

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Report of the Clerk

For further information about this report please contact Jonathan Eatough, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, on 01952 380103.

1 Purpose of Report

This report asks the Fire Authority to agree both the composition of its Committees and the allocations of seats on its committees to political groups.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to decide upon Committee composition and allocation of seats to political groups, as proposed in the Appendix to this report.

3 Background

In accordance with the Fire Authority's Standing Order 7(2) (for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business), the Fire Authority is required to review at its Annual Meeting the constitution and composition of any committees or sub-committees, which have been appointed.

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and Regulations made thereunder, require that seats on standing committees are politically balanced across the total number of committee places (i.e. in aggregate) and, subject to that overriding requirement, each committee has to be politically balanced, as far as reasonably practicable.

4 Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats

The proposed committee composition and allocation of seats is set out in the Appendix to this report, which Members are requested to consider and decide upon.

An Independent member was appointed to the Fire Authority by Shropshire Council in May 2017. The member concerned has affiliated to the Liberal Democrat Group in order that they can participate in the Fire Authority's Committees. The allocations set out in the Appendix reflect this.

As there have been no changes to membership from either constituent authority, the political balance remains the same as that agreed last year.

5 Pensions Panel

At its Annual Meeting in July 2010, and at successive Annual Meetings since then, the Fire Authority has agreed that its Pensions Panel would not be subject to the political balance requirements.

Legal advice has been sought regarding this issue and it has become clear that as the Pensions Panel has delegated decision making powers, it should be included in the overall political balance of the Authority. Accordingly, it has been included as such in the Appendix to the report.

6 Financial Implications

There are no direct costs arising from the recommendations of this report, although many decisions of committees will impact on budgets and need financial approval.

7 Legal Comment

The Fire Authority must comply with the political balance requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and its Regulations, when allocating seats on its standing committees.

8 Initial Impact Assessment

As this report merely proposes allocations of seats to political groups in order to meet legislative requirements, an Initial Impact Assessment has not been completed.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

As this report has no differential impacts on people, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

10 Appendix

Proposed Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Proposed Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Key

*	Cons	Conservative
	Lab	Labour
	Lib Dem / Indep	Joint Liberal Democrat and Independent Group

** These rows indicate the actual number of Members each political group should have, based on the percentage of Members it has of the Fire Authority as a whole.

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem / Indep*	Total Seats
Shropshire Council	7	1	3	11
Telford & Wrekin Council	2	4	0	6
Total	9	5	3	17

The following allocation of seats on the Fire Authority's committees is proposed.

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem / Indep*	Total Seats
** Strategy and Resources Committee Members: 7	3.71	2.03	1.26	7
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Audit and Performance Management Committee Members: 7	3.71	2.03	1.26	7
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Standards and Human Resources Committee Members: 7	3.71	2.03	1.26	7
Allocation	3	2	2	7

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem / Indep*	Total Seats
** Brigade Managers Employment Panel Members: 7	3.71	2.03	1.26	7
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Pensions Panel Members: 3	1.58	0.88	0.53	3
Allocation	2	1	0	3
** Aggregate Seats	16.42	9.00	5.57	31
Total Seats Allocation	17	9	5	31

Standards and Human Resources Committee

The proposed allocation of seats on the Standards and Human Resources (S&HR) Committee varies from that of the other committees in order to ensure that the overall aggregate seat allocation is correct.

All members of the S&HR Committee are eligible to sit on the Appeals Panel, which consists of 3 members. As far as practicable, the aim is for any Appeals Panels to be politically balanced. Having a minimum of 2 members from each Political Group on the S&HR Committee will assist with this.

Pensions Panel

It is recommended that the seats on the Pensions Panel be allocated as follows:

- 1 seat to be taken by Chair or Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority;
- 1 seat to be taken by Chair or Vice-Chair of the Standards and Human Resources Committee; and
- Remaining seat to be taken by a balancing member

Strategy and Planning Working Group

Although Members agreed that this Group should be politically balanced, it does not form part of the political balance calculations, as being a Working Group, it is not a fully constituted committee of the Fire Authority. The following allocations are proposed.

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem / Indep*	Total Seats
** Members: 7	3.71	2.03	1.26	7
Allocation	4	2	1	7