

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to: Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 18 May, 2017

Subject: Political Balance

Report by: Chief Executive

1.0 Purpose & Background

1.1 Standing Order 1.5 states that at the first Council meeting after an election, Council will *"decide the political balance on each committee and sub committee. We will set aside seats to achieve a balance between the political parties, as far as is reasonably practical."*

1.2 The purpose of this report is to ask Council to decide the political balance on its standing committees.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

a) notes the political balance of the Council further to the May elections (Table 1);

b) notes the options for the number of seats each political group might have on the Council's standing committees based on that political balance (Tables 3 and 4); and

c) decides the balance of seats on the Council's standing committees, guided by those options.

3.0 Background & Considerations

3.1 Standing Orders state that at the first meeting of the Council after an election the political balance on committees should be determined.

3.2 While political balance is not an exact science, the following general principles, insofar as are practicable, apply to its determination:

a) not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;

(b) the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of people belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;

(c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the body allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

3.3 Political representation on the Council further to the recent elections is set out in Table 1 below. This shows the number of seats each group has and the percentage of overall seats that number represents.

TABLE 1

Political Groups Seats	No	%
SNP	8	44
Conservative	5	28
Labour	5	28
	<u>18</u>	100

3.4 When the respective percentages in Table 1 are applied to seats on the Council's standing committees, the unrounded allocation of seats is as set out in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2

Political Group	% to apply	Seats Planning	Seats Regulatory	Seats Audit & Finance	Seats Scrutiny
SNP	44	4.4	3.52	3.52	3.52
Conservative	28	2.8	2.24	2.24	2.24
Labour	28	2.8	2.24	2.24	2.24
		<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>

3.5 Clearly, it is not practicable to have the seats allocated in any other way than in round figures. Applying rounding conventions to the figures set out in Table 2 would result in the seat apportionment as set in Table 3 overleaf.

TABLE 3

Political Groups & Seats	No.	Seats Planning Committee	Seats Regulatory	Seats Audit & Finance	Seats Scrutiny
SNP	8	4	4	4	see para 3.9
Conservative	5	3	2	2	
Labour	5	3	2	2	
	<u>18</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>

3.6 The scenario in Table 3 results in a position whereby the SNP group would have half the seats on committees of eight even though it does not have half the seats on the Council. That scenario would result in the following percentage of seats for each group (with the difference from the % of overall seats on the Council in brackets):

- SNP - 50% (+6%)
- Conservative - 25% (-3%)
- Labour - 25% (-3%).

3.7 An alternative scenario which would address that potential imbalance (albeit it would create a different one) is as set out in Table 4. This provides that the SNP would have one seat fewer than half the number of seats on committees of eight and that, alternately, each of the other parties with 28% of overall Council seats would have 37.5% representation on committees of eight.

TABLE 4

Political Groups & Members	No.	Seats Planning Committee	Seats Regulatory	Seats Audit & Finance	Seats Scrutiny
SNP	8	4	3	3	see para 3.9
Conservative	5	3	3	2	
Labour	5	3	2	3	
	<u>18</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>

3.8 That scenario would result in the following percentage of seats for each group (with the difference from the % of overall seats on the Council in brackets):

- SNP - 37.5% (-6.5%)
- Conservative (or Labour) - 37.5 (+9.5)%
- Labour (or Conservative) - 25% (-3%)

3.9 The Council has previously agreed that the majority of members of the Scrutiny Committee should come from outwith the political Administration and that the chair of that Committee should be appointed from the main

opposition. It is not clear at the time of writing this report which group or groups may be in political Administration and accordingly, no allocation of seats to that Committee has been proposed in this report.

- 3.10 Once other decisions are taken, seats on the Scrutiny Committee will be able to be allocated according to the principles of political balance and in line with whichever option for this is agreed by Council.

4.0 Other Committees & Fora

- 4.1 Licensing Board - appointments to this body are covered by a separate item on the agenda.
- 4.2 Local Review Body - the LRB is also subject to separate legislation and there are no requirements to make any appointments to this body at the Council's statutory meeting.
- 4.3 Statutory Committees - are all subject to specific requirements set out in either legislation or guidance.
- 4.4 Ad hoc Committees - political balance will be applied to these as appropriate (e.g. to Appointments Committees) and based on the balance agreed by the Council.
- 4.5 Nominations to these other committees and fora will come forward to Council at the relevant time and as required.

5.0 Sustainability Implications - N/A

- 6.0 Resource Implications** – There are no budget or staffing implications as a result of this paper.

7.0 Exempt Reports

- 7.1 Is this report exempt? No

8.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

9.0 Equalities Impact

- 9.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations? N/A

10.0 Legality

- 10.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers.

11.0 Appendices

None

12.0 Background Papers

- Results of local government elections, May 2017
- Council Standing Orders

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Elaine McPherson	Chief Executive	Signed: E McPherson

