

NOT CONFIDENTIAL – For public release

Council
26 May 2022

Report of the Director of Corporate and Customer Services

MEMBERSHIP OF POLITICAL GROUPS, POLITICAL BALANCE AND ENTITLEMENT TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on the updated membership of political groups on the Council, the change to the political balance of the authority following the by-election held on 5 May 2022 and the revised entitlement of political groups to seats on committees for the 2022/23 municipal year.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the operation of four political groups on the Council and the detail of their designated Leaders be noted:
 - (a) Conservative Group and Cllrs Bright, Elliott and Salt – Councillor Garry Purdy
 - (b) Green and Independent Group – Councillor Neil Buttle
 - (c) Independent Group – Councillor Colin Swindell
 - (d) Labour Group – Councillor Mike Ratcliffe
 - (e) Liberal Democrat Group – Councillor Steve Flitter
2. That special responsibility allowances be paid to the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, and group leaders of the two largest opposition groups in accordance with the Members Allowances Scheme at Part 6 of the Constitution.
3. That the Council notes, and agrees, the entitlement of the membership of the political groups and that such entitlements have been reflected in the allocations to Committees.

WARDS AFFECTED

District-wide

STRATEGIC LINK

The strategic leadership provided by Councillors in discharging the functions of the Council through committees and other bodies is critical to the delivery of all priorities in the Corporate Plan.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Proper Officer is required to notify the Council of any change in the political balance of the authority or the operation of new political groups under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Since the last

Council meeting, the two new councillors have been elected to serve on the District Council and have joined existing political groups.

- 1.2 On 5 May 2022, Councillor Mrs Rose was elected to represent Carsington Water ward. The effect of this result means there are 22 Members in the Conservatives and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt Group. Following the by-elections the Conservatives and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt Group continue to hold the majority of seats on the Council.
- 1.3 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 places on local authorities the duty to allocate seats to political groups and sets out the principles to be followed when determining such allocation. The main principles, which must be satisfied sequentially, include
 - (a) That the number of seats on ordinary Committees/Bodies ... which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary Committees of that Authority, as is borne by the Members of that group to the membership of the Authority (i.e. the allocation of the total number of seats available must mirror the political composition of the council).
 - (b) That the number of seats on the Body (Committee, etc.), which are allocated to each political group, bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that Body as is borne by the number of Members of that group to the membership of the Authority (i.e. the allocation of seats on individual committees must mirror the political composition of the council).
- 1.4 Local authorities are able to depart from the statutory provisions where there is unanimous agreement to do so.
- 1.5 Those members not in a political group are entitled to a due share of seats, although the Council will decide how to allocate seats to any non-aligned councillor

2 POLITICAL GROUPS

- 2.1 The Proper Officer has received formal notifications, under the provisions of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, of changes in the membership of the Council's political groups.
- 2.2 On 5 May 2022, Councillor Mrs Rose became a member of the Conservatives and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt Group, which remained a group of 22 Members as a result.
- 2.3 The Conservatives and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt Group holds the majority of seats on the Council and is in overall control of the authority. The political balance of the Council is now:

Name of Group	Designated Leader	Number of Members
Conservative and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt	Councillor Purdy	22
Green and Independent	Councillor Buttle	5
Independent	Councillor Swindell	2

Labour	Councillor Ratcliffe	3
Liberal Democrat	Councillor Flitter	7

3 ENTITLEMENT TO SEATS

3.1 The allocation process must be applied 'so far as is reasonably practicable' to achieve a balanced outcome. The allocation of seats to the four political groups and non-aligned is determined by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Members in a political group}}{\text{Total Number of Members of the Council (39)}} \times \text{Number of Seats to be allocated}$$

3.2 For the 86 seats available in applying principle (a) in paragraph 1.3, this gives:

Political Group	Seat Entitlement
Conservatives and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt	49
Green and Independent	11
Independent	4
Labour	7
Liberal Democrats	15

3.3 Application of principle (b) in paragraph 1.3 of this report, relating to the number of seats on individual committees, gives the following:

	Membership	Conservative Group and Cllrs Bright, Elliott & Salt	Green and Independent Group	Independent Group	Labour Group	Liberal Democrat Group
		22	5	2	3	7
Committees						
Governance and Resources	17	10	2	1	1	3
Community and Environment	17	10	2	1	1	3
Planning	13	7	2	1	1	2
Licensing and Appeals	13	7	2	1	1	2
Joint Consultative	6	3	1	0	1	1
Joint ICT	3	2	0	0	0	1
Constitution Working Group	7	4	1	0	1	1
Local Plan Advisory Group	10	6	1	0	1	2
TOTALS	86	49	11	4	7	15

3.4 This calculation enables all of the political groups to take up a proportion of the seats on committees that matches their overall entitlement.

3.5 Should the Council determine to establish a Scrutiny Committee of 9 Members then the total number of seats would increase accordingly to 96, as the Local Plan Advisory

Group would need to increase by a seat in order to achieve balance. Applying principle (a) from paragraph 1.3 provides a total seat entitlement as follows:

Political Group	Seat Entitlement
Conservatives and Councillors Bright, Elliott & Salt	54
Green and Independent	12
Independent	5
Labour	7
Liberal Democrats	17

3.6 Application of principle (b) in paragraph 3.1 of this report, relating to the number of seats on individual committees, gives the following:

	Membership	Conservative Group and Cllrs Bright, Elliott & Salt	Green and Independent Group	Independent Group	Labour Group	Liberal Democrat Group
		22	5	2	3	7
Committees						
Governance and Resources	17	10	2	1	1	3
Community and Environment	17	10	2	1	1	3
Planning	13	7	2	1	1	2
Scrutiny	9	5	1	1	0	2
Licensing and Appeals	13	7	2	1	1	2
Joint Consultative	6	3	1	0	0	1
Joint ICT	3	2	0	0	0	1
Constitution Working Group	7	4	1	1	0	1
Local Plan Advisory Group	11	6	1	1	1	2
TOTALS	96	54	12	7	5	17

3.7 This calculation enables all of the political groups to take up a proportion of the seats on committees that matches their overall entitlement.

4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Legal

The legislative requirements in respect of political balance and entitlement to seats are set out earlier in this report. The recommended approach will reduce the legal risk to the authority and on this basis, the legal risks associated with this report are considered to be low.

4.2 Financial

The proposed allowances can be contained within the existing revenue budget. The financial risk is therefore assessed as low.

5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

6 CONTACT INFORMATION

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7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8 ATTACHMENTS

None