

**Committee:** Full Council

**Date:**

**Title:** Political Balance April 2025

Tuesday, 22 April  
2025

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## Summary

1. This report considers the political composition of the Council following the resignation of Councillor Asker from the Residents for Uttlesford Group. Councillor Asker now sits as a Reform UK councillor.
2. The Council's political composition is now 21 Residents for Uttlesford, 11 Conservative Party, 4 Liberal Democrats, 2 Uttlesford Independent Group and 1 Reform UK.
3. As per the Local Government Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the political balance calculation is based only on councillors who are members of a political group in Council, with such groups requiring at least two members to be formally recognised. As Councillor Asker is sitting as a single Reform UK councillor, political balance has been revised and a calculation has been carried out incorporating members in formal political groups only.
4. The revised calculation has led to the Residents for Uttlesford Group (R4U) losing one committee seat overall and the Conservative Party Group (CONs) gaining one seat overall. The only committee affected is the Audit and Standards Committee, and Councillor Lemon (CONs) has been nominated to the seat vacated by Councillor Asker. No further changes to committee appointments have been proposed.
5. It should be noted that political balance will be re-visited at the annual Council meeting in May 2025, as required by the Constitution.

## Recommendations

6. That the Council approves:
  - I. The political balance and the allocation of seats on its committees as detailed in the report.
  - II. That Councillor Lemon (CONs) is appointed to the Audit and Standards Committee.

## Financial Implications

7. None.

## Background Papers

8. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None.

## Impact

9.

Communication/Consultation	The Leader of the Council and Main Opposition Group Leader have been consulted on the proposals.
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None.
Health and Safety	None.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The political balance calculation is in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Local Government Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	None.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

## Situation

10. The Local Government Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to review the representation of the different political groups and allocate the seats on their committees to political groups represented in accordance, so far as reasonably practicable, with the following four principles of proportionality:-
- a) that not all seats on the body concerned are allocated to the same political group;
  - b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
  - c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of an authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority;

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

11. The number of seats on ordinary committees of the Council is proposed as follows; this remains unchanged from the number of seats agreed at the Annual Council meeting in May 2024:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Number of Seats</b>
Audit and Standards	11
Licensing and Environmental Health	10
Planning	9
Scrutiny	11
Appointments Committee	7
Investigatory and Disciplinary Committee (IDC)	5
Appeals Committee (AC)	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>

12. Based on the 58 seat scheme, the number of seats available to each group is:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Calculated Seats</b>	<b>Number of Seats</b>
Residents for Uttlesford	55.26%	32.05	32
Liberal Democrat	10.53%	6.11	6
Conservative	28.95%	16.79	17
Uttlesford Independents	5.26%	3.05	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>

### **Licensing and Environmental Health Committee**

13. The Licensing Committee cannot be taken into account for the purposes of the calculation because it is not a Committee to which the Local Government Act 1972 applies. However, it is proposed that the ten places available to be allocated to the Licensing Committee and agreed by Council be calculated on the same basis of proportionality applied to those Committees falling under the 1972 Act. It is a requirement that the Licensing Committee has between 10-15 Members.

### Proposal for Allocation of Seats

14. The allocation of the 58 seats is therefore proposed as follows:

Committee	No. Seats	R4U	LD	CONs	IND
Planning	9	5	1	2	1
Licensing and Environmental Health	10	6	1	3	0
Scrutiny	11	6	1	3	1
Appointments	7	4	1	2	0
Audit and Standards	11	5	1	4	1
IDC	5	3	0	2	0
AC	5	3	1	1	0
<b>Total seats</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>

### Risk Analysis

15. There are no risks associated with this report.