

REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Principles

1. 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

2. The application of the general principles to the committees and sub-committees to which they apply is best considered separately for ordinary committees, for advisory committees and for other bodies to which appointments must be made. This report is concerned chiefly with ordinary committees, namely the Social Services Committee and other executive committees appointed under Section 102(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972.
3. The County Council must review the establishments of its committees in accordance with the principles laid down in the Act. Immediately this is done, each political group should state the names of the members it wishes to take its allocated places on committees, and when those wishes are known, the Council is under a duty to make the appointment of those members as soon as practicable.

Members not in a Political Group

4. In the case of county 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 in its discretion.

Method to Calculate Places

5. The principles can be applied in the following sequence:
 - (i) Calculate the total of seats with votes on all the ordinary committees (in doing so, the seats with votes on the Education Committee to be filled by the representatives of voluntary schools, ie Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, and the four parent governors, should be excluded);
 - (ii) Reserve a proportion of seats on committees equal to the proportion of Council members who do not belong to a political group;
 - (iii) Calculate the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the authority (the "total membership of the authority" includes vacant seats);
 - (iv) 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;
 - (v) Apply the proportions to the number of members on each ordinary committee to give provisional entitlement to seats on that committee;
 - (vi) 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));
 - (vii) Adjust, if necessary, 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 (v) and (vi) (thus applying principle (c)); and,
 - (viii) Finally, examine the results and add (a) place(s) for the majority group to provide a voting majority where this does not occur naturally on committees (thus applying principle (b)).
6. The Council is free to adopt any aggregate number of places on ordinary committees so long as it follows the principles and the sequence outlined above.