

Appendix 2 - Allocation of Committee Places (May 2026)

1. Each year Council adopts the Constitution thereby confirming the committee structure, size and terms of reference of the committees and the proposals set out in this report and its supporting documents reflects the details contained in the updated Constitution.
2. Where membership of East Devon District Council is divided into political groups the Council is required to review and allocate the total number of seats on committees in accordance with the strength of each political group. Following changes to the membership of the political groups on the Council it is necessary to review the total number of seats on committees.
3. Following a change to the membership of the Conservative Group, which sees one councillor become an ungrouped independent councillor the following changes to the overall position of seats on the Council is now:

Political Group as 1 May 2026	Number of Councillors	Entitlement to committee places	Overall entitlement
Democratic Alliance	31	61	52.5%
Conservative	13	25	22%
Independent Group	10	20	17%
Cranbrook Voice	3	6	5.1%
Independent Cllr Group	2	4	3.4%
Ungrouped Cllr	1	0	1.7%

4. This document presents an analysis of the committee seat allocation based on the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Act outlines principles to ensure fair and democratic representation across council committees. These principles include:
 - Preventing domination by a single group: No single political group should hold all committee seats.
 - Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committee. The majority group in the council should maintain a majority in each committee.
 - Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares. Committee seats should be distributed proportionally to each group's representation in the full council.
 - Ensuring fairness on each committee: Each committee should reflect the overall council composition as closely as possible.

5. The Democratic Alliance form the majority administration from 2023 to 2027. This report has been prepared on the basis of the political groups reflecting the position set out above.

6. The following table sets out the proposed total and target seating arrangements across all committees. Figures have been rounded and the need to round seat allocations to whole numbers can create mathematical imbalances. Ensuring every group is represented on every committee is not always feasible, especially for smaller groups.

7. These figures are within acceptable limits and comply with the 'so far as reasonably practicable' clause of the Act. The allocation ensures that no single group dominates all committees, the majority group (DAG) retains majority control, and smaller groups are fairly represented.

Proposed total and target committee seat allocations:

Applying the above rationale would give a proposed committee seat allocation as follows:

Political Group	Democratic Alliance Group	Conservative	The Independent Group	Cranbrook Voice	Independent Councillor Group	Un-grouped	Total
Seats held on the Council	31	13	10	3	2	1	60
% of seats on Council	52.5%	22%	17%	5.1%	3.4%	1.7%	100
Standards Committee (7 seats)	4 (3.6)	2 (1.5)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.4)	0 (0.2)	0 (0.1)	7
Housing Review Board (8 seats)	4 (4.2)	2 (1.7)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.4)	0 (0.2)	0 (0.1)	7
Audit & Governance Committee (10 seats)	5 (5.2)	2 (2.2)	2 (1.7)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.3)	0 (0.1)	9
Overview Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.2)	15

Scrutiny Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.2)	15
Strategic Planning Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.2)	15
Personnel Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.2)	15
Licensing & Enforcement Committee (15 seats)	8 (7.8)	3 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.5)	0 (0.2)	15
Planning Committee (16 seats)	8 (8.4)	3 (3.5)	3 (2.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.5)	0 (0.2)	16
Totals	61	24	22	6	1	0	114
Adjustment to meet target allocation	0	+1	-2	0	+3	0	+2

Target allocation	61	25	20	6	4	0	116
Overall % balance based on target allocation	52.5%	22%	17%	5.1%	3.4%	1.7%	100

The aim will be to meet the target allocations shown in green as this provides an overall balance across the committee seat allocations.

If the above table is used as the starting point:

The Democratic Alliance Group have 61 seats across all committees, with the Conservative Group having 25 seats and the Independent Group having 20, all other groups remain unchanged.

Following the change to the membership of the Democratic Alliance Group increasing by 1 member and the Independent Group decreasing by 1 member this results in a change to the total number of seats allocated to the Democratic Alliance Group.

The following table sets out a proposed seating allocation to meet the target allocations set out above.

Recommendation:

The following table sets out a proposal to achieve political balance across all committee places:

Political Group	Democratic Alliance Group	Conservative	The Independent Group	Cranbrook Voice	Independent Councillor Group	Un-grouped	Total
Seats held on the Council	31	13	10	3	2	1	60
% of seats on Council	52.5%	22%	17%	5.1%	3.4%	1.7%	0
Standards Committee (7 seats)	4	2	1	0	0	0	7
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (8 seats)	4	2	1	0	1	0	8
Audit & Governance Committee (10 seats)	5	2	2	0	1	0	10

Overview Committee (15 seats)	8	3	2	1	1	0	15
Scrutiny Committee (15 seats)	8	3	3	1	0	0	15
Strategic Planning Committee (15 seats)	8	3	2	1	1	0	15
Personnel Committee (15 seats)	8	3	3	1	0	0	15
Licensing & Enforcement Committee (15 seats)	8	3	3	1	0	0	15
Planning Committee (16 seats)	8	4	3	1	0	0	16
Totals	61	25	20	6	4	0	116

Method of calculating the allocation of places to political groups.

The principles set out above can be applied in the following sequence:

- i. Calculate the total number of seats with votes on all the committees.
- ii. Calculate the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the council. Reserve an appropriate number of seats for any members not in a political group.
- iii. Apply those proportions to the total number of committee seats to give the aggregate entitlement of each group; the requirement to apply the proportions 'so far as reasonably practicable' can be met by rounding down fractional entitlements of less than half, and 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 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 committee to give provisional entitlement to seats on that committee.
- v. If the provisional entitlement gives only one group seats on the committee, adjust the entitlement so that the next largest group has a seat.
- vi. Finally, adjust the seats on each committee so that the total allocated to each group is as near as possible to their aggregate entitlement, whilst preserving the results reached at steps (iv) and (v) thus applying principle 3 as set out above.

This means that the committees are set out as proportionately balanced, but the numbers across the committees are then altered, whilst trying to ensure the committees keep to this proportionality as far as is possible, to ensure that the total number of all the committee places when taken together are politically balanced.

The council is free to adopt any aggregate number of places on committees as long as it follows the principles set out above and the sequence outlined in steps (i) to (vi). This has been developed in line with the recommendations of the political group leaders.

