

Head of Terms - Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Groups

All political groups and councillors agree that it is vital, in the best interests of the residents of Babergh, that a stable administration is put in place to lead the Council.

Whilst they are different political groups, the Green, Independent and Liberal Democrat Groups do share some political principles and philosophies. In particular, the groups share a desire to work in an inclusive and open way, working with, and engaging with, all Babergh residents and stakeholders.

In some other Councils this has resulted in the creation of a single Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group. In Babergh however, given the balance of numbers of Councillors within the groups it is the collective view that the 3 groups should work together in a 'supply and confidence' arrangement ('coalition') but to stop short of creating a single group in order to maintain each political party's identity.

In the spirit of their shared principles none of the three groups are seeking to impose any policy 'red lines' upon the coalition. In order to facilitate the effective working of the coalition the three groups will therefore meet together on a regular basis to agree any collective policy positions.

Leader and Deputy Leaders of the Council

In order to properly reflect the political proportions of each group, and within the Council, the coalition will operate a power sharing arrangement. This arrangement is based upon the rotation of executive roles within the Council but continuous collective leadership.

It has been agreed that the Groups will support the election of:

Year 1 (2023/24) – a Liberal Democrat Leader of the Council

Year 2 (2024/25) – a Green Leader of the Council

Year 3 (2025/26) - an Independent Leader of the Council

Year 4 (2026/27) – a Green Leader of the Council

It will be for the relevant group to nominate their candidate for Leader in their given year.

In order to sustain true power sharing throughout the municipal term (2023 – 2027) there will always be two political deputy leaders appointed – one from each of the coalition groups that does not hold the role of Leader of the Council.

It will be for the relevant groups, rather than the Leader of the Council, to nominate their candidates for Political Deputy Leader.

To better facilitate these arrangements it is proposed to amend the Council's constitution for this municipal term so that the Leader of the Council is elected by Council for 1 year (rather than the current 4 years).

Cabinet

The Leader will appoint a Cabinet of 8 Councillors made up of the Leader, 2 Deputy Political Leaders and 5 other Councillors. One Cabinet member will be appointed by the Leader to be the Deputy Executive Leader under Schedule A1 2(3) Local Government Act 2000.

The political balance of the Cabinet will be:

4 Green Councillors

3 Independent Councillors

1 Liberal Democrat Councillor

It will be for the relevant groups, rather than the Leader of the Council to nominate Councillors from their group into the Cabinet roles.

In selecting their Cabinet members the groups will be collectively mindful of the desire to create a 'balanced' and inclusive Cabinet – balanced includes (but is not limited to) gender, race, age and the geography of the district.

Portfolios

The creation of portfolios and the distribution of those portfolios to the members of Cabinet will be agreed collectively by the Leader and 2 Political Deputy Leaders (with each of those 3 Councillors having a veto power).

Changes to Cabinet

The size of the Cabinet (but not the proportions) and the portfolio roles can be amended at any point but only with the collective agreement of the Leader and 2 Deputy Political Leaders (with each of those 3 Councillors having a veto power).

Collective Cabinet decision making

The 3 groups will represent the views of their separate groups through Cabinet but will collaborate and seek to reach the majority of executive decisions by consensus. Where consensus is not possible then the Cabinet will ultimately have to make majority decisions. When this does happen, however, the Cabinet will follow the principles of 'collective decision making'. So whilst Cabinet members can and will explain why they voted as they did on any decision, they will not seek to undermine or unreasonably seek to challenge or change the decision of the Cabinet.

Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council

In recognition of the size of the political groups within the Council as a whole it is also intended that the roles of Chairman of the Council and Vice Chairman of the Council will be rotated between the 3 groups. The coalition will collectively propose a Chairman and Vice Chairman from a different political group to the one that holds the role of Leader of the Council. With this in mind the coalition partners will propose that an Independent group Councillor is elected to the role of Chairman of the Council in year 1 (2023/24) and Green group Councillor is elected to the role of Vice Chairman of the Council in year 1 (2023/24).

Councillor Leigh Jamieson (Green Group Leader)

Signed: 

Dated: 23/5/23

Councillor Stephen Plumb (Independent Group Leader)

Signed: 

Dated: 23-09-2023

Councillor Lee Parker (Liberal Democrat Group Leader)

Signed: 

Dated: 23-05-2023

