



## Tabled To-Follow

### Extraordinary Council Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 19 March 2025

Time 7.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

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Report and appendices added 18.3.25

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**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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<b>Extraordinary Council Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	19 March 2025
<b>Report Title</b>	Recalculation of Political Balance and Allocation of Committee seats as a result of changes to political groups
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery – Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jo Millard – Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Council is asked to agree the political balance calculation from the possible options as set out in Appendix II or an unanimously agreed alternative.</li><li>2. That Council is asked to allocate seats to those Committees in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders.</li></ol>

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out changes to the Political Balance and Committee Seat Allocations and memberships as a result of a recent by-election and changes to the membership of political groups.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires Local Authorities to review the allocation of seats on Committees at the annual meeting, or as soon as possible after it. Once the Council has agreed the allocation of Committee places between the political groups the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the Committees. This was last agreed at Council in January 2025 (Appendix I).
- 2.2 Where changes to the membership of political groups take place between elections, the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require the Council to recalculate the political balance and the allocation of committee seats 'as soon as practicable' after notice of changes to groups is delivered to the proper officer.
- 2.3 Due to a recent changes in political groups, the political balance has been recalculated as set out in Appendix II.
- 2.4 The following principles apply to the allocation of seats:

- (a) That not all seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
  - (b) That the majority of seats on each Committee is allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belong to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
  - (c) Subject to (a) and (b), that, when allocating seats to a political group, the total number of their seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council, must reflect their proportion of the authority's membership; and
  - (d) Subject to (a) and (c), that the number of seats on each Committee is as far as possible in proportion to the group's membership of the authority.
- 2.5 There are 134 seats to be allocated under the Committee System. The seat entitlement of each group, on each Committee is thus based on the group's percentage representation on the Council as detailed in Appendix II. Whilst an initial version of this can be calculated mathematically, this usually results in a discrepancy between the strict entitlement of each group and the overall number of Committee seats to be allocated, requiring 'manual' adjustment to ensure that the number seats allocated to each group is fair.
- 2.6 To ensure overall political balance Members must negotiate with each in order that Committees are not over or under-subscribed.
- 2.7 The overall requirement for total places to be balanced only applies to ordinary committees so sub-committee places do not need to be included in the overall calculation, but the membership of sub-committee places should be proportionate as far as is reasonably practical.
- 2.8 The Joint Transportation Board and the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group are not committees covered by Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 15 of the Local Government Housing Act does not apply. The membership of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group was determined by the Policy and Resources Committee at its June 2024 meeting and will be determined at the first Policy and Resources Committee following Annual Council.
- 2.9 Group Leaders have been requested to provide nominations to the places on Committees to which their respective groups are entitled; this has resulted in over allocations and under allocations across various committees. In addition, as there are two groups with identical membership numbers, and an odd number of seats assigned, it will be necessary for those two groups to either agree who will give the additional seat up or use a tried and tested method at the meeting to award the additional seat. The outcome of who is to give up the additional seat may impact on other groups allocations.
- 2.10 Members are able to agree a position that does not reflect the strict apportionment of political balance, but is has to be published in advance and agreed unanimously to be formally adopted. An illustrative example of this type of allocation is included in Appendix II.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 That Council is asked to agree the political balance calculation from the possible options as set out in Appendix II or an unanimously agreed alternative.

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 In view of changes to the membership of political groups, there is no lawful alternative to the recalculation of political balance but if Members wish to propose an alternative to allocate committee seats, they may do so.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 All Group Leaders have been asked to advise Democratic Services of their nominations to seats on Committees for their respective Groups.

### **6 Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	The recommendations in this report contribute to the council priority to renew local democracy and make the council fit for the future.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Financial, Resource and Property within their remits.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Deputy Head of Legal has been consulted on this report. The relevant legal provisions are set out in the body of the report.
Crime and Disorder	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Crime and Disorder within their remits.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency within their remits.
Health and Wellbeing	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Health and Wellbeing within their remits.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults within their remits.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Risk Management and Health and Safety within their remits.

Equality and Diversity	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Equality and Diversity within their remits.
Privacy and Data Protection	The Council's Committee Structure includes Committee(s) with Privacy and Data Protection within their remits.

## **7 Appendices**

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Political Balance Calculation agreed at Council January 2025.
- Appendix II: Political Balance Calculations and illustrations as a result of changes in political groups.

## **8 Background Papers**

Link to Council January 2025:

[Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 29 January 2025, 7.00 pm](#)

Political Balance  
Calculations Jan 25

Group	Labour					SIA					Conservative					Lib Dem					Green					Rounded Total			Shortfall	Total					
	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Current Allocation	Proposed Adjust	Adjusted Allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Current Allocation	Proposed Adjust	Adjusted Allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Current Allocation	Proposed Adjust	Adjusted Allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Current Allocation	Proposed Adjust	Adjusted Allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Current Allocation	Proposed Adjust	Adjusted Allocation										
Number of Members	15					12					10					5					3										45				
Overall proportionality	33%					27%					22%					11%					7%										100%				
Size																																			
<b>Service Committees</b>																																			
Policy and Resources	15	5.0000	5	5	5	4.0000	4	4		4	3.3333	3	4		4	1.6667	2	1		1	1.0000	1	1		1	15	15	15		0					
Community & Leisure	15	5.0000	5	6	-1	5	4.0000	4	4		4	3.3333	3	3		3	1.6667	2	1	1	2	1.0000	1	1		1	15	15	15		0				
Environment & Climate Change	15	5.0000	5	6	-1	5	4.0000	4	3	1	4	3.3333	3	3		3	1.6667	2	2		2	1.0000	1	1		1	15	15	15		0				
Housing and Health	15	5.0000	5	6	-1	5	4.0000	4	3	1	4	3.3333	3	3		3	1.6667	2	2		2	1.0000	1	1		1	15	15	15		0				
Economy and Property	15	5.0000	5	5		5	4.0000	4	4		4	3.3333	3	4		4	1.6667	2	1		1	1.0000	1	1		1	15	15	15		0				
<b>Regulatory Committees</b>																																			
Licensing	15	5.0000	5	5		5	4.0000	4	4		4	3.3333	3	3		3	1.6667	2	2		2	1.0000	1	1		1	15	15	15		0				
Planning	17	5.6667	6	6		6	4.5333	4	4		4	3.7778	4	4		4	1.8889	2	2		2	1.1333	1	1		1	17	17	17		0				
<b>Other Committees</b>																																			
Urgent Decisions	7	2.3333	2	2		2	1.8667	2	2		2	1.5556	2	2		2	0.7778	1	1		1	0.4667	0	0		0	7	7	7		0				
Audit	9	3.0000	3	3		3	2.4000	2	2		2	2.0000	2	2		2	1.0000	1	1		1	0.6000	1	1		1	9	9	9		0				
Standards	11	3.6667	4	4		4	2.9333	3	3		3	2.4444	2	2		2	1.2222	1	1		1	0.7333	1	1		1	11	11	11		0				
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>44.6667</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>35.7333</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29.7778</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14.8889</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8.9333</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>134</b>	<b></b>	<b>0</b>				

To achieve overall

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**Political Balance Calculations**

Group	Labour	Conservative	SIA	Lib Dem	Reform	Green														Total	Ungrouped Member (Independent)	TOTAL Members								
Number of Members	15	10	8	5	5	3														46	1	47								
Overall proportionality	33%	22%	17%	11%	11%	7%														100%										
Total entitlement	43.6957	29.1304	23.3043	14.5652	14.5652	8.7391														134	0	0								
Total rounded entitlement	44	29	23	15	15	9														135	0	0								
Size	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Rounding Adjustment	proposed allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Rounding Adjustment	proposed allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Rounding Adjustment	proposed allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Rounding Adjustment	proposed allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Allocation	Rounding Adjustment	proposed allocation	Strict Entitlement	Rounded Total	Proposed allocation							
<b>Service Committees</b>																														
Policy and Resources	15	4.8913	5	5	3.2609	3	3	2.6087	3	-1	2	1.6304	2	2	1.6304	2	2	0.9783	1	1	15	16	15							
Community & Leisure	15	4.8913	5	5	3.2609	3	3	2.6087	3	-1	2	1.6304	2	2	1.6304	2	2	0.9783	1	1	15	16	15							
Economy and Property	15	4.8913	5	5	3.2609	3	3	2.6087	3	-1	2	1.6304	2	2	1.6304	2	2	0.9783	1	1	15	16	15							
Environment & Climate Change	15	4.8913	5	5	3.2609	3	3	2.6087	3	-1	2	1.6304	2	2	1.6304	2	2	0.9783	1	1	15	16	15							
Housing and Health	15	4.8913	5	5	3.2609	3	3	2.6087	3	-1	2	1.6304	2	2	1.6304	2	2	0.9783	1	1	15	16	15							
<b>Regulatory Committees</b>																														
Licensing	15	4.8913	5	5	3.2609	3	3	2.6087	3	-1	2	1.6304	2	2	1.6304	2	2	0.9783	1	1	15	16	15							
Planning	17	5.5435	6	5	3.6957	4	4	2.9565	3	-1	3	1.8478	2	2	1.8478	2	2	1.1087	1	1	17	18	17							
<b>Other Committees</b>																														
Audit	9	2.9348	3	3	1.9565	2	2	1.5652	2	-1	1	0.9783	1	1	0.9783	1	1	0.5870	1	1	9	10	9							
Standards	11	3.5870	4	4	2.3913	2	2	1.9130	2		2	1.1957	1	1	1.1957	1	1	0.7174	1	1	11	11	11							
Urgent Decisions	7	2.2826	2	2	1.5217	2	2	1.2174	1		1	0.7609	1	1	0.7609	1	1	0.4565	0	0	7	7	7							
<b>Transfers required</b>																														
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>134</b>	43.6957	45	-1	44	29.1304	28	1	29	23.3043	26	-3	23	14.5652	17	-2 or -3	14 or 15	14 or 15	14 or 15	17	-2 or -3	14 or 15	0	9.00	9	0	9	134	142	134
Overall rounded total		44.00			44	29.00			29	23.00			23	15.00			14 or 15	14 or 15												
Rounding Adjustment required			-1			1				-3					-2		14 or 15	14 or 15		-2										
Lib Dem/Reform Adj															-1															
<b>Rounded overall</b>		<b>44</b>			<b>29</b>				<b>23</b>				<b>14 or 15</b>				<b>14 or 15</b>							<b>9</b>		<b>134</b>				

