



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	Council – 18 May 2022
Report Number	Agenda Item 10
Subject	POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL AND FORMATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Council
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Giles.Hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To advise the Council of the notifications received under Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 giving the composition of political groups and note the impact on the proportionality of allocated seats to Committees.
Annexes	Annex A: Political Composition of West Oxfordshire District Council May 2022 Annex B: Committee Structure 2022/23 Annex C: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2022/23
Recommendation/s	<i>a)</i> Note Annex A: Political Composition of West Oxfordshire District Council May 2022 <i>b)</i> Approve the structure and number of seats of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's constitution and as set out in Annex B: Committee structure 2022/23, and delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect this resolution <i>c)</i> Approve the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in Annex C: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2022/23 and agree the representation on those committees.
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

I. BACKGROUND

This report invites Annual Council to note the notifications received in accordance with *Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990* giving the composition of political groups, following the local elections on 5 May 2022. Annex A sets out the Political Composition of West Oxfordshire District Council as at 18 May 2022.

This report also invites Annual Council to approve the Committee Structure set out at Annex B to this report. The Committee structure reflects the arrangements set out in the constitution, previously adopted by full Council. However, the number of seats on each Committee and Sub Committee is not referenced in the Constitution, and therefore Annual Council are asked to confirm the seats allocated to each Committee and delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution to reflect the Committee structure as approved.

The programme of committee meeting dates has previously been agreed by the Council for 2022/23.

The *Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (section 15)* (“The Act”) provides a statutory basis for the allocation of committee seats to political groups based on principles of political proportionality. To enable this the Council has to provide for:

- Political Groups to be formed and Group Leaders elected (see Annex A)
- Seats on Committees to be allocated to political groups in accordance with the requirements of the Act (see Annex C)

The political balance of the Council and its Committees has been reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Annex C shows the political proportionalities on the Committees the Council is asked to appoint to.

Annual Council are invited, under a separate agenda item, to make appointments to those Committees.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1. Political Composition of West Oxfordshire District Council

- 2.1.1.** Political Groups must comprise two or more members who have indicated that they wish to be a member of that group by signing a notice to the Proper Officer, the Chief Executive. Once political groups have been formed, changes to the membership and leadership of groups can be made by notice to the Chief Executive. A change of group leader must be notified by a majority of group members.
- 2.1.2.** Following the successful election of an additional Green Party Candidate, Councillors Prosser and Pearson have notified the Proper Officer that they wish to form a group on the Council, to be known as the Green Party Group.

2.1.3. West Oxfordshire District Council is therefore now comprised of 5 political groups and one non-group member as follows:

Conservative Group	20
Liberal Democrat Group	15
Labour / Labour & Cooperative Group	9
Independent Group	2
Green Party Group	2
Non-Grouped Independent Member	1

2.2 Political balance calculations

2.2.1 Council has a duty to appoint most committees using the principles of political proportionality set out in the Act. However:

- the Cabinet is appointed by the Leader and does not fall under the political proportionality regulations;
- the Licensing Committee is appointed to by Council but does not fall under the political proportionality regulations;
- the Sub-Committees are appointed to by Council (from the membership of the 'parent' Committee) but do not fall under the political proportionality regulations.

Where committees, and sub committees, do not fall within the political proportionality regulations, they are not included in the calculations for political balance and allocation to seats. However, it remains good practice and Council convention, to appoint to these bodies in a way that reflects the political composition of the Council.

2.2.2 Council has a duty to appoint to the committees as indicated in Annex B, using the principles of political proportionality as set out in the Act. These principles should be read hierarchically:

- Where there is more than one political group, all seats must not be allocated to the same group;
- The majority of seats must be allocated to the group with the majority on the Council;
- When considering all seats available for allocation the total of those given to each group should match their representation on the Council overall
- The number of seats on each individual committee allocated to groups should match their representation on the Council overall.

2.2.3 Applying these principles may not result in a precise mathematical allocation of seats. In these cases the allocations will be rounded up at 0.5 and above.

2.2.4 In the event that achieving political proportionality on all committees results in an overall over-allocation of seats to a particular group, the group with the over-allocation will be required to relinquish a seat. Any such seats will then be reallocated to groups with an overall under-allocation of seats.

