



REPORT TO:	Full Council
DATE:	15 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Committee Seats Review
PURPOSE:	To review committee seat allocations to political groups in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990
KEY DECISION:	N/A
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	N/A
REPORT OF:	John Medler, Assistant Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer
REPORT AUTHOR:	Mark Stinson, Interim Democratic Services Manager
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	N/A
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to set out a revised allocation of seats for committees and panels following a review which was undertaken in response to a recent change in political group membership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the committees and panels to which the political proportionality rules are applied continue as at present, as detailed in Appendix A to this report.
2. That the revised allocation of seats to political groups be approved as detailed in section 2.1 of the report and Appendix A.
3. That Group Leaders advise of any changes to the current appointments to committees and panels as set out in Appendix A and that the Council approves any such changes in accordance with its duty to give effect to the wishes of the political group.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To comply with legal requirements as set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council is required to allocate seats on the committees and Panels of the Council to political groups in accordance with the law relating to proportionality as set out in the report.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** At its Annual Meeting on 22 May 2023, the Council appointed its committees and panels in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations. For most committees, sub-committees and panels this involved allocating seats to political groups in proportion to the number of seats that those groups hold on the Council.
- 1.2** On 7 November 2023 the Proper Officer received notice that Councillors Richard and Alison Austin had joined the 20-20 Independent Group. Councillors Mr and Mrs Austin had, until that point, been in a group of two (the Independent Group). In accordance with the Act and Regulations, a committee seats review has been undertaken.
- 1.3** The default position for the allocation of seats is on politically proportionate grounds. The law does however allow for exceptions to the political balance requirements. At the Annual Meeting, the Council determined that appointments to the following would not be made on the basis of political proportionality:
- Independent Panel (not a member meeting)
 - Boston Town Area Committee (made up of town ward members only)
 - International Links Committee (ad-hoc meeting)
 - Councillor Development Group (not a decision-making meeting)
- 1.4** All remaining committees and panels are politically balanced. Political balance has to be achieved, as far as reasonably practicable, by the Council to conform with prescribed principles for allocating seats on any body to which the duty to allocate seats to political groups applies. These principles are:
- a) That not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group.
 - b) That the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership.
 - c) Subject to (a) and (b) above, that the total number of seats each political group has on all ordinary committees is in proportion to that group's share of the total council elected membership.

d) Subject to (a) and (c) above that each political group has the same proportion of seats on a body as it holds on the Council as a whole.

- 1.5** The Council now has three rather than four political groupings as shown (as Councillors Mr and Mrs Austin were a separate group of two but have now joined the 20-20 Independent Group).

Political Group	Number of members	% of seats on Council
Boston Independent	18	60.00
Conservative	5	16.66 (recurring)
20-20 Independent	7	23.33 (recurring)
	30	100%

- 1.6** On applying the above calculations to the totality of committee seats across all committees, and on the allocation of committee seats at individual committee level, there is no change in seat allocations to the Boston Independent Group nor the Conservative Group. The 20-20 Independent Group does receive additional seats on certain committees, but in each case it is the seat that was allocated to the former Independent Group. As such there is no need to change the actual membership of any committee, though Group Leaders may of course choose to make changes in due course.

2. CHANGES TO INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEES

- 2.1** As a result of Councillors Mr and Mrs Austin joining the 20-20 Independent Group, the following changes are required:
- 2.1.1** Overview and Scrutiny – Environment & Performance – 20-20 Independent Group increased from two seats to three (replacing former Independent Group seat)
 - 2.1.2** Overview and Scrutiny – Corporate & Community – 20-20 Independent Group increased from one seat to two (replacing former Independent Group seat)
 - 2.1.3** Audit & Governance – 20-20 Independent Group increased from two seats to three (replacing former Independent Group seat)
 - 2.1.4** Licensing/Regulatory & Appeals Committee – 20-20 Independent Group increased from two seats to three (replacing former Independent Group seat)
 - 2.1.5** Planning Committee – 20-20 Independent Group increased from two seats to three (replacing former Independent Group seat)
- 2.2** An up-to-date list of committee membership reflecting the above changes is attached at Appendix A.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

Compliance with the law.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

None

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

None

STAFFING

None

WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The operation of committees and sub-committees and the appointment of members thereto are dealt with in the Constitution and in law (Local Government Act 1972, Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990)).

DATA PROTECTION

None

FINANCIAL

None

RISK MANAGEMENT

None

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

None

REPUTATION

None

CONTRACTS

None

CRIME AND DISORDER

None

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

None

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

Not applicable

ACRONYMS

None

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A

Revised allocation of seats to political groups and current appointments to committees/panels

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

REPORT APPROVAL

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