

Local elections and LGA political balance 2017-2018

Purpose

For decision.

Summary

Local government elections took place on Thursday 4 May 2017 in England and Wales.

Following the election results, the definitive figures for the LGA's proportionality for 2017-2018 have been confirmed. This reports sets out the revised proportionality and its implications for the distribution of seats amongst the political groups on the LGA's governance structures.

Recommendations

That the LGA Leadership Board:

1. endorses the proportionality figures for 2017/2018 meeting year; and
2. agrees not to include elected mayors in the LGA's political balance calculations for 2018/19, and to review this position after a year.

Action

Political groups to agree the allocation of places across all LGA structures.

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Background

1. The 2017 local government elections took place on Thursday 4 May 2017 in 36 English councils, 22 Welsh councils, as well as mayoral contests in six combined authority areas and two directly elected local authority mayoral elections. The City of London Corporation elections took place on 23 March 2017.

LGA proportionality

2. Overall, since the LGA's proportionality was calculated in 2016, and including the impact of elections, by-elections, defections, boundary changes and changes in LGA membership, the Conservative Group have gained 355 seats; the Labour Group have lost 231 seats; the Liberal Democrat Group have lost 6 seats; and the Independent Group have lost 95 seats.¹
3. The final figures for 2017-2018, based on data provided by Professors Rawlings and Thrasher (formerly of the LGC Elections Centre at the University of Plymouth) are set out below along with the 2016-17 figures. The figures include the effect of the 50 per cent weighting for Welsh authorities, and the respective weightings for two tier areas.

	Conservative %	Labour %	Lib Dem %	Ind %
2017/18	43.88	38.07	9.40	8.65
2016/17	40.47	39.86	9.40	10.27

4. Under the LGA Constitution, the largest group appoints the Chair of the Association. For 2017-2018, the Conservative Group takes the LGA chairmanship by 5.81 per cent. The LGA Chairman also chairs the Leadership Board, the LGA Executive and the Councillors' Forum. The remaining Office Holders are appointed according to proportionality. Under the LGA Constitution, the Senior Vice-Chair of the LGA is the leader of the second largest group, which for 2017-18 is the Labour Group.

LGA governance structures

5. Once the LGA's overall political balance has been calculated, the result is applied to each of our political structures to determine their make-up. Mathematical rounding is applied to allocate available seats to match each Political Group's proportionality. Figures are calculated to two decimal places and any group whose balance is above 0.5 is rounded up and below 0.5 rounded down. The only exception is where adopting this approach would have the effect of increasing the size of the board or committee. In that instance, the group with the smallest amount above 0.5 is rounded down.

¹ The UK Independent Party (UKIP) lost 138 seats, with independent councillors and the smaller parties gaining 43 seats.

6. Task Groups and the four-member Audit Committee, Commercial Advisory Board and Property Company Boards are included in the political balance.
7. The revised breakdowns are set out in **Appendix A**.

LGA Leadership Board

8. The LGA Leadership Board comprises a core group of eleven places, made up of the Chairman, four Vice-Chairs (the LGA's Group Leaders) and six Deputy Chairs. As in 2016/17, one additional place has been negotiated for each group giving a Board comprising six Conservatives, five Labour, two Liberal Democrats and two Independents.

Chairs

9. The LGA's nine Boards, together with the Fire Services Management Committee, gives a total of ten Chairs.

LGA Executive

10. Core membership of the LGA Executive comprises the LGA Leadership Board, the Chairs of the nine boards and representatives of the nine English regions and Wales. From September 2017, the core membership of the Executive will be 34.
11. Under the LGA Constitution, regional and Welsh appointments to the Executive are encouraged to be made from the largest group. The LGA Executive balance will be calculated when once the regional nominations are confirmed in August. If required, Groups may either appoint additional members as balancing members, or allocate additional voting rights to existing members to achieve the balance.
12. The Chairs of CCN, DCN, SIGOMA and Local Partnerships attend Executive meetings in a non-voting capacity and are not included in the political balance.

Policy Boards

13. The seven policy boards have a proportionate membership of 18, including the Chair:
 - 13.1. Children & Young People
 - 13.2. Community Wellbeing
 - 13.3. Culture, Tourism & Sport
 - 13.4. Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport
 - 13.5. Improvement & Innovation
 - 13.6. Resources
 - 13.7. Safer & Stronger Communities

14. In 2017/18, where applying political balance to the seven 18-member policy boards gives each Group a figure above 0.5. This has not occurred during the past five years for which the LGA retains supporting calculations. The strict application of the LGA's normal approach to allocation of places would give:

Places	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Ind
18	8 (7.89)	7 (6.85)	2 (1.69)	1 (1.55)

15. The Independent Group, with the smallest fraction above 0.5, would therefore be rounded down. The consequence of this would be to reduce the Group's total Board representation by half at a time when its political balance has reduced by 1.62 per cent.
16. Given the unusual circumstances, the Chairman and Group Leaders of the other three groups have agreed two additional Board places to be allocated to the Independent Group, funded from LGA resources. This is a one-off one-year agreement applicable to the 2017/18 political year and does not set a precedent for future years.

City Regions and People & Places Boards

17. The City Regions and People & Places Boards were established in February 2014. The make-up of these Boards reflects the political proportionality of the wider group of councils from which their membership is drawn and each has an additional Deputy Chair drawn from the same group as the Chair.

Fire Services Management Committee

18. The Fire Services Management Committee membership of 14 is drawn from authorities with responsibility for fire & rescue.

Combined authority mayors and proportionality

19. At its last meeting on 5 April 2017, Leadership Board agreed the Constitution Task Group's recommended amendments to the LGA Constitution, but delegated to the Chairman and Group Leaders responsibility for deciding whether elected mayors of combined authorities should be included in the LGA's annual proportionality calculations.
20. Given the complexities of including a further tier in calculations and the minimal impact the current six combined authority mayors, the Chairman and Group Leaders propose no change to calculations in 2018/19, but recommend a further review in 12 months' time.

Appendix A: Allocation of places on LGA governance structures

Structure	Year	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Ind	Total
LGA Leadership Board (core group is 11 places) * an additional place per group was negotiated	2017/18	6	5	2	2	15*
	2016/17	6	6	2	2	16*
Chairs of Boards and Fire Services Management Cttee	2017/18	4	4	1	1	10
	2016/17	4	4	1	1	10
LGA Executive (excluding regional or balancing places)	2017/18	10	9	3	2	24
	2016/17	10	10	2	3	25
Boards (7) (18 Members) * Plus one additional place on the EEHT and CWB Boards	2017/18	8	7	2	1*	18*
	2016/17	7	7	2	2	18
City Regions Board (22 Members)	Political Balance					
		Lab	Cons	Lib Dem	Ind	
	2017/18	63.33%	23.04%	7.29%	6.34%	
	2016/17	63.7%	23.0%	7.2%	6.1%	
	Seats on the City Regions Board					
	2017/18	14	5	2	1	22
2016/17	14	5	2	1	22	
People & Places Board (22 Members)	Political Balance					
		Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Ind	
	2017/18	63.32%	17.10%	11.09%	8.49%	22
	2016/17	56.3%	20.3%	11.4%	12.1%	22
	Seats on the People & Places Board					
	2017/18	14	4	2	2	22
2016/17	12	4	3	3	22	
Fire Services Management Committee		Lab	Cons	Lib Dem	Ind	
	2017/18	6	6	1	1	14
	2016/17	6	6	1	1	14