

Committee: Annual Council

Date:

Title: Political Balance 2026-27

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Report Author: Ben Ferguson, Democratic Services Manager

Author: bferguson@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. As required at the annual meeting, this report considers the political composition of the Council and recommends that seats on the main committees be allocated to the political groups as detailed in the report.
2. Since the previous political balance calculation, approved in March 2026, Councillor Regan no longer sits in a political group and Councillor Loughlin, ward member for Stort Valley, has resigned. Sadly, a vacancy will also be announced in Great Dunmow North following the death of Councillor Armstrong. Therefore, the Council's political composition is now: 18 Residents for Uttlesford, 10 Conservative Party, 3 Liberal Democrats, 3 Reform UK, 2 Uttlesford Independent Group and 1 Independent (unaffiliated). For the purposes of this political balance calculation, there are 2 vacant ward seats.
3. As per the Local Government Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the political balance calculation is based only on councillors who are members of a political group, with formal political groups requiring at least two members. Therefore, this calculation has factored in the political groups of Council only and committee seats have been allocated accordingly.

Recommendations

4. That Council approves:
 - I. The political balance and the allocation of seats on its committees as detailed in the report.

Financial Implications

5. None.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None.

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	Group Leaders have been consulted on political balance and nominations have been put forward for member appointments.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	Committee seats are allocated proportionally to each political group's size on the council, both overall and (so far as practicable) on each committee.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The political balance calculation is in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Local Government Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

8. The Local Government Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review the representation of the different political groups and allocate the seats on their committees to political groups represented in accordance, so far as reasonably practicable, with the following four principles of proportionality:-
- a) that not all seats on the body concerned are allocated to the same political group;
 - b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of an authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority;
 - d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

9. The number of seats on ordinary committees of the Council is proposed as follows:

Committee	Number of Seats
Audit and Standards	11
Licensing and Environmental Health	10
Planning	10
Scrutiny	11
Appointments Committee	7
Investigatory and Disciplinary Committee	5
Appeals Committee	5
Total	59

10. Based on the 59 committee seats proposal, the number of seats available to each group is:

Group	Percentage	Calculated Seats	Number of Seats
Residents for Uttlesford	50.0000%	29.5000	30
Liberal Democrat	8.3333%	4.9167	5
Conservative	27.7778%	16.3889	16
Uttlesford Independents	5.5556%	3.2778	3
Reform UK	8.3333%	4.9167	5
Total	100%	59	59

Licensing and Environmental Health Committee

11. The Licensing and Environmental Health Committee cannot be taken into account for the purposes of the calculation because it is not a committee to which the Local Government Act 1972 applies. However, it is proposed that

the ten places available to be allocated to the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee be calculated on the same basis of proportionality applied to those committees falling under the 1972 Act. It is a requirement that the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee has between 10-15 members.

Proposal for Allocation of Seats

12. The allocation of the 59 seats is therefore proposed as follows:

Committees	Seats	R4U	LD	CONS	IND	REFORM
Planning	10	5	1	2	1	1
Licensing and EH	10	5	1	3	0	1
Scrutiny	11	5	1	3	1	1
App Ctt	7	3	1	2	0	1
Audit/Standards	11	5	1	3	1	1
IDC	5	3	0	2	0	0
AC	5	4	0	1	0	0
No of calculated seats available						
	59	30	5	16	3	5

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Local authorities have a statutory duty to review political balance and ensure committee seats are allocated proportionally, so far as reasonably practicable.	2	3	To review political balance in accordance with the principles of proportionality as set out in the Local Government Housing Act 1989.