

Council

Annual Council

18 MAY 2021

Appointment of Committees and Review of Allocation of Seats on Committees to Political Groups

Introduction

1. This report guides the Council in constituting and re-appointing committees and following the legal requirements in allocating seats to the political groups.

Review of Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

2. Under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (“the Act”) and subsequent Regulations, (“the Regulations”), the Council must review the representation of the different political groups on committees at the Annual Council meeting.
3. It is open to the Council when carrying out a review to adopt some arrangement other than that prescribed by the Act and the Regulations. Notice of such a proposal would have to be given in the Summons, and a decision would need to be made with no one voting against it. The remainder of this report assumes that the Council will not want an alternative arrangement to that prescribed by law.

Political Groups

4. Following the local elections on 6 May 2021, there are currently 4 political groups on the Council. The respective strengths of those Groups are as follows:

Name of Group	Number of councillors
Conservative	61
Liberal Democrat	27
Independent	7
Labour	3

5. Under the regulations, two or more councillors may form and register a group.

6. This report has been prepared on the basis of the strengths of the various political groups as they currently stand as set out in paragraph 4 above.

Principles

7. The Act sets out four principles which must be followed so far as reasonably practicable. They are:
 - (a) *Preventing domination by a single group:* All the seats on a committee should not be allocated to the same political group.
 - (b) *Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committees:* If one political group has a majority in the full Council, that political group should have a majority on each committee.
 - (c) *Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares:* Subject to the above two principles, the total number of seats on all the committees of the Authority allocated to each political group should be in the same proportion as that political group's seats on the full Council.
 - (d) *Ensuring as far as practicable fairness on each committee:* Subject to the above three principles, the number of seats on each committee of the Authority allocated to each political group should be in the same proportion as that political group's seats on the full Council.

Application of Principles

8. The Council must review the establishment of its committees in accordance with the principles laid down in the Act. Immediately after this is done, each political group should state the names of the councillors it wishes to take its allocated places on committees, including substitutes, and when those wishes are known, the Council is under a duty to make the appointment of those councillors as soon as practicable..

Councillors not in a Political Group

9. In the case of councillors who are not members of a political group, a proportion of seats on committees equal to the proportion of Council members who do not belong to a political group, has to be reserved, with appointments to these seats being made by the Council at its discretion. There are no ungrouped members on this Council at this time.

Joint Committees

10. The Police and Crime Panel constituted under the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011 is a committee of Swindon and Wiltshire and the two councils are required to meet a "balanced appointment objective" whereby members reflects both the geographical and political nature of the two councils plus the skills and experiences required to fulfil the Panel's functions. Wiltshire's PCP comprises 11 councillors, plus two independent members, with the ratio of councillors 7:4 in favour of Wiltshire.

11. The membership of the PCP must reflect the political proportionality of the two councils when taken together.

12. Swindon's current political composition is as follows:

Conservative: 36

Labour: 20

Ungrouped: 1

13. When taken with the political composition of Wiltshire the breakdown is as follows:

Conservative	97	7 seats (6.884)
Liberal Democrat	27	2 seats (1.916)
Labour	23	2 seats (1.632)
Independent (Wiltshire)	7	0 seats (0.497)
Ungrouped (Swindon)	1	0 seats (0.071)

Swindon is entitled to appoint 3 Conservatives and 1 Labour, meaning Wiltshire will appoint 4 Conservatives, 2 Lib Dem and 1 Labour.

14. The Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee must also reflect the proportionality of both Wiltshire and Swindon Borough Council when taken together. The Committee is constituted of 5 Wiltshire Councillors, 2 Swindon councillors, 2 voting and 2 non-voting representatives.

When taken with the political composition of Wiltshire the breakdown is as follows:

Conservative	97	5 (4.381)
Liberal Democrat	27	1 (1.219)
Labour	23	1 (1.039)
Independent (Wiltshire)	7	0 (0.316)
Ungrouped (Swindon)	1	0 (0.045)

Swindon is entitled to appoint 1 Conservative and 1 Labour councillor, leaving Wiltshire to appoint 4 Conservatives and 1 Lib Dem.

Committees of the Council

15. The Council's Constitution currently provides for the appointment of the following ordinary committees:-

Appeals Committee
Area Planning Committees: Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western
Audit Committee
Children's Select Committee
Electoral Review Committee
Environment Select Committee
Health and Wellbeing Board
Licensing Committee
Officer Appointments
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Pension Fund Committee
Police and Crime Panel
Staffing Policy Committee
Standards Committee
Strategic Planning Committee

16. Outside the scope of this report are the Cabinet and the Health and Wellbeing Board and Local Pension Board as the political proportionality rules do not apply to these bodies.

