



COUNCIL

Wednesday, 25 September 2019

POLITICAL BALANCE OF EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees of East Suffolk Council is determined under the terms of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (the Regulations).
2. The Regulations require the Authority to ensure that the seats on Committees are allocated by Group Leaders in proportion to the political groups' membership of the Council. Also, under paragraph 17 of the Regulations, to review the representation of the various political groups' allocations, as soon as practical after any notice of change in the numbers of each Groups' membership.
3. This report contains recommendations on the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees and Sub-Committees, following the recent decision by former Independent Councillor T Cooper to join the Conservatives.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
Cabinet Member:	Leader of the Council
Supporting Officer:	Hilary Slater Head of Legal and Democratic Services 01394 444336 hilary.slater@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The overall political composition of the Council must be reflected in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees, in accordance with the Regulations.
- 1.2 As soon as practical after a change in the overall political balance, the authority is required to undertake a review and to consider any implications for representation on the Council Committees.
- 1.3 This report is to provide an update on the current political composition of the Council, following Councillor T Cooper's move to the Conservative Group, which was announced at the last full Council meeting on 24 July 2019.

2 POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

Previous Overall Political Composition of the Council

- 2.1 The Council has 55 Councillors.
- 2.2 Following the election, the Councillors from the Green Party, Liberal Democrat Party and the Independent Councillors agreed to form a group, known as the GLI Group.
- 2.3 The composition of the Council, following the elections on 2 May 2019, is shown below:

Conservative	39
Labour	7
GLI	9

- 2.4 As a result of Councillor Cooper's change of Group, the current political composition of the Council is as follows:

Conservative	40
Labour	7
GLI	8

3 POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

- 3.1 There are currently 61 Committee places that need to be shared out on a politically proportionate basis.
- 3.2 At the Annual Council meeting on 22 May 2019, Council Cooper was allocated a seat on the Planning Committee South.
- 3.3 It is proposed that Councillor Cooper retains his seat on the Planning Committee South, as a Conservative Councillor. This will ensure that the political proportionality of the Council is maintained.

3.4 The table below provides the proposed distribution of Committee seats, for information:

	Total	Conservatives	Labour	GLI
District Councillors	55	40	7	8
Audit and Governance Committee	9	6	1	2
Licensing Committee	15	11	2	2
Planning Committee North	9	7	1	1
Planning Committee South	9	7	1	1
Scrutiny Committee	13	9	2	2
Appointments Committee	6	4	1	1
Total Proportional Allocations (Seats)	61	44	8	9

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the Regulations require that the political balance of the Council be reflected in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council. Any changes in the political balance will impact on the allocation of seats on Committees, and the Council is under a duty to review those allocations, as a result of any change.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES AND OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The Council is required to undertake a review, following any change to the political balance of the Council. The Council also needs to appoint to Committees / Sub-Committees in order to carry out its business effectively. Appointment to these bodies gives Members an opportunity to carry out their community leadership role and enables cross party views to be given on specific issues which is healthy for democracy and good decision-making.

6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 To ensure that Members are aware of the political balance of the Council and that Members are appointed to the Committees for the 2019 / 20 municipal year, in accordance with the politically proportionality rules and that decision-making is undertaken in a democratic way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the updated political balance of the Council and the composition of the Committees be noted.
2. That Members note that Councillor Cooper has retained his seat on the Planning Committee South, as a Conservative Councillor.

APPENDICES – None**BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**