

Council – 8 January 2018

Change in political group membership

1. Summary of report

This report informs the Council that Councillor S. Craddock has notified the Proper Officer that he no longer wishes to be treated as a member of the UKIP Group and exercised his right to become an Independent Councillor. The Council is invited to agree the revised allocation of committee places between the political groups.

2. Recommendations

That Council agree the revised proportionality calculations as set out in paragraph 3.6 within the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 Councillor S. Craddock resigned from the UKIP Group and notified the Proper Officer that he does not wish to be a part of a Political Group. As a consequence, the composition of the Council is now as follows:-

Political Group	Number of Seats
Labour	28
Conservative	25
Liberal Democrats	2
UKIP	2
Independents (not a group)	3

- 3.2 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires committee places to be allocated between political groups in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
- (b) that the group with the majority of the seats on the council is allowed to have a majority of seats;
- (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the total of all committees allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats which that group holds on the council;

(d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, the number of the seats on each committee allocated to any political group must be proportional to the number of seats which that group holds on the Council.

3.3 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 only gives an entitlement to political groups to have seats on committees. A 'political group' is defined as two or more members who inform the Proper Officer that they wish to be regarded as a political group and have a leader. The remaining places are filled by the council, nominating from those councillors who are not in any Group, but with all councillors voting.

3.4 The table below shows the global seat allocations **prior to** Councillor Craddock's resignation from UKIP.

Group	Sum (Group Members/Total Cllrs x No of Seats Available)	(Actual)	(Rounded)
Labour	28/60 x 82	38.2	38
Conservative	25/60 x 82	34.1	34
UKIP	3/60 x 82	4.1	4
Liberal Democrat	2/60 x 82	2.7	3
Independent (1)	1/60 x 82	2.6	3
Independent (2)	1/60 x 82		
Total			82

3.6 The table below shows the global seat allocations **following the** resignation of Councillor Craddock from the UKIP Group.

Group	Sum (Group Members/Total Cllrs x No of Seats Available)	Seats Entitled to (Actual)	Seats Entitled to (Rounded)
Labour	28/60 x 82	38.2	38
Conservative	25/60 x 82	34.1	34
UKIP	2/60 x 82	2.7	3
Liberal Democrat	2/60 x 82	2.7	3
Independent (1)	1/60 x 82	3.9	4
Independent (2)	1/60 x 82		
Independent (3)	1/60 x 82		
Total			82

3.7 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.

- 3.8 These calculations are rarely exact, but in seeking to ensure that all political groups are dealt with fairly, this report implements the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- 3.9 The Council is open to legal challenge if it was thought 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.
- 4.0 On the basis of the political groups the allocation of seats on Committees must be calculated in the ratio of 28: 25: 2: 2: 1: 1: 1 reflecting the size of the groups on the Council.
- 3.7 At its meeting held on 22nd May, 2017, Council agreed the appointment to Committees and outside bodies. It is suggested that no changes be made to this allocation pending a full report being submitted to Annual Council in May, 2018. This will reflect any changes that may occur as a result of the election on 3rd May, 2018.

Background papers

Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (as amended)

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Signed:



Dr Helen Paterson

Chief Executive

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