

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Council

17 May 2023

Establishment of Committees and Review of Political Proportionality

Head of Service Gavin Ramtohal - Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Report Author: Rachel Whillis – Democratic Services Manager
Wards Affected: n/a

Summary and purpose

To appoint the Council's committees for the 2023/24 municipal year and to agree their size and their proportionality.

Recommendation

The Council is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) the committees as set out at Annex A be appointed with the committee sizes shown; and
- (ii) the scheme of proportionality as set out at Annex A be adopted for 2023/24.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The Council is asked to appoint the committees it requires for the next municipal year, agree their size, to review formally the proportional political allocation of places on committees and to adopt a scheme of proportionality for the 2023/24 municipal year.
- 1.2 The committees which it is proposed to establish for the 2023/24 municipal year, and their proposed size, are set out at Annex A. It also sets out the political proportionality overall.
- 1.3 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review annually committee membership and political representation. By law, seats on committees must be allocated in proportion to the political composition of the Council. Only with no councillor voting against such a decision, can an authority decide that it wishes to adopt an arrangement other than a proportional one.
- 1.4 Four groups have been formed: the Liberal Democrats Group, the Conservative Group, the Community Group, and the Labour Group. The

number of seats of each group on the Council and the resulting percentages are as follows:

<u>Liberal Democrats</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Labour</u>
21	6	3	2
65.63%	18.75%	9.38%	7.14%

- 1.5 In determining the allocation of seats on committees, the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the Council is applied to the total number of elected councillor seats on each committee. Fractional entitlements of less than one half are rounded down and entitlements of one half or more are rounded up. So that this process of rounding does not result in disproportionate advantage to one political group, the aggregate membership of all the committees must also be in line with the proportions on the Council.

2. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 2.1 The Council must establish a Licensing Committee and at least one scrutiny committee (overview and scrutiny). It is for the Council to decide what other committees it wishes to establish for the discharge of its functions and good governance.
- 2.2 The Council has no option but to achieve political proportionality. Where it is not possible to achieve absolute proportionality for each committee, the scheme agreed must achieve overall proportionality across all the committees of the Council.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the committees listed in Annex A be appointed with the composition shown. The Annex incorporates a scheme of proportionality for 2023/24. This scheme achieves the required balance between the four political groups on the Council.
- 2.4 The Council will review the scheme of proportionality following the rescheduled Frimley Green election on 15 June 2023.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.

4. Legal and Governance Issues

- 4.1 As set out above.

5. Monitoring Officer Comments

- 5.1 No matters arising.

Annexes: Annex A – Scheme of Proportionality
Background Papers: None

Annex A - Scheme of Proportionality

Committee	Liberal Democrats	Conservative	Community	Labour	TOTAL
Planning Applications	10	2	2	1	15
Licensing	9	2	1	1	13
Performance & Finance	8	2	2	1	13
External Partnerships	9	2	1	1	13
Audit & Standards	4	2	1	0	7
Employment	5	2	1	1	9
Total seats	45	12	8	5	70
% of Committee seats	64.29%	17.14%	11.43%	7.14%	100%
% of Council membership	65.63%	18.75%	9.38%	6.25%	100%