

REVIEW OF POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY – MAY 2023

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. The Council is asked to formally review the proportional political allocation of places on committees and to adopt a scheme of proportionality for the Council year 2023/24.
2. By law, seats on committees must be allocated in proportion to the political composition of the Council. An authority can only decide that it wishes to adopt an arrangement other than a proportional one if no Member votes against it.
3. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that as far as reasonably practicable, the following principles must be adhered to when determining the allocation of seats on committees to political groups:
 - (a) The seats on a committee cannot be allocated to members of one political group.
 - (b) The largest group on the council must be allocated the majority of seats on any committee.
 - (c) Subject to (a) and (b) the total number of committee seats allocated to each political group must reflect the proportion of total members of the authority from each political group.
 - (d) Subject to (a) to (c) above, the number of the seats on a committee which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on the committee as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.
4. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review committee membership and political representation annually and when notice is received of a change in the size of the political groups.
5. Following the by-election held in the Walton South & Oatlands Division on 4 May 2023, the Conservative Group now consists of 45 Members (previously 46 Members), and the Liberal Democrat Group now consists of 16 Members (previously 15 Members). The Residents Association/Independent Group consists of 16 Members (no change), the Labour Group consists of 2 Members (no change) and the Green Group consists of 2 Members (no change).
6. In determining the allocation of seats on ordinary committees, the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the Council is applied to the total number of elected Member seats on each committee. Generally, fractional entitlements of less than one half are rounded down and entitlements of one half or more are rounded up. So that this process of rounding does not result in advantage to one political group, the aggregate membership of all the ordinary committees must also be in line with the proportions on the County Council.
7. Due to the principle at 3(b) above that a majority group must have a majority on all committees, the Conservative Group must have 52 seats allocated to them. This is one more seat than the proportionate entitlement and this seat must come from the proportionate allocation of seats to the Residents Association/Independent Group and Liberal Democrat Group, who have an

equal entitlement to the number of seats on committees. This results in no change to the proportional allocation of seats to each political group.

8. The number of seats of each group on the Council and the resulting number of seats on committees and percentages are as follows:

	Conservative	Residents' Association & Independent	Liberal Democrats	Labour	Green	Total
Number of Council seats	45	16	16	2	2	81
Number of seats on committees	52	18	17	2	2	91
Percentage	57%	20%	19%	2%	2%	100%

N.B The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require a constituted political group to be two or more members.

8. The proportional allocation of committee seats is set out in Annex 1 below.

RESOLVED:

That Council adopted the scheme of proportionality as set out in Annex 1 to this report for the Council year 2023/24 (Appendix C).

CONTACT

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Report to County Council Meeting, 15 Dec 2022
Report to County Council AGM, 24 May 2022
Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Local Government (Committees and Political Groups Regulations) 1990
Proportional Representation Table
Constitution of the Council

SCHEME OF PROPORTIONALITY 2023/24

	CON	RA & IND	LIB DEM	LAB	GREEN	Total	Previous figs
SELECT COMMITTEES							
Adults & Health	7	3	2	1	0	13*	13
Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture	7	2	3	0	1	13*	13
Communities, Environment & Highways	7	3	2	0	1	13	13
Resources & Performance	7	2	3	1	0	13	13
PLANNING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE	6	3	2	0	0	11	11
AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	4	1	1	0	0	6*	6
PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	4	1	1	0	0	6	6
SURREY PENSION FUND COMMITTEE	4	1	1	0	0	6*	6
						81	81
MEMBER CONDUCT PANEL	6	2	2	0	0	10	10
TOTAL	52	18	17	2	2	91	91

* additional co-opted members are appointed to these committees

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