

**Subject:** Political Balance – the Local  
Government and Housing Act 1989

**Status:** For Publication

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**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007

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**Report of:** Chief Executive

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**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Leader of the Council

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**Key Decision:** No

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider the revised political balance of the Council following the By Election held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Well Managed Council (Improvement, Community Network)

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation in this report involves risk considerations as set out below:

It is a requirement under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 that the Council reviews the representation of different Political Groups on Committees when there are changes to the political groupings.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 It is the duty of the Council, under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, to review the representation of different Political Groups on Committees at its Annual Meeting and at other times when there are changes to the political groupings.
- 4.2 The principles required, in effect that, so far as reasonably practical:
- (a) All the seats are not allocated to the same political group;
  - (b) The majority of the seats go to the political group majority on the full Council;
  - (c) Subject to the above two principles, that the number of seats on *the total* of all the ordinary committees of the authority allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council;
  - (d) Subject to the above three principles, that the number of seats on *each* ordinary committee of the authority allocated to each political group bears the same proportion on the full Council.
- 4.4 A number of options have been considered by the Group Leaders including Appendices 1 to 5. Set out below are the main points of each option for the consideration of Members of the Council. Members are asked to note that if agreement cannot be reached on any of the options then the default position would be option 1.

### **Option 1**

This option is purely based on how the political balance rules would apply together with the principles followed for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee whereby each member on the three scrutiny committees has a seat on the Management Committee.

Members are asked to consider the percentage of seats allocated to each Group.

### **Option 2**

The Conservative Group would have a majority on each Committee with the exception of the East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee. 1 seat would be allocated to the Conservative Group and 1 seat to the Labour Group (Members are asked to note this has been previous practice).

The principles followed for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be applied whereby each member on the three scrutiny committees has a seat on the Management Committee.

Members are asked to consider the percentage of seats allocated to each Group.

**Option 3**

The Conservative Group would have a majority on each Committee with the following exceptions:-

The East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee. 1 seat would be allocated to both the Conservative Group and Labour Group on the East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee (Members are asked to note this has been previous practice) and

The Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The principles followed for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be applied whereby each member on the three scrutiny committees has a seat on the Management Committee.

Members are asked to consider the percentage of seats allocated to each Group.

**Option 4**

The Conservative Group would have a majority on each Committee with the following exceptions:-

The East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee. 1 seat would be allocated to both the Conservative Group and Labour Group on the East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee (Members are asked to note this has been previous practice).

The Standards Committee.

The principles followed for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be applied whereby each member on the three scrutiny committees has a seat on the Management Committee.

Members are asked to consider the percentage of seats allocated to each Group.

**Option 5**

The Conservative Group would have a majority on each Committee with the following exceptions:-

The East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee. 1 seat would be allocated to both the Conservative Group and Labour Group on the East Lancashire ePartnership Joint Committee (Members are asked to note this has been previous practice).

The Standards Committee.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee.

The principles followed for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be applied whereby each member on the three scrutiny committees has a seat on the Management Committee.

Members are asked to consider the percentage of seats allocated to each Group.

- 4.5 Other options may be available for the Council to consider. Members are requested to contact the Democratic Services Team in advance of the meeting (by no later than noon on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> December, where possible) to enable further calculations to be presented to the Council for consideration.

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES**

- 6.1 The options in this report need to be fully considered by the Council.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 It is important that consideration is given to the political balance to ensure that Committees can be administered efficiently.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Council considers the options set out in the appendices.
- 9.2 That confirmation of the names of the Councillors to serve on the Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies be delegated to the Chief Executive.

## **10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 10.1 Group Leaders, Independent Member

## **11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required	No
Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached	N/A

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There are no background papers.