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| **MEETING:** | **Council** |
| **DATE:** | **Wednesday 23 June 2004** |
| **SUBJECT:** | **Application of Political Balance Rules to the Allocation of Seats on Council Bodies** |
| **REPORT OF:** | **David Robinson, Local Democracy Manager** |
| **Purpose:** | To bring before Council information governing the allocation of seats for the 2003/04 Council year in order that proposals and nominations can be considered. |
| **Contact:** | David Robinson, Local Democracy Manager. Telephone 01323 415022 or internally on extension 5022, or<br><br>Peter Finnis, Assistant Director – Strategy and Democracy, Telephone 01323 41503 or internally on extension 5003. |

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| **1.** | **Introduction** | |
| **1.1** | A meeting of Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders was held on Wednesday 16 June 2004. An earlier version of this report was presented to that meeting. | |
| **2.** | **Current Structure (Executive Arrangements - Leader and Cabinet)** | |
| **2.1** | This paper is based on the current structure as first formally adopted on 24 April 2002 and last amended by the last Council on 16 April 2004:- | |
| **2.2** | **Base percentages:-** | |
| | No. of Councillors: 27 | % seats on Council |
| | Conservatives 14 | 52 |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Liberal Democrats 13 | 48 | |
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**2.3** **Committees**. The proposed allocation of seats in accordance with the rules is as follows:-

| Committee | No. of Seats | Controlling Group | Opposition |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scrutiny | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| Planning & Lisc. | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| Standards* | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| **Totals:** | **19** | **11** | **8** |

(* The political balance rules do not apply to the Standards Committee and the Council has amended their Constitution to provide for both Groups to be equally represented on this Committee).

**2.4** It is recognised that the allocation of 8 seats to the Opposition Group on the committees listed above is below that to which they would receive if it had been possible to allocate a number in strict proportion to their number of seats on the Council as a whole (i.e. 48% of 19 equals 9 seats). The allocation is, however, in accordance with size of committees provided for in the Council's Constitution and otherwise in accord with the rules on proportionality which guarantee the controlling group a majority of seats on each committee.

**2.5** **Other Bodies**

| Body | No. of Seats | Controlling Group | Opposition |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cons Area Adv. | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Tenants Advisory | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Performance Management Task Group | 5 | 3 | 2 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Grants Task Group | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| | Cleansing and Highways Forum | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | Downland Forum | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| | **Totals:** | **24** | **13** | **11** |

**2.6** Adjustments may be made to give the controlling group a majority of seats, however, past Borough Council practice has been to allow an equality of seats on some advisory and consultative bodies notwithstanding one party's superior number of Council seats.

**2.7** **Joint Staff Committee.** The current constitution provides for the 6 seats to be shared equally between the two largest groups.

**2.8** **Eastbourne Buses Board.** The tradition has been for the Board to comprise 2 members from each of the largest political groups. This has held true irrespective of the overall proportion of seats. The Chairman of the Board has come from the controlling group.

**2.9** **Other Task Groups, Project Boards and Best Value Review Teams.** So far as is possible, groups are recommended to retain existing membership so as to maintain continuity and allow members to continue or complete work already begun.

**David Robinson**

**Local Democracy Manager**

**17 June 2004**

**<u>Background papers:</u>**

**Agenda and papers, including guidance notes on the application of the political balance rules, as submitted to the Leaders' meeting on 16 June 2004.**