

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Council

## Agenda Item 47

**Subject:** Review of Political Balance 2024/25

**Date of meeting:** 24 October 2024

**Report of:** Chief Executive

**Contact Officer:** Name: Anthony Soyinka  
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**Ward(s) affected:** All

### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Council is required to review the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub Committees where there is a change to the membership of the political groups in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to review the allocation of seats following a by election in Brunswick & Adelaide Ward in July 2024.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council appoints/re-appoints its committees with the sizes and allocation of seats between political groups as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

### 3. Context and background information

- 3.1 In July 2024 Councillor Ollie Sykes (Green) was elected as a member for Brunswick & Adelaide ward. The political composition of the Council is therefore now: Labour (37 Members), Green (8 Members), Conservative (5 Members), Brighton & Hove Independent Group (2 Members) and 2 Independent Members.
- 3.2 Section 15(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to review the representation of the different political groups on committees and sub-committees:
  - At, or as soon as practicable after, the Annual Meeting of the Council or,
  - Where notice is received of a change in the composition of political groups.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive is under a duty; whenever such a review takes place, to submit a report to the Council showing what allocation of seats would in his opinion best meet the requirements of Section 15 of the 1989 Act.
- 3.4 The Council's duty to determine the allocation of seats is prescribed by Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (specifically sub-

sections (3) to (5). These rules do not impose any requirement on the Council to consult the political groups as to which committee seats should be allocated to which group.

3.5 The Council’s duty is “to make only such determinations as give effect, so far as reasonably practicable, to the principles specified in sub- section (5).” In summary, these principles of determination (“principles”), are that:

- (a) All seats are not allocated to the same Group,
- (b) The majority of the seats go to the Group (if any) which has an overall majority on the Council (i.e. more than 27 seats),
- (c) Subject to the above two principles, that the number of seats on the total of all the committees/sub-committees allocated to each Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the Full Council, and
- (d) Subject to (a) and (c), that the number of seats on each committee/sub- committee allocated to each Group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the Full Council.

Overall Political Group split on the Council

3.6 The political groups now have the following seats on the Council:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Initial Allocation (rounded)</u>
Labour	37	68.52	43.2 (43)
Green	8	14.81	9.3 (9)
Conservative	5	9.26	5.9 (6)
Brighton & Hove Independents	2	3.70	2.3 (2)
Independent	1	1.85	1.2 (1)
Independent	1	1.85	1.2 (1)
Total	54	100%	63.1 (62)

Committee Sizes and Review of Committees

3.7 The total number of Committee places (excluding sub-committees) used for the determination of the allocation of seats to the political groups is 63 as detailed in Appendix 1, noting that the Political Balance Regulations do not apply to the Cabinet, Licensing Committee (2003 Act) or the Health & Well Being Board).

- 3.8 The proposed allocation of places on each of the committees as detailed above and in Appendix 1 to the report takes into account the principles referred to in paragraph 3.5 in that:
- a. The Labour Group's overall allocation equals **45 seats**,
  - b. The Green Group's overall allocation equals **9 seats**,
  - c. The Conservative Group's overall allocation equals **6 seats**,
  - d. The Brighton & Hove Independent Group's allocation equals **2 seats** and
  - e. That in having regard to the convention that the Council has abided to whenever there has been an Independent Member, **1 seat** is offered to each of the Independent Members.

- 3.9 The allocations set out at paragraph 3.8 above provides the Green Group, Conservative Group and Brighton & Hove Independent Group with allocations in accordance with their politically proportionate calculations and provides the Labour Group with 2 seats above their initial allocation. This outcome accords as closely as possible with political proportionality for the allocation of 2 unallocated roles following initial calculation. The two unallocated roles arise due to the need to round up or down to achieve whole numbers for posts and to only 1 independent member taking up the seat offered. The allocations proposed ensure that all committees have a full membership.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 The proposed revised committee allocations have been shared with the respective Group Leaders and are in keeping with the Regulations governing the political balance of committees.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The Leaders of the political groups impacted by the changes have been consulted on the proposed allocations.

#### **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this Report.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenyu Chagonda Date consulted: 15.10.2024

#### **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 The proposals in this report comply with Section 15(1) of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, which sets out the duty and principles regarding the allocation of seats to political groups.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted 15.10.24

## **8. Equalities implications**

- 8.1 The regulations provide for the distribution of seats amongst the political groups on a politically proportionate basis.

## **9. Sustainability implications**

- 9.1 There are no sustainability issues arising from the report.

## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1 Having taken into consideration the number of committees and seats available for the distribution of places between the Groups represented on the Council and the Independent Members, the allocations proposed are considered to be the most appropriate.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

- 1. Appendix 1 Committee Seat allocations