

This report is public	
District By-election: Review of Proportionality and Committee Membership	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	20 July 2026
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 result of the by-election held on 16 July 2026 and to note the constitution of political groups, the proportionality calculations and amendments to committee membership arising from a by-election.

1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the result of the District by-election held on 16 July 2026.
- 1.2 To note the constitution of Political Groups following the by-election (paragraphs 4.2 and 4.4).
- 1.3 To note the allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements (Appendix 1) following the by-election.
- 1.4 To note the allocation of seats on committees that are not subject to the political balance requirements (Appendix 1) following the by-election.
- 1.5 To note the amendments to committee membership, as advised by the Leader Liberal Democratic Group (paragraph 4.7).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following the resignation of Councillor Dorothy Walker as a district councillor in the Kidlington West ward, an election to fill the vacancy was called. The Returning Officer scheduled the by-election for 16 July 2027.
- 2.2 This report sets out the result of the by-election, updated membership of Political Groups, proportionality and committee membership in light of the by-election.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	There are no financial implications arising directly from the report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), 20 July 2026			
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. It is a legal requirement for Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 20 July 2026			
Risk Management	In ensuring the legal requirements are met risk to the authority is mitigated. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 20 July 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		Appointments are made using the principles of proportionality as set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15). Each Group appoints whomever it wishes to serve on a committee to fulfil its proportional entitlement.
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	None, this report is pursuant to a statutory requirement			

Human Resources	N/A
Property	N/A
Consultation & Engagement	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Lesley McLean

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Following a by-election it is necessary to report the result to Council, review proportionality, committee allocations and amend committee membership accordingly. This report fulfils that requirement.

4. Details

16 July Kidlington West ward by-election result

- 4.1 Councillor Rob Packard, Liberal Democrat, was elected to the vacant seat. Councillor Packard will serve the remainder of the term of the vacant seat: to May 2028.

Constitution of the Council and Constitution of Political Group

- 4.2 The current constitution of the Council (48 Members) is:
- 20 Liberal Democrat (41.67%)
 - 8 Labour / Labour & co-operative party (16.67%)
 - 8 Conservative (16.67%)
 - 6 Reform UK (12.5%)
 - 4 Green (8.33%)
 - 2 Independent (4.16%)
- 4.3 The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Lesley McLean, and Councillor Packard have confirmed that Councillor Packard will join the Liberal Democrat.
- 4.4 This means there is no change to constitution of political groups reported to Annual Council on 20 May 2026:
- Liberal Democrat (20 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Lesley McLean
 - Conservative (8 Members, all Conservative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves
 - Labour (8 Members, all Labour and Labour & Co-operative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Rebecca Biegel

- Reform UK (6 Members, all Reform UK party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Paul Jeffreys
- Green (4 Members, comprising all 4 Green party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton

Proportionality

- 4.5 As there is also no change to the constitution of political groups, there is no change to the allocation of seats on committees as agreed at Annual Council on 20 May 2026, attached as Appendix 1.

Committee membership changes

- 4.6 Former Councillor Walker was a member of Planning Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These seats currently sit as Liberal Democrat vacancies.
- 4.7 The Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Councillor McLean has advised that Councillor Packard will fill the vacant Liberal Democrat seat on Planning Committee. Councillor Wells has stepped down as a member of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Packard will replace Councillor Wells on Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A Liberal Democrat vacancy on Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore remains.
- 4.8 The outcome of the by-election does not require the Conservative Group, about Group, Reform UK Group or Green 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 note the results of the by-election, proportionality review and amendments to committee membership. This is rejected as it is a requirement of Council following a by-election.

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
Report Author contact details	demcoracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01292 221535
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of statutory officer, Monitoring Officer