

APPENDIX A

Methodology applied to allocations

1. The legislative requirements in relation to political balance are set out within the main report.

2. Appointments by the Council

The principles are considered separately for ordinary committees, advisory committees and for other bodies to which appointments must be made. Ordinary committees are committees that make decisions on behalf of the Council. The other form of committee, the advisory committee, is one appointed to advise the Council on any matter relating to the discharge of its functions

- (a) Ordinary Committees

According to the draft circular issued in 1990, a suitable sequence for applying the principles will be:

- (i) calculate the total seats with votes on all the ordinary committees;
- (ii) calculate the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the authority (and that membership does not include a chairman who is no longer a councillor but remains a member of the Council by virtue of section 26 of the 1972 Act); the “total membership of the authority” does, however, include vacant seats;
- (iii) apply those proportions to the total number of ordinary committee seats to give the aggregate entitlement of each group; the requirement (here as elsewhere) to apply the proportions “so far as reasonably practicable” can be met by rounding up entitlements of a half or more; if this results in a greater aggregate than the number of seats available, the fractional entitlement(s) closest to a half should be rounded in the other direction until entitlements balance the available seats;
- (iv) apply the proportions to the number of members on each ordinary committee to give a provisional entitlement to seats on that committee;
- (v) where the provisional entitlement gives only one group the seats on the committee, adjust the entitlement so that the next largest group has a seat;
- (vi) where one group has a majority of the membership of the Council, but does not have a majority on any committee as a result of the provisional entitlement, increase its share on that committee so that it does have a majority;

- (vii) finally, adjust the seats on each committee so that the total allocated to each group is as near as possible to their aggregate entitlement, while preserving the results reached at steps (v) and (vi)

This sequence of steps has been adopted in this report.

(b) Advisory Committees

The intention of the provision is to ensure that those seats to be filled by councillors are (in the absence of unanimous agreement to the contrary) shared fairly between the political groups.

It is, therefore, necessary for the Council first to decide how many of the seats on each advisory committee are to be filled by members of the Council; the statutory requirements then only apply to those seats; the allocation of those seats can conveniently be made by following steps (ii), (iv), (v) and (vi) above.

(c) Other Bodies

The intention is to ensure a fair distribution of the available seats among the political groups, as a majority group would reasonably be entitled to all the seats where the authority makes only one or two appointments, the duty to allocate seats to political groups only applies where the Council appoints to three or more seats.

The allocation can be made by following steps (ii), (iv), (v) and (vi) above.

3. Appointments by Committees

Where an ordinary committee appoints a sub-committee with executive powers, the allocation can be carried out by following steps (ii), (iv), (v) and (vi) above.

When an advisory sub-committee is appointed, the committee will first need to determine how many seats are to be filled by members of the Council (not just members of the committee). The duty to allocate to political groups then applies only to those seats. The same steps can be followed.