Local Pension Board

17. Under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and consequent amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, each administering authority is required to appoint a local pension board to assist the administering authority to comply with relevant legislation and guidance, and to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Such Boards are constituted entirely under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and are not local authority committees.

Area Boards

18. Area boards are appointed by the Council under Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. These are constituted as area committees within the meaning of Section 18 of the Local Government Act 2000 and regulations made under that section for the purposes of discharging functions delegated by the executive (or not otherwise reserved). They are not subject to the rules on political proportionality. A list of these area boards is set out at Appendix 1 to this report.
19. All unitary councillors representing the electoral divisions covered by the area board will be appointed to their respective area board.
20. Pewsey, Tidworth and Marlborough are established as a single area committee with three sub-committees, each of which operate as an area board known as Pewsey Area Board, Tidworth Area Board and Marlborough Area Board respectively.

Health and Wellbeing Board

21. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council is required to appoint a Health and Wellbeing Board that works with partners, including the GP led Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), to prepare a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Council and the CCG and to encourage the delivery of integrated services. The Board is to be regarded as an ordinary committee of the Council and is therefore appointed by the Council, reports to the Council and with membership, as defined by the legislation, agreed by the Council.

Children's Select Committee

22. This Committee must include nominees of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and a number of elected parent governor representatives (historically there have been 3 appointed representatives – one from each school sector). They will be voting members. In accordance with the principle set out at 7(b) above the majority group are entitled to appoint additional councillors to ensure it enjoys a majority. The Council also has discretion to appoint an unlimited number of co-opted members onto this committee as representatives of children's organisations/agencies (historically this has been **on a non-voting basis**).

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority

23. The political proportionality requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies to appointments to the Fire Authority. Wiltshire is entitled to appoint 6 members to the Fire Authority, based on the respective strengths of the political groups the allocation of places is:

Conservative	61	4 seats (3.735)
Lib Dem	27	2 seats (1.653)
Independent	7	0 seats (0.429)
Labour	3	0 seats (0.184)

Method of Calculating the Allocation of Places to Political groups

24. The principles in paragraph 7 can be applied in the following sequence:

- (i) Calculate the total number of seats with votes on all the ordinary committees and any Joint Committees.
- (ii) Calculate the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the Authority. Reserve an appropriate number of seats for ungrouped members.

- (iii) Apply those proportions to the total number of ordinary committee seats to give the aggregate entitlement of each group; the requirement to apply the proportions “so far as reasonably practicable” can be met by rounding down fractional entitlements of less than half, and rounding up entitlements of a half or more; if this results in a greater aggregate than the number of seats available, the fractional entitlement(s) closest to a half should be rounded in the other direction until entitlements balance the available seats.
 - (iv) Apply the proportions to the number of councillors on each ordinary committee to give provisional entitlement to seats on that committee.
 - (v) If the provisional entitlement gives only one group seats on the committee, adjust the entitlement so that the next largest group has a seat (thus applying principle (a) in paragraph 7).
 - (vi) Finally, adjust the seats on each committee so that the total allocated to each group is as near as possible to their aggregate entitlement, whilst preserving the results reached at steps (iv) and (v) (thus applying principle (c) in paragraph 7).
26. The Council is free to adopt any aggregate number of places on ordinary committees so long as it follows the principles in paragraph 7 and the sequence outlined above. A draft scheme of committee places is at Appendix 3 which has been the subject of consultation and agreement with group leaders.
27. A numerical guide to proportional representation on Committees is at Appendix 2 to reflect the Council’s updated political composition.

Matters for Decision

25. The Council is asked:
- a) To note this report and the legal requirements.
 - b) To re-appoint the following bodies with the terms of reference as set out in the Constitution:-

Appeals Committee
 Area Planning Committees: Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western
 Audit Committee
 Children’s Select Committee
 Electoral Review Committee
 Environment Select Committee
 Health Select Committee
 Health and Wellbeing Board
 Investment Sub Committee
 Licensing Committee
 Officer Appointments
 Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
 Wiltshire Pension Fund Committee

Police and Crime Panel
Staffing Policy Committee
Standards Committee
Strategic Planning Committee

- c) To re-appoint those Area Boards, constituted as area committees as set out under item 10a Appendix 1 of this report and within the Constitution, to comprise the Unitary Councillors for that area.
- d) To re-appoint the Local Pension Board established under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.
- e) To approve a scheme of committee places which sets out the number of seats available to members of the Council and to political groups (Appendix 3).
- f) To appoint members to the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority, in accordance with the guidance set out in this report.

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Background papers: None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Area Boards
Appendix 2 - Numerical Guide to political proportionality
Appendix 3 – Draft Scheme of committee places