



NORWICH City Council

Committee Name: Council

Committee Date: 21/05/2024

Report Title: Political Proportionality of Norwich City Council, 2024-25

Portfolio: Leader of the Council (to be confirmed)

Report from: Executive director of resources

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

This report sets out the political balance for the 2024-25 Civic Year and gives notice of changes to the Council's political composition following the Council elections held on 2 May 2024.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- (1) The political proportionality for the 2024-25 Civic Year be approved.
- (2) The Interim Head of Legal and Procurement, in consultation with the leaders of the political groups, be authorised to make the appointment of members to committees, joint committees and other working parties/panels of the Council, in accordance with the political balance rules.

Policy Framework

The Council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report meets the "An open and modern council" corporate priority.

Report Details

1. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to review the representation of different political groups on committees and sub-committees at, or as soon as practicable after, the Annual Meeting of the Council, or in the event of a change to the Council's political composition.
2. Following the recent elections, the political composition of the Council is now as follows:

Group	Members	Percentage
Labour Group	19	49
Green Group	15	38
Liberal Democrat Group	3	8
Independent	2	5
Total	39	100.0

3. 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, so far as is reasonably practicable. Fractional entitlements are rounded appropriately to ensure 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 Council.
4. The principles mentioned above, in relation to the seats on anybody, which fall to be filled by appointments made by the Council, are:
 - (a) that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group.
 - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership.
 - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of the Council, which are allocated to each political group, bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of the Council as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Council.
 - (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body, 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.
 - (e) In the case of councillors who are not members of a group, a proportion of seats on committees equal to the proportion of Council Members who do not belong to a political group are reserved, with appointments to these seats being made by the Council at its discretion.
5. Cabinet is excluded, by law, from the calculations under s.9GC to the Local Government Act 2000. Where the local authority chooses to disregard the rules of political proportionality for a particular committee then that committee is also excluded from the calculations. If the authority wants to agree an alternative scheme that does not comply

with the principles, it can only do so with no members voting against.

6. The calculations also only apply to “ordinary” committees, which are ones empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council and the scrutiny committees. The principles do not formally apply to advisory bodies, such as the constitution working party, however the Council elects to follow the principles as far as possible on its advisory bodies.
7. In March 2023, Council agreed new arrangements for the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, with the division of functions between two committee meetings. However, Council also agreed the principle that the members of the two committees should be the same, and this principle has been adopted in this report.
8. It is for the Council to establish the number of places on each committee and, in so doing, it will need to be mindful of the functions of the committee, the number of members it needs for the best possible governance and the overall availability of members to serve on committees.
9. **Appendix 1** sets out the allocation of places to the Council’s committees, calculated in a manner that is consistent with the legislation and on the basis that the rules of political proportionality are applied to all ordinary committees.
10. Council is only required to confirm the number of seats allocated to each political group. Individual Councillors are then allocated to fill the committee places based on the wishes of the political groups.

Consultation

11. The proposals within this report have been subject to consultation with the political groups and no objections have been received.

Implications

Financial and Resources

12. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively, increase income must be made within the context of the Council’s stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.
13. There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report. There is unlikely to be a direct impact on members’ allowances (which are funded through the Council’s budget)

Legal

14. This report fulfils the Council’s obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review the political balance and that this is reflected in its committees and has been compiled in line with the requirements under the Act and the Committee and Political Group Regulations 1990.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	None
Health, social and economic impact	None
Crime and disorder	None
Children and adults safeguarding	None
Environmental impact	None

Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The Council fails to agree a scheme of committee apportionment that is compliant with the principles.	Inability to appoint members to committees, and therefore decisions cannot be made.	Agreement of a scheme by the Council

Other Options Considered

15. Other options have been considered in recommending a scheme to Council, however the option proposed provides the most equitable apportionment in accordance with the principles.

Reason for the Decision and Recommendation

16. It is a statutory requirement for the Council to apportion seats on committees to Councillors. Without this, committee meetings cannot take place in order to make decisions.

Background papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1, Allocation of seats on Council Committees

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Appendix 1

Allocation of seats on Council Committees

Group	Seats on Council 39 following election 2 May 2024
Labour	19
Greens	15
Liberal Democrat	3
Independent Norwich	2

Cabinet

Leader and at least 2 and no more than 9 other members (as nominated by the Leader)

Main Committees	No of Members	Labour	Green	Lib Dem	Ind Norwich
Scrutiny	12	6	4	1	1
Audit	8	4	3	1	0
Planning applications	12	6	4	1	1
Licensing and Regulatory Committees	12	6	4	1	1
Standards	6	3	2	1	0
Norfolk Joint Museums	3	2	1	0	0
Norfolk Joint Records	3	2	1	0	0

Other Committees and Working Parties¹	No of Members	Labour	Green	Lib Dem	Ind Norwich
Twinning	6	3	2	1	0
Sustainable development panel	7	3	3	1	0
Climate Emergency and Environment Executive Panel	7	3	3	1	0
Treasury Management committee		Leader of the Council: Chair of Audit: Chair of Scrutiny: Portfolio holder for resources: 1 other member if politically balanced.			
Constitution WP	5	2	1	1	1
Norwich area museums	6	3	2	1	0
Mousehold Heath Conservators	9 (of whom 7 must be cllrs)	3	3	1	0
Councillors' development group	7	3	2	1	1
Cross party working group – council tax reduction scheme	7	3	2	1	1

¹ Appointments to **Other Committees and Working Groups** are subject to review and will reported to the June meeting. Any appointments necessary in the interim will be ratified by Council.

Other Committees and Working Parties¹	No of Members	Labour	Green	Lib Dem	Ind Norwich
Personnel Appeals Panel	3 (from a pool of 12)	6	4	1	1
Polling District Review Group	7	3	2	1	1

Notes:

The executive panels are not subject to political balance rules.