

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Report of the Clerk

For further information about this report please contact Anthea Lowe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, on 01952 383219.

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.

Changes to Fire Authority Membership

Following Shropshire Council's elections in May 2025, there have been changes to 8 of the Fire Authority members from that constituent Authority. In addition, there have also been 2 new members appointed from Telford & Wrekin Council.

The political groupings of the Fire Authority are now as follows:

Political Group	Shropshire Council	Telford & Wrekin Council	Total Seats
Conservative	1	0	1
Green / Progressive Independent	1	0	1
Labour	0	4	4
Liberal Democrat	6	1	7
Reform	2	0	2
Total Seats	10	5	15

For the two members who are the only representatives of their political group on the Fire Authority, that is Conservative and Green/Progressive Independent, they must affiliate to one of the larger political groupings in order for them to participate in the Fire Authority's Committees.

The Committee composition and allocation of seats proposed in the Appendix to this report is based on indications that the Conservative and Green/Progressive Independent members will affiliate to Liberal Democrats and that the Reform members will sit as a party of two. Formal confirmation of these arrangements is expected to be received soon.

5 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.

6 Legal Comment

The Fire Authority must comply with the political balance requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations, when allocating seats on its standing committees. The proposals contained within this report comply with the obligations contained within the legislation.

7 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.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

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

9 Appendix

Proposed Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

10 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

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Reform	Total Seats
Shropshire Council	8*	0	2	10
Telford & Wrekin Council	1	4	0	5
Total Number of Seats	9	4	2	15
Percentage of Seats	60%	27%	13%	

* This figure is based on indications that the Conservative and Green/Progressive Independent members will affiliate to Liberal Democrats

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

** 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.

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Reform	Total Seats
** Strategy and Resources Committee Members: 7	4.2	2.1	0.7	7.00
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Standards, Audit and Performance Committee Members: 8	4.8	2.4	0.8	8.00
Allocation	5	2	1	8
** Brigade Managers Employment Panel Members: 7	4.2	2.1	0.7	7.00
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Pensions Panel Members: 3	1.8	0.9	0.3	3.00
Allocation	2	1	0	3

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Reform	Total Seats
** Personnel Panel Members: 3	1.8	0.9	0.3	3.00
Allocation	2	1	0	3
** Appeals Panel Members: 3	1.8	0.9	0.3	3.00
Allocation	2	1	0	3
** Aggregate Seats	18.6	9.3	3.1	31
Total Seats Allocation	19	9	3	31

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
- Remaining seats to be taken by balancing members

Brigade Managers Employment Panel

Seats on the Brigade Managers Employment Panel should be allocated as follows

- 1 seat to be taken by Chair of Fire Authority
- 1 seat to be taken by Vice Chair of Fire Authority
- Each Political Group Leader to sit on Panel
- Remaining seats to be taken by balancing members

Strategic Advisory Group

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

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Reform	Total Seats
* Members: 8	4.8	2.4	0.8	8.00
Allocation	5	2	1	8

Seats on the Strategic Advisory Group should be allocated as follows:

- 1 seat to be taken by the Chair of the Fire Authority
- 1 seat to be taken by the Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority
- 1 seat to be taken by Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee
- 1 seat to be taken by Chair of Standards, Audit and Performance Committee
- Each Political Group Leader to sit on the Group
- Remaining seats to be taken by balancing members