

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 25 JUNE 2009

REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of changes in the Council's political balance and the resulting changes to the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the change to the Council's political balance be noted;
- 2.2 That the corresponding changes in the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees/Boards be endorsed.

3.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Council – 5 March, 2009
Annual Council Meeting – 21 May 2009

4.0 INFORMATION

- 4.1 Following notification of the formation of a Liberal Democrat/Independents Group, the Council's political balance has been recalculated as follows:

Conservative	25 seats (46.30%)
Labour	18 seats (33.33%)
Lib Dem/Independent	7 seats (12.96%)
TAWPA	4 seats (7.41%)

- 4.2 The Regulations require main Committees/Boards to be balanced overall, which gives a total of 43 available seats. Given the current structure of the Council, the revised allocation of seats is as follows:

		CON	LAB	LD/IND	TAWPA
		(19.90)	(14.33)	(5.57)	(3.19)
		20	14	6	3
Scrutiny Leadership Board	6	3	2	1 (+1)	0 (-1)
Standards Committee	8	4	2 (-1)	1 (+1)	1
Audit Committee	6	2	2	1	1
Plans Board	8	4	3	1	0
Licensing Committee	15	7	5	2	1
Total	43	20	14	6	3

4.3 The application of the recalculation of the political balance will, therefore, result in the membership of the Scrutiny Leadership Board becoming 3 Conservative seats, 2 Labour seats and 1 Liberal Democrat/Independent seat. The TAWPA group will, however, be entitled to co-opt a member on to the Scrutiny Leadership Board. The membership of the Standards Committee is subject to one change – the Labour Group was slightly over-represented on the previous “best fit” political balance calculation, and, in order to more accurately reflect the current political proportionality, it loses one seat. This goes to the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group, which is entitled to one seat on the Standards Committee.

4.4 The Liberal Democrat/Independent Group retains the seats on Audit Committee, Plans Board & Licensing Committee that were allocated to members of the former Independent and Liberal Democrat Groups.

4.5 **Other Committees/Boards appointed by Council**

The following were appointed at Annual Council on 21 May 2009:

Appeals Committee – 8 Members (4 Con, 3 Lab, 1 Ind)
 Personnel Board – 6 Members (3 Con, 2 Lab, 1 TAWPA)
 Employee JICF – 8 Members (4 Con, 3 Lab, 1 Liberal Democrat)
 Parishes Forum – 8 Members (4 Con, 3 Lab, 1 Liberal Democrat)
 Development Plan Steering Group – 8 Members (4 Con, 3 Lab, 1 Ind)
 Combined Fire Authority (CFA) – 6 Members (3 Con, 2 Lab, 1 TAWPA)

4.5.1 With 6 Member bodies (Personnel Board and CFA), there has been a 3-2-1 split between the three largest Groups. Applying that principle means that the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group (as the third largest group) are entitled to a seat, and will now be represented on these bodies instead of the TAWPA group.

4.5.2 For the remaining 8 Member bodies, the following is proposed:

Appeals Committee and Development Plan Steering Group – Liberal Democrat/Independent Group have the seat previously allocated to the Independent Group;

Employee JICF – TAWPA Group have the seat previously allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group.

Parish Forum – TAWPA Group have the seat previously allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group.

5.0 OTHER INFORMATION

Equality & Diversity	The business of the Council considers equality and diversity in an appropriate manner.
Environmental Impact	None arising directly from this report.
Legal Comment	Approval of the allocation of seats on Committees/Boards is a function exercisable by the Council.
Links with Corporate Priorities	The Council seeks to deliver its objectives of providing leadership, accountability and high standards in local democracy.
Opportunities & Risks	The opportunities and risks associated with these proposals have been identified and assessed. Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Ward Implications	Borough wide

Report prepared by Phil Smith, Senior Democratic Services Officer (01952-383211)