**Groups will need to negotiate with each other on amending the allocation of seats.**

Rounded allocation is the rounding per committee

Rounding adjustment is the rounding per committee and may not give the correct total entitlement for each party which is subject to negotiation between groups as the rounded figure gives a total of 135 seats and there are only 134 seats available

Transfers required shows the adjustment required for Lib Dems and Reform to allocate 2 seats each to SIA across P&R/Community & Leisure/Economy & Property/Environment & Climate Change/Housing and Health/Licensing

Usually the party with the lowest proportion of a seat overall have to give up a seat (highlighted above in yellow) for each committee, however we have 2 parties with identical allocations with the lowest proportion and so they need to decide who will lose a seat. In the event that a decision is not achieved then lots will be drawn.

Lib Dems and Reform will need to allocate an additional seat (subject to lots being drawn) to the Conservative Group

Once all adjustments are included the proposed allocation should add up to 134 seats and will form the proposal to council

**Please note:**

†Individual Members may not sit on both the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Appeals Sub-Committee.

Committees can establish Sub-Committees during the course of the year, with the number of members determined by the parent Committee.

As long as the membership of the Sub-Committees is broadly balanced, the total entitlement of seats will be unaffected. This will also apply to the Swale Rainbow Homes Shareholder Representation Sub-Committee, the membership of which is to be determined by the Housing and Health Committee.

**Group Leader Submissions**

Committee	Labor	Conserv	SIA	Lib Dem	Reform UK	Green	Independent	WE have NOW	Membership	Notes
P&R	5	3	3	2	2	1	0	16	15	One over subscribed
Community and Leisure Committee	5	3	3	1	2	1	0	15	15	
Economy and Property	5	3	3	2	2	1	0	16	15	One over subscribed
Environment and Climate Change	5	3	3	2	1	1	0	15	15	
Housing and Health Com	5	3	2	2	2	1	0	15	15	
Licensing Com	4	3	2	1	1	1	0	12	15	Three undersubscribed
Planning Com	6	4	3	2	2	1	0	18	17	One over subscribed
Audit	3	2	1	1	1	1	0	9	9	
Standards	4	2	2	1	1	1	0	11	11	
Urgent Decisions Com	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	7	7	
	44	28	23	15	15	9	0	134	134	

In addition to committee variances, Conservatives are one underallocation and Lib Dems/Reform are one over

Illustrative example to address committee seat variances

Committee	Labor	Conserv	SIA	Lib Dem	Reform UK	Green	Independent	WE have NOW	Membership
P&R	5	3	2	2	2	1	0	15	15
Community and Leisure Committee	5	3	3	1	2	1	0	15	15
Economy and Property	5	3	2	2	2	1	0	15	15
Environment and Climate Change	5	3	3	2	1	1	0	15	15
Housing and Health Com	5	3	2	2	2	1	0	15	15
Licensing Com	5	4	3	1	1	1	0	15	15
Planning Com	5	4	3	2	2	1	0	17	17
Audit	3	2	1	1	1	1	0	9	9
Standards	4	2	2	1	1	1	0	11	11
Urgent Decisions Com	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	7	7
	44	29	22	15	15	9	0	134	134
Transfer required 1 to SIA from Lib Dem or Reform			+1	-1	-1				

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