

Report to: Governance Committee

Date: 22 April 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title of report: Appointments of Members to Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Other Bodies

Purpose of report: To consider the allocation of places on committees, sub-committees, panels and other bodies to the political groups and independent members.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Governance Committee is recommended to recommend the County Council to:

- 1) Allocate to political and independent groups the places on, and membership of:**
 - (a) The main committees in Appendix 1 of this report;**
 - (b) other committees and panels listed in Appendix 2 of this report; and**
 - (c) Chair and Vice Chair positions on Scrutiny Committees and other Committees.**
-

1. Supporting Information

1.1 In appointing members to committees, sub-committees, most panels and some outside bodies, the Council must comply with section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and subsequent Regulations. These provide that places on committees must be allocated to political groups in proportion to the number of seats on the Council held by each group, unless there is agreement, without dissent, that the provisions of the Act should not be applied.

1.2 The allocation of places to party groups must, so far as is reasonably practicable, give effect to the following principles:

- (a) not all the seats on the body can be allocated to the same political group;
- (b) where more than half the members of the Council belong to one political group, that group shall have a majority on all committees, sub-committees, etc;
- (c) subject to (a) and (b) above, the total number of seats on the ordinary committees (including sub-committees) allocated to a political group reflects that group's proportion of the members of the Council;
- (d) subject to (a), (b) and (c) above, the number of seats on each body allocated to a political group reflects the proportion of the seats on the Council held by the group.

1.3 The rules require seats to be allocated on a proportional basis "so far as practicable" and inevitably there must be some rounding up and rounding down. It is open to the Council to review the size and number of committees and sub-committees at any time.

1.4 Members of the Cabinet may not serve on the Scrutiny Committees, or the Regulatory Committee and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council may not serve on the Standards Committee.

1.5 The Leader of the Council appoints the Cabinet and allocates portfolios to those Cabinet Members. Political balance provisions do not apply to the Cabinet.

1.6 The principle in paragraph 1.2 (c) above applies to appointments to ordinary committees (including sub-committees). Accordingly, before considering the allocation of places to political groups the Committee will need to consider whether it wishes to recommend any changes in committees, including their size.

1.7 Following the Committee's meeting, the party group leaders and independent members will be asked to let the Deputy Chief Executive have nominations to fill the places on committees, sub-committees, panels and other bodies covered in this report provisionally allocated to their group. The nominations received will be circulated to members of the County Council on the day of the annual council meeting, for approval by the Council.

2. Allocation of seats

2.1 The tables in Appendix 1 show the proposed allocation of seats for 2025/26. The proposals in relation to the ordinary committees and sub-committees, their total membership and the number of seats on each to which the groups will be entitled follows the principles set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

2.2 The allocation of seats to the Governance Committee has been proposed to take into account the importance of having one member from each of the four largest political groups. Membership of this Committee normally includes the Group Leaders.

2.3 The Committee is asked to consider the allocations in Appendix 1 and to make a recommendation to the County Council as to number of places on each committee to be allocated to each group or independent members.

3. Other Committees and Panels

3.1 There is no obligation in relation to other committees and panels to aggregate the total number of places and to adjust allocations so that the total number of places allocated to each group reflects its proportion of the members of the Council. It is proposed that places should be allocated on a proportionate basis, unless the Council agrees to waive the political balance provisions which has been the custom for certain panels over many years.

3.2 The Committee is asked to recommend to County Council the number of places on the Committees and Panels listed in Appendix 2.

4. Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

4.1 The Council's Constitution provides that the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee should be added together and the positions then allocated to groups in accordance with the number of seats they have on the Council. Within this allocation the Chair of the Audit Committee shall be appointed from the members of the largest Group not represented on the Cabinet. On this basis the allocation of the 8 places would be as follows:

Conservative – 4

Liberal Democrat – 2 (including the Chair of the Audit Committee)

Labour – 1

Green - 1

Independent Democrat - 0

The current list of Chairs and Vice Chairs to be appointed by the County Council is:

Committee	Chair	Vice-Chair
Regulatory	Conservative	
People Scrutiny Committee	Conservative	Liberal Democrat
Place Scrutiny Committee	Conservative	Green
Audit Committee	Liberal Democrat	Conservative
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Conservative	Labour
Governance Committee	Conservative	
Planning Committee	Conservative	Conservative
Pension Committee	Conservative	
Standards Committee	Conservative	

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Committee is asked to recommend the County Council to agree the allocation of places on committees and Panels to each group as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 and the Chair and Vice Chair positions on committees.

PHILIP BAKER
Deputy Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Hannah Matthews
Tel: 01273 335138
E-mail: Hannah.matthews@eastsussex.gov.uk

Local Member: All