2.2.5 Non-grouped independent members are not treated as political groups but do affect overall proportionality. As such they should be offered any seats that remain unallocated once all groups have received their full proportional allocation of seats.

2.2.6 Annex C shows the number of committee seats allocated to political groups for the 2022/23 Council year on the basis of the methods, calculations and conventions described above. A total of 102 committee seats are included in the political balance calculations (subject to Council agreeing the number of seats on Committees as above).

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. There will be an increase of the number of Special Responsibility Allowance's currently paid to Group Leaders, due to the creation of the Green Party Group. SRA's are also applicable to the Chair's position on Committees.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Legal implications are addressed in the body of the report

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. Not required

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

6.1. Not required

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Not required

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

8.1. Council is able to vary the allocation of seats to the political groups and the non-grouped independent member, provided the Act is complied with.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1. There are no relevant background papers.

Political composition of West Oxfordshire District Council – May 2022

Conservative Group – 20 members	Ward
Alaa Al-Yousuf	Freeland & Hanborough
Andrew Beaney	Kingham, Rollright & Enstone
Jill Bull	Carterton North West
Suzi Coul	Alvescott & Filkins
David Cooper	Ascott & Shipton
Colin Dingwall	Hailey, Minster Lovell & Leafield
Jane Doughty	Witney West
Harry Eaglestone	Witney West
Ted Fenton	Bampton & Clanfield
Jeff Haine	Milton under Wychwood
Gill Hill	Hailey, Minster Lovell & Leafield
Mark Johnson	Witney South
Nick Leverton	Carterton South
Norman MacRae	Carterton North East
Martin McBride	Carterton North East
Michele Mead	Carterton South
Lysette Nicholls	Standlake, Aston & Stanton Harcourt
Dean Temple	Chadlington & Churchill
Alex Wilson	Kingham, Rollright & Enstone
Ben Woodruff	Ducklington
Total Members	20

Liberal Democrat Group – 15 members	Ward
Lidia Arciszewska	Freeland & Hanborough
Hugo Ashton	Burford
Nathalie Chapple	Stonesfield & Tackley
Julian Cooper	Woodstock & Bladon
Andy Goodwin	Eynsham & Cassington
Andy Graham	Charlbury & Finstock
David Jackson	The Bartons
Natalie King	Carterton North West
Liz Leffman	Charlbury & Finstock
Dan Levy	Eynsham & Cassington
Charlie Maynard	Standlake, Aston & Stanton Harcourt
Mathew Parkinson	Stonesfield & Tackley
Elizabeth Poskitt	Woodstock & Bladon
Carl Rylett	Eynsham & Cassington
Alaric Smith	Bampton & Clanfield
Total Members	15

Labour & Co-operative – 9 members	Ward
Joy Aitman	Witney East
Luci Ashbourne	Witney Central
Michael Brooker	Witney South
Andrew Coles	Witney Central
Owen Collins	Witney South
Duncan Enright	Witney East
Rizvana Poole	Chipping Norton
Geoff Saul	Chipping Norton
Ruth Smith	Witney East
Total Members	9

Independent Group – 2 members	Ward
Richard Landridge	Witney North
Harry St John	North Leigh
Total Members	2

Green Party Group – 2 members	Ward
Rosie Pearson	Brize Norton & Shilton
Andrew Prosser	Witney North
Total Members	2

The Council also consists of 1 other Independent member. In accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, this does not constitute a political group, however the Constitution makes provision for them to receive one Committee seat each.

Non-grouped – 1 member	Ward
Mike Cahill - Independent	Chipping Norton

Political Composition & % of seats
Conservative – 20 members – 41%
Liberal Democrat – 15 members – 31%
Labour & Co-operative Group – 9 members – 18%
Independent Group – 2 members – 4%
Green Party Group – 2 members – 4%
Independent – No Group – 1 members – 2%
Total – 49 members

