

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of meeting: 22 October 2025

Report by: James Ellis, Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Report title: Political Balance and Committee Membership of the Council Update

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Summary – In line with paragraph 3.3(i) and (k) of the Constitution, Council is required to approve its political balance and allocation of seats. The political balance of the Council has changed since May 2025, due to a change in the number of councillors within the Green Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL:

- a) That the revised political balance of the Council at paragraph 2.6 be agreed; and**
- b) That the membership of Scrutiny Committees, Regulatory Committees and Joint Committees be as set out in Appendix A be agreed, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The political balance of the Council has changed since the Annual Council meeting on 15 May 2025. A Councillor has left the Green Party group and become an Independent Member.
- 1.2 This has impacted the number of seats allocated to the political groups and requires approval from the Council.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the authority is under a duty to review the allocation of seats to political groups as soon as practicable following a change to the membership of those groups.
- 2.2 In September 2025, the Monitoring Officer received notification that Councillor Woollcombe had decided to leave the Green Party group and sit on the Council as an Independent Member.
- 2.3 The political groups within East Herts Council are entitled to an allocation of committee places in proportion to their representation on the Council.
- 2.4 At the Council meeting in May 2025, it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be increased from 14 to 15 Members, in line with recommendations from the Member Constitution Review Group and to ensure political balance across committees. Following the subsequent change in political balance, it is now recommended that the Committee be reduced back to 14 Members, with a one seat reduction for the Green Party group.
- 2.5 Following Council in May 2025, an Independent Vacancy remained on Licencing Committee. It is proposed that Councillor Woollcombe be appointed to this Committee, following their expressed interest. The remainder of seat allocations are unchanged, with two vacant seats for the Green Party group, as detailed in Appendix A.
- 2.6 The proposed political balance representation of each relevant group is set out below:

Group	Members	%	No of committee seats
Green	16	32	22

Conservative	14	28	19
Lib Dems	10	20	14
Labour	5	10	7
Reform	2	4	3
Independent	1	2	1
Independent	1	2	1
Independent	1	2	1
Total	50	100	68

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 A change in the political make-up of the Council has had an impact on the political balance of the Council and also, therefore, the number of committee seats each group is entitled to.
- 3.2 This report ensures that the Council complies with its statutory obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The Council must review its political balance and allocation of seats as soon as practicable following a change to political groups in accordance with the legislation.

5.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

6.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

6.1 [Annual Council report](#) – 14 May 2025

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