



Annual Council

17 July 2025

Item

Public



# CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS – AUDIT COMMITTEE

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## 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 To consider a change of name and an increase in the membership of the Audit Committee. This report deals with the consequential revised constitution of committees, the overall entitlement of seats for each of the political groups and the proportionate allocation of seats between the groups across all committees.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Council will have seen the recommendation within the Audit Committee Annual Assurance Report to Council 2024/25 to increase in the size of the Audit Committee from 5 to 9 members and to change its name to the Audit and Governance Committee. In particular, at paragraph 16 of the Statement of the Chairman of the Audit Committee he states:

*“In order for the Audit Committee play a leading role in establishing this new culture and addressing the issues that have led to the Council’s assurance being limited it is requested that the Council increase the size of the Committee by four members so that all groups on the Council can be represented on it and it has the capacity to manage its work through sub-groups or working parties if appropriate. It is also requested that the title is amended to “Audit and Governance Committee” to make its role clearer.”*

- 2.2. The provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 require the Council to review the representation of each political group on committees, panels etc. at each annual meeting or as soon as practicable after that meeting. The regulations require that all Scrutiny, Standing and Regulatory Committees are politically balanced across the total number of committee places. Subject to that overriding requirement, each committee must also be politically balanced, as far as it is reasonably practicable. An increase in the size of a committee requires that the overall allocation of seats is reconsidered.
- 2.3 The Executive (Cabinet) is not subject to the political balance rules.
- 2.4 Advisory Committees and other ad hoc bodies and groups are not subject to the political balance rules either, but traditionally political proportionality has been applied to them outside the overall aggregate balance referred to in paragraph 2.2 above.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That Council approves the change of name of the Audit Committee to the Audit and Governance Committee and an increase in its membership from five to nine members.
- 3.2. That the Council confirms the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.3. That the leaders of the Liberal Democrat, Reform UK and Conservative groups notify officers which members will take up the additional Audit Committee seats available to their group.

## **Report**

### **4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

- 4.1. The Council is obliged to ensure that the membership of committees and related bodies is proportionate to individual group membership.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1. The allocation of seats on Committees will have no obvious financial implications.

### **6. Climate Change Appraisal**

- 6.1. The allocation of seats on Committees will have no obvious impact in terms of climate change.

### **7. Background**

- 7.1. The Council is requested to approve an increase in number of members of the Audit Committee from 5 to 9 and the overall revised constitution of committees.
- 7.2. This requires 112 seats to be allocated proportionately across all committees and the Council is requested to approve the overall constitution as set out below:

<b><u>Committee Name</u></b>	<b><u>Seats per Committee</u></b>
Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11
Pensions Committee	4
Audit Committee	9
Strategic Licensing Committee	15
Standards Committee	9
Southern Planning Committee	11
Northern Planning Committee	11
Housing Supervisory Board	9
Total	<u>112</u>

## 8. Allocation of Seats

- 8.1. The Council is required to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups for the coming year.
- 8.2. The maximum number of seats available to each group within the political balance rules will be:

<b><u>Group Name</u></b>	<b><u>Seats per Group</u></b>
Liberal Democrats	64
Reform	23
Conservatives	11
Green and Progressive Independent	7
Labour	6
Non Aligned	1
Total	<u>112</u>

- 8.3. The proportionate allocation of seats to the political groups across all committees is set out in Appendix 1.
- 8.4. An additional 4 seats added to the Audit Committee results in an increase in the Liberal Democrat membership of the Committee by 2 to 5, Reform UK by 1 to 2. The Conservative Group is also now represented with 1 seat.
- 8.5. The Council is entitled to 10 seats on the Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority. Under the present arrangements, the Liberal Democrat Group is entitled to 6 seats, the Reform Group 2 seats, the Conservative Group 1 seat and the Green and Progressive Independent Group 1 seat. This will remain unchanged.

- 8.6 The proposed allocation of seats meets the legal requirements, however, should the Council wish, it is possible to agree allocations which are not strictly politically balanced if no Member dissents.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations made thereunder.

**Local Member:** All

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Constitution of Committees and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups