
Proportionality

Background

- 1** It is the duty of the County Council, following the Worthing West by-election to review the entitlement of political groups to seats on committees in line with the proportionality rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The rules allow adjustments to be made to make whole numbers of seats and, once the County Council has determined how adjustments should be made, appointments are made to committees on that basis.
- 2** The proportionality rules are as set out below:
 - (1) No political group can have all the places on a committee (the exception is the Cabinet).
 - (2) A group having an overall majority on the County Council is entitled to a majority of seats on each committee.
 - (3) The gross number of seats is allocated in accordance with each group's entitlement.
 - (4) The number of seats on each committee is allocated in accordance with each group's entitlement.
- 3** The application of these rules produces different figures so the figures have to be reconciled by applying the rules in descending order of importance. The critical rule is rule (2) if, as in the case of the County Council, there is an overall majority, and numbers of seats are then reconciled with rules (3) and (4). Under the rules, if there are members of the Council who do not belong to a political group (independent members) then, once the division of seats between the political groups has been made, any remaining seats are allocated to the independent members by the County Council.
- 4** Although the by-election for the Worthing West electoral division has been held, Cllr John Charles, the member for the Felpham division, sadly died on 3 July 2022 and so a new vacancy has arisen. Proportionality therefore will be recalculated after a by-election in the Felpham division. This vacancy will not otherwise affect the calculation for this report.
- 5** The application of the rules in 2 above to the outcome of the Worthing West by-election is to confirm two committee seats in the Labour group's allocation – those made vacant by the resignation of the previous member for the division. The two Labour vacancies are on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and on the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee. It is proposed that the Labour group be requested to fill those two vacancies.

Recommended

That the proportionality be recalculated after a Felpham division by-election and that the impact of the recent by-election on committee vacancies, as set out in paragraph 5, be approved.

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Background papers

None