

**Report title: Political Balance Report**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
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Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Council is asked to RESOLVE that:-**

- 1) the Political balance of the Committees of the Council be agreed as set out in paragraph 4.5;**
- 2) the arrangement where the seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are not allocated in accordance with the political balance requirements be continued;**
- 3) the arrangement where the seats on the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel are not allocated in accordance with the political balance requirements be continued;**
- 5) appointments by political group leaders to the places on each Committee etc. be noted;**
- 6) the Council appoints Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Committees and other bodies as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- 7) appointments to Working Groups and other bodies listed in the appendix be agreed.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This report sets out the proposed political balance of the Council's Committees and seeks the Council's agreement to these. The balance has changed following the resignation of a member from the Conservative Group.
- 2.2 Once the Council has agreed the political balance, the Leaders of each of the Political Groups on the Council can nominate to the places on each for their group. Councillors who are not members of a political group are appointed to Committees by the Council.
- 2.3 The Council also makes appointments to other bodies which are not required to be politically balanced.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The level of Members' allowances, based on the current number of positions as set out in this report, has been agreed previously by the Council.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 With the exception of the Executive Committee, the Council is required by law and / or its own constitution to allocate places on its main Committees in accordance with its political make-up and to approve the Committee terms of reference. The main requirements are that:
- the number of seats on each Committee allocated to each Political Group reflects the proportion it holds of the total number of seats on the Council;
  - the Group with the majority of seats on the Council should hold the majority of seats on each Committee.
- 4.2 The definition of a Political Group for these purposes is that it has a minimum of 2 members. The current composition of the Council is 17 Conservative, 10 Labour, 1 non-aligned Member and 1 vacant seat.
- 4.3 The Council would not usually assess the political balance in the event of a vacant seat arising until that seat has been filled at an election, including a by-election. However, the current vacant seat has been included in these calculations to ensure that the calculations in respect of the number of seats allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary Committees of the authority as is borne by the number of members of each group to the membership of the authority; as there are 29 seats overall on the authority this has been taken into account in calculating the balance.

- 4.4 The Council is able to decide not to allocate places in accordance with political balance and has done this for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a number of years. The convention is that the Members who take the majority of seats on the Committee are not from the controlling political group. However, this decision can only take effect if no Councillor votes against it. A similar arrangement has been made for the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, which is a sub-committee of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.5 The table on the next page shows the political balance based on current sizes of Committees. These figures assume the suspension of the political balance for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. In order for the figures to then balance overall:
- The Conservative Group receives a single spare space on each of the Planning, Licensing and Audit, Governance and Standards Committees.
  - The Labour Group takes one fewer seat than the group is entitled to on the Licensing Committee, Appointments Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel.
  - The non-aligned member receives a single seat on each of the Appointments Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel.
  - There are two places for the vacant seat, which will remain vacant until the end of the municipal year, on the Licensing Committee and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.
  - Whilst there are 68 seats on Committees available overall only 67 are allocated when the total entitlement of each group, the non-aligned member and the vacant position are calculated. Members are proposing that the spare remaining seat should be offered to the Labour Group.

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Council**

12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Total places</b>	<b>Conservative Group Places – entitled to</b>	<b>Labour Group Places – entitled to</b>	<b>Non-aligned Member</b>	<b>Vacant Seat</b>
Audit, Governance & Standards	9	6 (5.28)	3 (3.10)	0 (0.31)	0 (0.31)
Licensing	11	7 (6.45)	3 (3.79)	0 (0.31)	1 (0.31)
Planning	9	6 (5.28)	3 (3.10)	0 (0.31)	0 (0.31)
Overview and Scrutiny	9	5 (5.28) <b>Takes 4</b>	3 (3.10) <b>Takes 5</b>	0 (0.31)	0 (0.31)
Crime and Disorder Panel	5	3 (2.93) <b>Takes 2</b>	2 (1.72)	0 (0.17)	0 (0.17) <b>Takes 1</b>
Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel	5	3 (2.93)	1 (1.72)	1 (0.17)	0 (0.17)
Employment Appeals Committee	5	3 (2.93)	2 (1.72)	0 (0.17)	0 (0.17)
Appointments Committee	5	3 (2.93)	1 (1.72)	1 (0.17)	0 (0.17)
Shareholders Committee	5	3 (2.93)	2 (1.72)	0 (0.17)	0 (0.17)
Electoral Matters Committee	5	3 (2.93)	2 (1.72)	0 (0.17)	0 (0.17)
Actual Entitlement	68	39.86	23.45	2.35	2.35
Total entitlement (rounded figure)	67 (+ 1 spare seat)	40	23	2	2
Actual number (taken subject to suspending the political balance)	<b>68</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

**5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 The proposals detailed in this report support the strategic purpose 'An Effective and Sustainable Council'.
- 5.2 The Council is required to consider the political balance when changes are made to the composition of the membership of the authority and this report enables the Council to address this requirement.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 There are no climate change implications.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equalities and diversity implications.

**Operational Implications**

- 6.2 Once the Council has agreed the allocation of seats to the main Committees, the leaders of each political group will nominate members to fill them so that the business of the Council can continue to run smoothly. It is planned to have a list of the nominations available for noting at the Council meeting.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 There are no specific risks arising from this report.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Committee Appointments (to follow).

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Group Leaders	The political group leaders have both been consulted about the political balance figures as has the non-aligned Member.	Various dates March and April 2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive	Various dates, March and April 2021
Legal Services	Clare Flanagan, Principal Solicitor	March 2021