

This report is public	
Review of Proportionality and Committee Membership	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	20 October 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Not applicable
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	Not applicable
Report of	Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

To note the amendments to the constitution of political groups and amendments to the proportionality calculations and committee membership arising from a change to political Group membership.

1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the amended constitution of Political Groups (paragraphs 3.2 and 4.2).
- 1.2 To note the amended allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements as set out in Table 1.
- 1.3 To note the amended allocation of seats on committees that are not subject to the political balance requirements as set out in Table 2.
- 1.4 To note the amendments to committee membership, as advised by the respective Leaders of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance and Labour Group (paragraphs 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On 19 September 2025 Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke advised the Proper Officer that he had left the Labour Group and had joined the Conservative Party.
 - 2.2 On 19 September 2025, Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke and Councillor Eddie Reeves, Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, advised the Proper Officer that Councillor Okeke had joined the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance.
 - 2.3 A Member changing political group requires a review of the allocation of seats on committees and changes to committee membership to be made if required. This is
- Cherwell District Council

reported to the next scheduled Council meeting and effective from the date of that meeting.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
Finance		There are no financial implications arising directly from the report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), 9 October 2025		
Legal		The allocation of seats to the Political Groups is in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 and related regulations mentioned in the report. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 9 October 2025		
Risk Management		In ensuring the legal requirements are met risk to the authority is mitigated. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 9 October 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
Equality Impact			X	
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			X	
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?			X	
Climate & Environmental Impact				
ICT & Digital Impact				
Data Impact				
Procurement & subsidy				

Council Priorities	None, this report is pursuant to a statutory requirement
Human Resources	N/A
Property	N/A
Consultation & Engagement	Political Group Leaders

Supporting Information

3. Background

3.1 The current constitution of the Council (48 Members) is:

- 17 Liberal Democrat (35.42%)
- 12 Conservative (25.00%)
- 11 Labour / Labour & co-operative party (22.92%)
- 4 Green (8.33%)
- 4 Independent (8.33%)

3.2 As a result of Councillor Dr Okeke leaving the Labour Group and joining the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, the current political groupings of Council for committee allocation is:

- Liberal Democrat (17 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor David Hingley
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Lesley McLean
- Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance (13 Members, all Conservative Group members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Ford)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Eddie Reeves
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor David Rogers
- Labour (11 Members, all Labour and Labour & Co-operative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Amanda Watkins
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Andrew Crichton
- Green and Independent Alliance (5 Members, comprising 4 Green members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Broad)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Tom Beckett
- Independent (2 Members, comprising 2 Independent Members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Les Sibley

- 3.3 The Labour Group and Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance no longer have the same number of members. The Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance is now the official opposition.

4. Details

Proportionality

- 4.1 The political balance of committees has been reviewed in accordance with the principles of political proportionality set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989:
- Where there is more than one political group, all seats must not be allocated to the same group.
 - The majority of seats must be allocated to the group with the majority on the Council.
 - When considering all seats available for allocation the total of those given to each group should match their representation on the Council overall.
 - The number of seats on each individual committee allocated to groups should match their representation on the Council overall.
- 4.2 Under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 made pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, allocations of committee seats are made to political groups and any member not in a political group is consequently not automatically entitled to seats on committees. There are no such members currently and the committee allocations take account of the Groups notified to the Proper Officer as set out below.
- Liberal Democrat Group (17 Members) – 35.4%
 - Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance (13 Members) - 27.1%
 - Labour Group (11 Members) – 22.9%
 - Green and Independent Alliance Group (5 Members) – 10.4%
 - Independent Group (2 Members) – 4.2%
- 4.3 Table 1 sets out the revised allocation of Seats to proportional committees. The figures show the adjustments which are necessary to achieve the balance across and within committees to comply with the rules. There is no change to the adjustment agreed at the Annual Council meeting whereby the Independent Group gives a seat to the Liberal Democrat Group. The adjustment required is for the Labour Group to give a seat to the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance on the General Licensing Committee.

