

# Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

## Report of the Clerk

For further information about this report please contact Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager, on 01743 260210.

### 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 following a change in the political balance, resulting from the elections at Telford & Wrekin Council.

### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to consider and decide:

- a) Whether the political balance requirements should not apply to the Authority's Pensions Panel; and
- b) Committee composition and allocation of seats to political groups, as proposed in the Appendix to this report.

### 3 Background

At its Annual Meeting on 26 May 2011, following elections, Telford & Wrekin Council appointed its complement of 6 Members to the Fire Authority. Previously, this was made up of one Liberal Democrat, 2 Labour and 3 Conservative Members. Now, however, seats on the Fire Authority have been allocated to 4 Labour and 2 Conservative Members. A Liberal Democrat Member has been nominated to one of the Labour seats however it remains a Labour seat and must be treated as such in any political balance calculations.

As this change in the membership has resulted in a change in the political balance of the Fire Authority itself, it is necessary to revisit the allocation of seats on committees to political groups.

Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and its Regulations, as amended by the Local Government Act 2000, seats on standing committees have to be balanced proportionately across all committee places (i.e. in aggregate) and, subject to that overriding requirement, each committee has to be politically balanced as far as reasonably practicable.

The Standards Committee is specifically exempted from the political balance rules, so it has not been included in the calculations shown at the appendix.

#### **4 Pensions Panel**

At its Annual Meeting in July 2010 the Fire Authority agreed that its Pensions Panel would continue to comprise of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and Chair of the Human Resources Committee and that it would not be subject to the political balance requirements. Members are asked to consider whether they wish this arrangement to continue.

#### **5 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.

#### **6 Financial Implications**

There are no material direct costs arising out of 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, as amended by the Local Government Act 2000, when allocating seats on its standing committees.

Under the provisions of Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the decision not to apply political balance requirements for the Pensions Panel can only be implemented, if no Member of the Authority votes against it.

#### **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

#### **9 Appendix**

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 Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

### Key

- \* **Cons**                      Conservative
- Lib Dem / Indep**      Liberal Democrat / Independent
- Lab**                        Labour

- \*\* 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
<b>Shropshire Council</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Telford &amp; Wrekin Council</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem / Indep*	Total Seats
** <b>Pensions Panel Members: 3</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>2.99</b>
<b>Allocation to be decided</b>				<b>3</b>

The Fire Authority established the Pensions Panel at its meeting in June 2010 and agreed that it would be made up of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

Under section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Fire Authority can agree that the political balance requirements do not apply to the Panel, provided no Member votes against the motion. In this case allocation of these seats would **not** need to be taken into account in the overall political balance calculations, which would then be as shown on the following page. This is the approach, which the Fire Authority agreed at its Annual Meeting in July 2010.

In light of this Members are asked to consider whether or not they wish the political balance requirements to apply to this Panel.

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	4.12	2.06	0.82	7
<b>Allocation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
** Audit and Performance Management Committee Members: 7	4.12	2.06	0.82	7
<b>Allocation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
** Human Resources Committee Members: 7	4.12	2.06	0.82	7
<b>Allocation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
** Brigade Managers Employment Panel Members: 6	3.53	1.76	0.71	6
<b>Allocation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
** Aggregate Seats	15.89	7.94	3.17	27
<b>Total Seats Allocation</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>

### Standards Committee

This is not required to be politically balanced and does not, therefore, form part of the political balance calculations. The following allocation is proposed.

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem*	Total Seats
<b>Elected Members: 4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

## Strategic Risk 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.

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem/ Indep*	Total Seats
**				
<b>Members: 7</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Allocation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

If the allocations proposed to the Fire Authority at its June meeting are accepted then the position with the Committees will be as follows:

Committee	Conservative		Labour		Liberal Democrat / Independent	
	Current	Required	Current	Required	Current	Required
<b>Strategy and Resources</b>	5 P Adams J Hurst-Knight D Minnery K Roberts S West	4 <b>i.e. 1 less</b>	1 R Picken	2 <b>i.e. 1 more</b>	1 N Hartin	1 no change
<b>Audit and Performance Management</b>	2 Peter Adams Terry Kiernan	4 <b>i.e. 2 more</b>	1 J Jones	2 <b>i.e. 1 more</b>	1 Chris Mellings	1 no change
<b>Human Resources</b>	4 P Adams J Barrow Terry Kiernan Mal Price	4 no change	2 K Blundell R Picken	2 no change	1 Nigel Hartin	1 no change
<b>Standards</b>	2 M Bennett Terry Kiernan	2 no change	0	1 <b>i.e. 1 more</b>	1 C Mellings	1 no change
<b>Pensions Panel</b>	3 P Adams D Minnery S West	To be decided	0	To be decided	0	To be decided
<b>Brigade Managers Employment Panel</b>	4 P Adams J Barrow D Minnery S West	4 no change	0	2 <b>i.e. 2 more</b>	1 N Hartin	0 <b>i.e.1 less</b>
<b>Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group</b>	4 J Barrow D Minnery M Price S West	4 no change	1 J Jones	2 <b>i.e.1 more</b>	1 N Hartin	1 no change

Please note that in the above matrix Councillor Blundell has been counted as a Labour Member, as she has taken a Labour seat.