

This report is public	
Review of Proportionality and Committee Membership and Amendment to Outside Body Representative	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	19 October 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 amendments to the constitution of political groups and amendments to the proportionality calculations and committee membership arising from changes to political Group membership. To amend the Council's representative on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

1. Recommendations

Full Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the amended constitution of the Council (paragraph 3.2) and Political Groups (paragraph 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 Liberal Democrat, Conservative, Labour and Reform UK Group Leaders (to follow as an addendum to this report).
- 1.5 To appoint Councillor Dr Timothy Faltermeyer as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On 28 July 2026 Councillor Grace Conway-Murray advised the Proper Officer that she had left the Liberal Democrat Group and would be an Independent, non-aligned, Member.

- 2.2 On 26 August 2026 Councillor Grace Conway-Murray advised the Proper Officer that she had left the Liberal Democrat Group and would be an Independent, non-aligned, Member.
- 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 reported to the next scheduled Council meeting and effective from the date of that meeting.
- 2.4 The appointment of a representative to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel rest with Full Council. Any change of representative therefore needs to be appointed by Full Council.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
Finance		There are no financial implications arising directly from the report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), 8 October 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. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 8 October 2026		
Risk Management		In ensuring the legal requirements are met risk to the authority is mitigated. Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer, 8 October 2026		
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			X	

lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
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	Political Group Leaders			

Supporting Information

3. Background

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

- 18 Liberal Democrat (37.50%)
- 8 Labour / Labour & co-operative party (16.67%)
- 8 Conservative (16.67%)
- 6 Reform UK (12.5%)
- 4 Green (8.33%)
- 4 Independent (8.33%)

3.2 As a result of Councillor Conway-Murray and Councillor Conway leaving the Liberal Democrat Group and being Independent, non-aligned Members, the current political groupings of Council for committee allocation is:

- Liberal Democrat (18 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Lesley McLean
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Chris Aramini-Brant
- Conservative (8 Members, all Conservative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Eddie Reeves
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor David Rogers

- Labour (8 Members, all Labour and Labour & Co-operative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Rebecca Biegel
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
- Reform UK (6 Members, all Reform UK party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Paul Jeffreys
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Michael Wilson
- Green (4 Members, 4 Green party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Tom Beckett

3.3 The Labour Group and Conservative Group continue to have the same number of members and will therefore both continue to be referred to as the official opposition.

3.4 There are four Members not aligned to any political group: Councillor Jean Conway; Councillor Grace Conway-Murray; Councillor Nick Cotter; and, Councillor Les Sibley.

3.5 Councillor Conway had been appointed a Planning Committee member at Annual Council as a Liberal Democrat Group member. Upon leaving the Group, there was a Liberal Democrat vacancy on Planning Committee. This was filled by Councillor Dr Faltermeyer on 16 September 2026 as set out in the [delegated officer decision](#).

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. Four Independent members have neither formed a group nor aligned with a political group and are therefore not entitled to seats on committees.

- Liberal Democrat Group (18 Members) – 40.9%
- Conservative Group (8 Members) - 18.2%
- Labour Group (8 Members) – 18.2%

- Reform UK Group (8 Members) – 13.6%
- Green Group (4 Members) – 9.1%

4.3 Table 1 sets out the revised allocation of Seats to proportional committees. Adjustments arising from the revised calculations are set out at paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8.

Table 1: Allocation of seats to non-proportional committees

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Conservative	Reform UK	Green	Total
% entitlement	40.90%	18.20%	18.20%	13.60%	9.10%	100%
Appeals Panel	4	2	2	1	1	10
Audit & Governance Committee *	3	2*	1*	1	1	8
Budget Planning Committee	5	2	2	2	1	12
General Licensing Committee	5	2	2	2	1	12
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5	2	2	2	1	12
Personnel Committee	5	2	2	2	1	12
Planning Committee	5	2	2	1	1	11
Proportional Entitlement by Committee	32	14	13	11	7	77

* Labour and conservative seats will alternate for remainder of the year.

