

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Date: 15 June 2023
Title: Political Representation on the Panels of the Fire Authority
By: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis, Monitoring Officer
Lead Officer: Abigail Blanshard, Democratic Services Manager

Background Papers: Previous Report - Fire Authority 9 June 2022
The East Sussex Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996

Appendices: 1 – Panel membership 2022-23
2 – Panel Allocations based upon Political Proportions 2023-24

Implications:

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
EQUALITY IMPACT		POLITICAL	✓
FINANCIAL		OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
HEALTH & SAFETY		CORE BRIEF	
HUMAN RESOURCES			

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To secure political balance on Panels in accordance with the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and agree the resultant membership to the Panels of the Fire Authority.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the Fire Authority must keep under review the allocation of seats on Committees and other bodies to ensure, so far as practicable, that they reflect the political groups on the Authority.

The rules governing representation on Panels are set out overleaf giving the pattern of membership agreed at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 9 June 2022.

The Fire Authority is invited to agree the membership of its Panels for the forthcoming year.

RECOMMENDATION: The Fire Authority is asked to consider whether it wishes to:

- i) confirm the Panel arrangements and political representation as set out in the Report, and authorise the Monitoring Officer to make and publish the consequential amendments to the constitution,
- ii) agree (with no Member voting against) that the political balance provisions shall not apply to the membership of the Principal Officer Appointments Panel; and
- iii) appoint the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Panels in accordance with Standing Order 41.13 or, as has been the practice in the past, leave it to the Panels to do this under Standing Order 41.14.

1 BACKGROUND – CURRENT POSITION

1.1 Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, authorities must keep under review the allocation of seats to political groups on their Committees/Panels to ensure, so far as practicable, that they reflect the numbers in the political groups on their authority. The guiding principles which can be drawn from the 1989 Act and which need to be borne in mind when conducting any review are that:

- (a) The majority party should have a majority on each committee/panel;
- (b) The overall number of committee/panel places allocated to each group should be proportionate to the numbers of each group on the authority;
- (c) Subject to (a) and (b), the number of seats on each committee/panel should be proportionate to the numbers of each group on the authority.

1.2 Currently, there are four political groups on the Fire Authority: Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green. The political make up is:

Conservative:	8
Labour:	5
Liberal Democrat:	3
Green:	2

1.3 The Panels are the Authority's committees set up in accordance with Standing Order 41 and their terms of reference are shown in the Constitution. The Panels and their related membership which were approved on 9 June 2022 are shown in Appendix 1, and the proposed political proportionality for 2023/24 is shown in Appendix 2.

1.4 The size of each Panel is not fixed and can be agreed by the Fire Authority. To ensure that each Panel is properly representative of the overall membership of the Fire Authority it was agreed on 9 June 2022 that the size of each Panel should be 6

Members enabling each politically proportional Panel to become an exactly proportionate replica of one third of the Fire Authority. Following changes to the political proportionality of the Fire Authority, as a result of the Brighton & Hove City Council Elections, it is proposed that the Panel size should become 7 Members and the political group allocations per panel to be as follows:

Conservative:	3
Labour:	2
Liberal Democrat:	1
Green:	1

- 1.5 Political proportionality rules need not apply to Panels of Authorities provided that due notice to adopt alternative arrangements is given to all Members and no Member votes against the proposals when they are considered and approved. Members are therefore asked to agree that the political balance provisions should not apply to the Principal Officer Appointments Panel.
- 1.6 It is proposed that the quorum for each Panel be confirmed as 3 Members.
- 1.7 Group Leaders are requested, if not agreed at this meeting, to let the Democratic Services Manager have the names of their Panel Members **by Monday, 19 June 2023**.
- 1.8 The Fire Authority assigns Member Leads on matters being managed by the Policy & Resources and the Scrutiny & Audit Panels. There are currently Lead Member roles in the areas of Health & Safety, Assurance & Peer Review, Inclusion & Diversity, IT, Environment & Sustainability and Estates. The current allocation of these roles is also set out in Appendix 1. Expressions of interest for the Lead Member positions should be directed to the Democratic Services Manager.

Appendix 1

Panel Membership 2022-23

	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Green
SCRUTINY & AUDIT (6)	3 Azad Redstone Theobald	1 Scott	1 Lambert (Ch)	1 Maples
POLICY & RESOURCES (6)	3 Galley Redstone Taylor	1 Evans	1 Lambert	1 Powell
HUMAN RESOURCES (6) (Chair to be elected at first meeting)	3 Azad Geary Marlow-Eastwood	1 Scott	1 Osborne	1 West
URGENCY (6) (Chair to be elected at first meeting)	3 Dowling Galley Geary	1 Scott	1 Lambert	1 Powell
PRINCIPAL OFFICER APPOINTMENT S PANEL (5) (Group Leaders + 1 additional Conservative)	2 Galley (Ch) Theobald	1 Evans	1 Lambert	1 Maples
PENSIONS BOARD (4)	Redstone, Hamilton (Ch), Ungar, West			

Member Leads	
Health & Safety	Theobald
Assurance & Peer Review	Geary
Inclusion & Diversity	Powell and Evans
IT	Redstone
Environment & Sustainability	West
Estates	Vacant

Panel Allocations based upon Political Proportions 2023-24

PANEL	TOTAL	
Scrutiny & Audit	7	3 Cons 2 Lab 1 Lib Dem 1 Green
Policy & Resources	7	3 Cons 2 Lab 1 Lib Dem 1 Green
Human Resources	7	3 Cons 2 Lab 1 Lib Dem 1 Green
Urgency	7	3 Cons 2 Lab 1 Lib Dem 1 Green
Total requiring political proportionality	28	
(The total number of seats = 28, divided 12:8:4:4 on the basis of the 2023-24 political balance)		
Principal Officer Appointments Panel	4 (5)	Group Leaders + 1 additional Conservative [+ Chairman of the Fire Authority, if not a Group Leader]
Pensions Board	4	4 (Volunteers required from any Group)
<i>The Pensions Board is not subject to the political balance rules.</i>		

Member Lead Roles – Current (voluntary posts, not subject to political balance rules)	
Health & Safety	???
Assurance & Peer Review	???
Inclusion & Diversity	???
IT	???
Environment & Sustainability	???
Estates	???