

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Report of the Clerk

For further information about this report please contact Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260280.

1 Purpose of Report

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

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to decide upon Committee composition and allocation of seats to political groups, specifically:

- a) Whether the political balance requirements should apply to the Authority's Pensions Panel; and
- b) The allocation, as proposed in the Appendix A to this report; and
- c) the appointment of Members to serve on committees, as set out in Appendix B to the 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 Pensions Panel

At its Annual Meeting in July 2010, and at successive Annual Meetings since then, the Fire Authority agreed that its Pensions Panel would comprise of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and the Chair of the Human Resources (now Standards and 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. In order for it to do so, Members must take a vote on the motion and there must be no votes against it.

5 Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats

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

The Fire Authority is also asked to confirm the membership of its Committees, as set out in Appendix B 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.

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 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 Appendices

Appendix A

Proposed Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Appendix B

Membership of Committees February 2017

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
 Lib Dem Liberal Democrat
 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*	Total Seats
Shropshire Council	8	1	2	11
Telford & Wrekin Council	3 2	3 4	0	6
Total	11 10	4 5	2	17

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem*	Total Seats
** Pensions Panel Members: 3	1.94 1.76	0.71 0.88	0.35	3.00
Allocation to be decided				3

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 (now Standards and 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 first agreed at its Annual Meeting in July 2010 and has reconfirmed at its Annual Meetings since that time.

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*	Total Seats
** Strategy and Resources Committee Members: 7	4.53 4.12	1.65 2.05	0.82	7
Allocation	5 4	1 2	1	7
** Audit and Performance Management Committee Members: 7	4.53 4.12	1.65 2.05	0.82	7
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Standards and Human Resources Committee Members: 7	4.53 4.12	1.65 2.05	0.82	7
Allocation	4	2	1	7
** Brigade Managers Employment Panel Members: 7	4.53 4.12	1.65 2.05	0.82	7
Allocation	5 4	1 2	1	7
** Aggregate Seats	18.12 16.48	6.60 8.2	3.28	28
Total Seats Allocation	18 16	6 8	4	28

As can be seen from the Aggregate Seats and Total Seats Allocation, technically the Liberal Democrats should have a total of 3 seats but this would leave the Liberal Democrats with no seats on one committee and the additional seat on that Committee would need to be allocated to either the Conservatives or Labour, which would not be representative of the overall political balance.

The Fire Authority has always been of the view that, if at all possible, each political group should have representation on each committee.

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. The following allocations is proposed.

	Cons*	Lab*	Lib Dem*	Total Seats
** Members: 8	5.18 4.70	1.88 2.35	0.94	8
Allocation	5	2	1	8

Committee	Political Group		
	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
Strategy and Resources 7 Members Current Chair Keith Roberts Vice-Chair Nigel Hartin	Seats – 5.4 Joyce Barrow Eric Carter Keith Roberts Stuart West Paul Wynn	Seats – 1.2 Chris Turley Vacancy	Seats - 1 Nigel Hartin
Audit and Performance Management 7 Members Current Chair Jean Jones Vice-Chair Chris Mellings	Seats - 4 Peter Adams Miles Hosken John Hurst-Knight Steve Barnes Vacancy	Seats - 2 Jean Jones Jane Pinter	Seats - 1 Chris Mellings
Standards and Human Resources 7 Members Current Chair Peter Adams Vice-Chair Mal Price	Seats - 4 Peter Adams Joyce Barrow Miles Hosken Mal Price	Seats – 2 Chris Turley Leon Murray	Seats – 1 Chris Mellings
Pensions Panel 3 Members Done on an ad-hoc basis, when the Panel meets	Seats - 3 Chair of Fire Authority, Vice-Chair of Fire Authority and Chair of Standards and Human Resources Committee		
Brigade Managers' Employment Panel 7 Members Current Chair Stuart West Vice-Chair Eric Carter	Seats – 5.4 Peter Adams (as Chair of Standards and Human Resources Committee) Joyce Barrow Eric Carter David Minnery Stuart West	Seats – 1.2 Chris Turley Vacancy	Seats – 1 Nigel Hartin
Strategic Planning Working Group 8 Members Current Chair Stuart West Vice-Chair Jean Jones	Seats – 5 Eric Carter David Minnery Mal Price Keith Roberts Stuart West	Seats - 2 Jean Jones Leon Murray	Seats - 1 Nigel Hartin
Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd 4 Members + Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Seats – 2 Eric Carter Steve Barnes Vacancy	Seats – 0	Seats – 2 Nigel Hartin Chris Mellings