Table 1: Allocation of seats to non-proportional committee

	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Cherwell Conservative & Independent Alliance	Green & Independent Alliance Group	Independent Group	Total
% entitlement	35.4%	22.9%	27.1%	10.4%	4.2%	100%
Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee	3	2	2	1	0	8
Appeals Panel	4	2	3	1	0	10
Budget Planning Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
General Licensing Committee	5 (+1)	2 (-1)	4 (+1)	1	0 (-1)	12
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
Personnel Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
Planning Committee	6	4	5	2	1	18
Standards Committee	3	2	2	1	0	8
Proportional Entitlement by Committee	32	22	24	9	5	92
Aggregate Entitlement	33	21	25	9	4	92
Adjustment Required	+1	-1	+1	0	-1	0

4.4 The Constitution sets out that the Planning Committee has 12 named substitutes. These appointments are not included in the main committee proportionality calculations above but the number of substitutes per Group should reflect the political makeup of the Committee with the adjustment to ensure each Group has a named substitute. Groups should appoint the number of named substitutes as set out below:

- Liberal Democrat Group - 4
- Labour Group - 3
- Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance - 3
- Green and Independent Alliance Group - 1
- Independent Group - 1

4.5 Political Groups must have regard to the following when nominating Committee members:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee must not include any members of the Executive
- Personnel Committee must include at least one member of the Executive and may not include members of the Appeals Panel
- Appeals Panel members must not include any members of the Personnel Committee

- 4.6 The Licensing Acts Committee allocation of seats is not subject to the political balance requirements. Due to the crossover with the functions of the General Licensing Committee, Members resolved at the Annual Council meeting that the make-up of the Licensing Acts Committee reflect the make-up of the General Licensing Committee, and the same Members are appointed to both Committees. It therefore follows that the adjustment in Table 1 to the General Licensing Committee also applies to the Licensing Acts Committee. This is set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Allocation of seats to non-proportional committee

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance	Green and Independent Alliance	Independent	Total
Licensing Acts Committee	5	2	4	1	0	12

Committee membership changes

- 4.7 The following adjustments are required by the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance:

- General Licensing Committee (also applicable to Licensing Acts Committee)
 - ADD Councillor Doug Webb
- Planning Committee
 - ADD Councillor David Rogers as a full committee member (currently a named substitute, therefore creating a named substitute vacancy)
 - ADD Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke as named substitute (vacancy arisen as per above)

- 4.8 The Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance has notified the Proper Officer of the following changes to committee membership (not required by the review of proportionality):

- Budget Planning Committee
 - REMOVE Councillor David Rogers
 - ADD Councillor Zoe McLernon
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - REMOVE Councillor Zoe McLernon
 - ADD Councillor David Rogers

- 4.9 The seats Councillor Dr Okeke occupied as a member of the Labour Group (Appeals Panel, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Planning Committee named

substitute) ceased when he left the Labour Group are indicated below, in addition to the adjustments required by the Labour Group arising from the review of proportionality:

- Appeals Panel
 - ADD Councillor Mark Cherry (currently Labour Group vacancy)
- General Licensing Committee (also applicable to Licensing Acts Committee)
 - REMOVE Councillor Andrew Crichton
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 - ADD Councillor Dom Vaitkus (currently Labour Group vacancy)
- Planning Committee
 - REMOVE Councillor Rebecca Biegel as full committee member
 - ADD Councillor Rebecca Biegel as a named substitute (currently Labour Group vacancy)

- 4.9 The revised proportionality calculations do not require the Liberal Democrat Group, the Green and Independent Alliance Group or Independent Group to make any amendments to committee membership. However, should a Group Leader notify the Monitoring Officer of a change, this will be notified to Council.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to amend appointments to committees. This is rejected as the change of political group membership has resulted in amended entitlement to seats on committees for the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance and Labour Group .

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 A change in political group membership has resulted in a review of the allocation of seats on committees that are both subject to and not subject to the political balance requirements with amendments to committee membership. The Constitution requires Council to agree each of these aspects.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	N/A

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
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Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of statutory officer, Monitoring Officer