REPORT TITLE: Proportionality Update

To:
Council (26 November 2026)

Report by:
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Wards affected:
All

Director Approval: Assistant Director Tom Lewis confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Committee.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Council approves the change in number of members on the Planning Committee from nine to eight and that proportionality of seats of the committee is as outlined in section 3.2.

2. Purpose and reason for the report

2.1 Council to note the changes in political composition of the Council and the proportionality on committee seats.

3. Background and key issues

3.1 The allocation of seats on local authority committees is subject to statutory political balance requirements. These requirements are principally set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that, where councillors are divided into different political groups, the composition of committees reflects, as far as reasonably practicable,

the political composition of the Council as a whole. This provides political groups with representation on committees broadly proportionate to their representation on the Council.

Statutory requirements

Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 places a duty on a relevant local authority to review the representation of political groups on committees and other bodies to which the political balance provisions apply. The review must take place, amongst other circumstances, at or as soon as practicable after the Council's annual meeting and following changes in the political composition of the authority.

Allocation of seats

Once Council has determined the allocation of seats to political groups, Section 16 of the 1989 Act requires the authority to exercise its appointment powers so as to give effect to that allocation. Where a seat has been allocated to a particular political group, the authority must give effect to the wishes of that group as to the person appointed to the seat.

3.2 With the Green Group now having 12 seats on the Council, down from 13 at the time of the last Full Council meeting and the Labour Group now having 15 seats the proportionality of seats has been reviewed and if the Council were minded to approve the change in planning committee members from nine to eight that would mean the proportionality on that committee would change to the following:

Labour 3
Green 3
Lib Dem 2

There would be no further changes to committee places.

To note the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee increased to 10 seats and this seat was given to the non-aligned Conservative Councillor as part of the unanimous agreement of Council.

4. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact

4.1 That under the proportionality rules the Planning Committee would now have eight members comprised of Labour 3, Green 3 and Lib Dems 2.

5. Implications

Relevant risks

5.1 None.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

5.2 None.

Financial Implications

5.3 None.

Legal Implications

5.4 Proportionality rules applied by virtue of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Equalities and socio-economic Implications

5.5 None.

Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications

5.6 None.

Procurement Implications

5.7 None.

Community Safety Implications

5.8 None.

6. Background documents

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

6.1 None.

7. Appendices

7.1 None.

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Dan Kalley, Head of Governance and Democracy (Deputy Monitoring Officer), email: dan.kalley@cambridge.gov.uk