far as is reasonably practicable at the same time the total number of seats allocated to each group across all Committees must be in the same proportion.

- 2.2 These calculations are rarely exact, but if the Council seeks to ensure that all Political Groups are dealt with as fairly as they consider possible when allocating seats on Committees, the requirements of the relevant legislation will be met.
- 2.3 The Council is open to legal challenge if it was seen not to have used its best endeavours to achieve “so far as reasonably practicable” a position where the allocation of seats reflects the political make-up of the Council. The final decision necessary to achieve political balance lies with the Council and officers have worked to bring forward to Council clear recommendations to achieve the intentions of the legislation.
- 2.4 On the basis of the political groups the allocation of seats on Committees must be calculated in the ratio of 35 : 18: 6: 1: reflecting the size of the groups on the Council.
- 2.5 The declared Political Groups will be asked for nominations to the allocated places in accordance with their numerical strength as recorded in their returns to the Chief Executive.

3. Calculations to ensure proportionality on Committees of the authority

- 3.1 The calculations to achieve political balance in the allocation of Committee places in accordance with the legislation is complex.

- 3.2 The calculation is carried out in three stages.

Stage one requires a calculation to show how many seats are available for distribution, This is done by working out how many Committees are to be set up and the number of seats on those Committees. For this current municipal year it is proposed that there will be one Committee with 14 members; three Committees with 7 members; one Committee with 5 members and five Committees with 9 members. This gives a total of 85 seats to be allocated.

Stage two in the process requires a calculation to show how many seats each political group is entitled to in relation to the number of seats which they hold on the Council. This calculation is therefore the number of seats held by each party, divided by 60 (number of Councillors) and then multiplied by 85 (number of seats available). This figure is then rounded up to achieve a total of 85.

The final stage in the process requires a calculation to show the actual number of seats which have been allocated. This is a simple task of totalling the actual seats which have been allocated across the groups on various Committees.

- 3.3. The actual calculation for this municipal year shows that the Conservative Group have received 49 seats overall, the Labour Group have been allocated 25 seats, the Liberal Democrat Group have been allocated 10 seats and one seat allocated to the independent member.

- 3.4 The final result of these calculations shows that the Conservative Group and the Labour Group have been allocated their exact entitlement, the Liberal Democrat Group have been allocated two seats more than their entitlement and the independent member has received his entitlement of one seat.
- 3.5 The overall result of the allocation of seats is that on each individual Committee all the groups are represented and therefore political balance has been achieved “so far as reasonably practicable”.
- 3.6 The Council could achieve the exact political balance by removing two Liberal Democrat seats, but as the Liberal Democrats only have one member on each Committee, the group would have no representation on two Committees. It is considered that by retaining two extra seats on two Committees, this not only complies with the letter of the law but the spirit of the law.

4. Schedule

The schedule showing the number of seats to which each political group is entitled and nominated membership of Committees appears as Item 15 on the Summons and will be circulated prior to the meeting.