Committee Structure 2022/23

Body	Number of seats	In political balance calculations?	Notes
Council	49	No	Formed by the election
Cabinet	TBC	No	Appointed by the Leader of the Council. Must have 3-10 members including the Leader and Deputy Leader.
Licensing Committee	11	No	For appointment by Council
Miscellaneous Licensing Sub Committee	5	No	For appointment by Council from the membership of the Licensing Committee
Audit & Governance Committee	17	Yes	For appointment by Council
Standards Sub-Committee	5	No	For appointment by Council from the membership of the Audit & Governance Committee
Development Control Committee	24	Yes	For appointment by Council
Uplands Sub Committee	11	No	For appointment by Council from the membership of the Development Control Committee
Lowlands Sub Committee	15	No	For appointment by Council from the membership of the Development Control Committee
Urgency Committee	11	Yes	For appointment by Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Economic & Social	15	Yes	For appointment by Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Finance & Management	15	Yes	For appointment by Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Climate & Environment	15	Yes	For appointment by Council

Political Proportionalities on Council Committees

The allocation of seats to political groups has been reviewed based on the political composition of the Council following elections held on 5 May 2022. The allocations are shown in the table below.

Group	Number	Political Composition of Council
Conservative Group	20	40.82%
Liberal Democrat Group	15	30.61%
Labour & Co-operative Group	9	18.37%
Independent Group	2	4.08%
Green Party Group	2	4.08%
Non-Grouped Independent Member	1	2.04%

Committees subject to proportionality rules

Committee	Seats	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	Indep	Green	Non Group Indep	Total	Bal.
Audit & Governance	17	7	5	3	1	1	0	17	0
Development Control	24	10	7	4	1	1	1	24	0
Performance & Appointments	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	5	0
Urgency	11	5	3	2	0	0	1	11	0
Overview & Scrutiny: Economic & Social	15	6	4	3	1	1	0	15	0
Overview & Scrutiny: Climate & Environment	15	6	5	3	0	1	0	15	0
Overview & Scrutiny: Finance & Management	15	6	5	3	1	0	0	15	0
Seats allocated	102	42	31	19	4	4	2	102	0
Real entitlement		41.6	31.2	18.7	4.16	4.16	N/A	100	-2
Rounded entitlement		42	31	19	4	4	N/A	100	-2
% of seats allocated		41.18	30.39	18.6	3.92	3.92	1.96	100	0

Initially all 102 seats were allocated to Groups, but:

- the Liberal Democrat Group had an overall over-allocation of 1 seat, having been allocated 32 seats with a total proportional entitlement of 31 seats;
- The Independent Group had an overall over-allocation of 1 seat, having been allocated 5 seats with a total proportional entitlement of 4 seats;
- The Green Party Group had an overall over-allocation of 1 seat, having been allocated 5 seats with a total proportional entitlement of 4 seats.

Initially all committees had the correct number of councillors except for:

- Development Control, which had an under allocation of 1 councillor;
- Urgency Committee, which had an under allocation of 1 councillor;
- Overview & Scrutiny: Economic & Social, which had an over allocation of 1 councillor;
- Overview & Scrutiny: Climate & Environment, which had an over allocation of 1 councillor;
- Overview & Scrutiny: Finance & Management, which had an over allocation of 1 councillor.

To resolve these issues the following steps were followed:

- The Liberal Democrat Group lost a seat that had been allocated to it on the Overview & Scrutiny: Economic & Social Committee. That left the Liberal Democrat Group with the correct number of seats (31) and the Committee with the correct number of councillors (15)
- The Independent Group lost a seat that had been allocated to it on the Overview & Scrutiny: Climate and Environment Committee. That left the Independent Group with the correct number of seats (4) and the Committee with the correct number of councillors (15)
- The Green Party Group lost a seat that had been allocated to it on the Overview & Scrutiny: Finance & management Committee. That left the Green Party Group with the correct number of seats (4) and the Committee with the correct number of councillors (15)
- That left one unallocated seat on the Development Control Committee and one unallocated seat on the Urgency Committee. These two unallocated seats have been allocated to the Non-Grouped Independent Member in accordance with custom and practice.

Committees not subject to proportionality rules

Committee	Seats	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	Indep Gp	Green	Non-Group Indep	Total
Licensing Committee	11	5	3	2	0	0	1	11
Miscellaneous Licensing Sub Committee	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Standards Sub Committee	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
Uplands Sub Committee	11	5	3	2	0	0	1	11
Lowlands Sub Committee	15	6	5	3	1	0	0	15