4.4 The Constitution sets out that the Planning Committee has 11 named substitutes. These appointments are not included in the main committee proportionality calculations above but the number of substitutes per Group should reflect the proportionality calculations for the full Committee. Groups should therefore appoint the number of named substitutes as set out below:

- Liberal Democrat Group - 5
- Labour Group - 2
- Conservative Group - 2
- Reform UK Group - 1
- Green 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 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	Conservative	Reform UK	Green	Total
Licensing Acts Committee	5	2	2	2	1	12

Committee membership changes

- 4.7 The following adjustments are required:
- Budget Planning Committee:
 - The Reform UK Group was required to give one seat to the Liberal Democrat Group. The revised proportionality calculations no longer require this adjustment.
 - The Liberal Democrat Group Leader will notify the Proper Officer of the Liberal Democrat Group member to come off Budget Planning Committee.
 - The Reform UK Group Leader will notify the Proper Officer of the Reform UK Group member to be appointed to Budget Planning Committee.
 - Once the changes are notified, they will be published as an addendum to the report.
 - Audit and Governance Committee (AGC):
 - The revised proportionality calculations reduce the allocation of seats to the Liberal Democrat Group from four to three. The Liberal Democrat Group Leader will notify the Proper Officer of the Liberal Democrat Group member to come off the Audit and Governance Committee.
 - The revised proportionality calculations allocate 1.5 seat each to the Conservative Group and Labour Group on AGC. Each Group currently has one AGC member. As it cannot be the case that half a seat is allocated, the Conservative Group Leader and Labour Group Leader have agreed that one Group will have two seats and the other continue to have one seat for a period and then this will be rotated. The Conservative Group Leader and the Labour Group Leader will notify the Proper Officer when the arrangement and additional appointees have been agreed.

- Once the changes are notified, they will be published as an addendum to the report.

- 4.8 The revised proportionality calculations do not require the Green Group to make any changes to Committee membership. However, should the Green Group Leader notify the Monitoring Officer of a change, this will be notified to Council.
- 4.9 A Liberal Democrat Group vacancy remains on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Liberal Democrat Group Leader will notify the Proper Officer of the Liberal Democrat Group member to fill this vacancy. Once the appointment is notified, it will be published as an addendum to the report.

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel Representative

- 4.10 The Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel examines and reviews how the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley carries out their responsibilities of ensuring that Thames Valley Police runs effectively and supports the Police and Crime Commissioner in their work.
- 4.11 The Panel's Terms of Reference set out that the membership included 14 elected Members, including one from each of the Oxfordshire district/city Councils.
- 4.12 The Panel's Terms of References state: "Appointments of elected Members to the Panel shall be made by each of the Authorities in accordance with their own procedures and in making their appointments to the Panel each individual authority shall have regard to the requirement in the Act that appointments shall be made with a view to ensuring that the 'balanced appointment objective' is met so far as is reasonably practicable. It is recognised that each Authority may choose to appoint from within the membership of the majority group."
- 4.13 At the 20 May 2026 Annual Council meeting, Councillor Robert Parkinson was appointed as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Lesley McLean, has advised the Proper Officer of a proposed change to the representative, which has been discussed with the current and proposed appointees. It is proposed that Councillor Dr Faltermeyer be appointed as the Council's representative to the Panel, replacing Councillor Parkinson.

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 changes of political group membership has resulted in amended entitlement to seats on committees for the Liberal Democrat, Conservative, Labour and Reform UK Groups.

Option 2: Not to change the council's representative on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Scrutiny Panel. This is not recommended as the change has been agreed with the Leader of the Council and the current and proposed appointee.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Changes in political group membership have 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.
- 6.2 Council appoints a representative to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel and therefore is required to agree the change of representative.

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	democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01292 221534
Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Report of Statutory Officer, Monitoring Officer