

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCIL

22 February 2024

Report Title **Changes to Political Balance and Committee Places**

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List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	09/02/2024
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	12/02/2024
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	12/02/24

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report invites the Council to review the changes to the political balance of the Council and approve changes to the membership of committees.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a. Notes the change to the distribution of seats held by political groups on the Council and determines the allocation of seats on committees to the groups as listed in Section 5;
- b. Notes the appointment of members to the committees listed in Section 5 below in accordance with the wishes expressed by the political groups to which the seats have been allocated.

3. Reason for Recommendations

3.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council is required to review the allocation of committee seats when there is a change to the political balance of the Council. The Council is also responsible for appointing members to committees to give effect to such changes.

4. Report Background

4.1 The Council is required to confirm the political balance of the Council and the allocation of seats on committees between Political Groups. As a result of the by-election held for the East Hunsbury and Shelfleys Ward on 8 February 2024, the number of seats held by the Conservative Group has reduced from 64 to 63 and the number of seats held by the Liberal Democrat Group has increased from 5 to 6.

4.2 In order to maintain the correct political balance, this change has necessitated a recalculation of the allocation of places on the Council's committees. The allocation of seats between the committees is now as follows:

Committee	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Independent Group	Un-grouped Independent	Total
Alcohol & Gambling Licensing Committee*	10	3	1	1	0	15
Taxi & General Licensing Committee*	10	3	1	1	0	15
Strategic Planning Committee	9	3	1	0	0	13
Planning Committee (North)	8	2	1	0	0	11
Planning Committee (South)	8	2	0	1	0	11
ASC & Health Scrutiny Committee	7	3	0	0	1	11
Corporate Scrutiny Committee	7	2	1	1	0	11
Children's Scrutiny Committee	8	2	1	0	0	11
Place Scrutiny Committee	7 (was 8)	2	1 (was 0)	1	0	11
Senior Appointments	5	2	0	0	0	7

Audit and Governance	6	2	1	0	0	9
Democracy and Standards	6	2	1	0	0	9
Pensions Committee	5	2	0	0	0	7
Total	96	30	9	3	3	141

4.3 In order to maintain the overall balance on the Council it is proposed to allocate a seat on the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Liberal Democrat group. The Conservative Group have advised that Councillor Kevin Parker will be replaced by Councillor Carl Squires with immediate effect. Councillor Parker has taken the place vacated by Councillor Suresh Patel on the Democracy and Standards Committee

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 Once the Council becomes aware of a change that affects the allocation of committee seats to political groups, it must review the allocation at the next available opportunity.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

6.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The Council has obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and its associated regulations to review the representation of political groups and determine the allocations of seats. This was last completed at the meeting of Annual Council on 18 May 2023. Since then, further changes have occurred that impact on the membership of political groups, requiring a further review to be undertaken.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.'

6.4 Consultation and Communications

6.4.1 There are no implications arising from the proposals.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 None. The allocation of seats to political groups is a matter that only the full Council may determine.

6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 None.

6.7 **Community Impact**

6.7.1 None.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.