

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ANNUAL MEETING – WEDNESDAY, 20TH MAY, 2015

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Contact: Keith Butler, Tel: (01993) 861521)

1. PURPOSE

To appoint the Committees of the Council, in accordance with the Constitution and, where applicable, the rules relating to political balance.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the Committees indicated in paragraph 3.2 below be appointed, with the specified membership;
- (b) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups and the non-aligned member in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 3.5 below;
- (c) That Members be appointed to each of the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the political groups;
- (d) That in accordance with, and subject to the exceptions in, Rule 4 of the Council Procedure Rules, all Members of each political group not appointed to a committee or sub-committee be named as alternate members for the member or members of that group who have been appointed to that committee or sub-committee;
- (e) That, pursuant to paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7, Council decides which additional seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be allocated to the Conservative, Liberal Democrat/Independent and Labour Groups;
- (f) That the Licensing Committee be re-constituted for 2015-2016, with a membership in the range of 10-15; and
- (g) That seats on the Licensing Committee be allocated to the political groups in accordance with the principles of political balance, and having regard to the information in paragraph 3.8 below, and be filled in accordance with their wishes.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1. The Constitution of the Council provides for the appointment by the Council of the Overview and Scrutiny and other Committees. The respective Committees will then appoint any Sub-Committees or Panels, as necessary.

3.2. In accordance with the Constitution, the Committees to be appointed are as follows:

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Finance and Management	(between nine and sixteen members)
Economic and Social	(between nine and sixteen members)
Environment	(between nine and sixteen members)

Other Committees

Audit & General Purposes	(seventeen members)
Development Control	(twenty four members)
Human Resources	(seven members)
Urgency	(eleven members suggested)
Licensing Committee	(between ten and fifteen members)

- 3.3. It is for Council to decide how many Members are appointed to each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (subject to the range set out above) and to the Urgency Committee. However, in previous years each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees has comprised 14 members and the Urgency Committee 11 members, and those figures have been used for the calculations in this report.
- 3.4. All of the Committees, with the exception of the Licensing Committee, are required to be appointed in accordance with the rules relating to political balance. Accordingly, the arithmetical calculations have been based on 40 Conservative Group members, five Liberal Democrat/Independent Group members; and four Labour Group members.
- 3.5. The rounding of the figures in accordance with the rules leads to the situation indicated in Table I below.

Table I – Allocation of Seats

Committee	Seats	Con	Lib Dem /Ind	Lab	(Total)
(Total seats entitlement)	101	83	10	8	101
Audit & General Purposes	17	14	2	1	17
Development Control	24	20	2	2	24
Human Resources	7	6	1	0	7
Urgency	11	9	1	1	11
Econ & Soc O & S	14	11	1	1	13
Fin & Man O & S	14	11	1	1	13
Environment O & S	14	11	1	1	13
Resulting Total	101	82	9	7	98
Required Adjustment		+1	+1	+1	

- 3.6. It can be seen from the above that using the current balance figures and rounding as necessary, leads to one seat fewer than the number available being allocated on each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees; and accordingly also to an overall shortfall of one seat for each of the three political groups. Accordingly, Council will need to decide which political group will be allocated which additional Overview and Scrutiny Committee seat.
- 3.7. The rules of political balance do not apply to the Licensing Committee. Under the statute, it must have between 10 and 15 members. The number of members has varied at times over the years, but in recent years the Committee has had 11 seats. As the Council has never specified an ongoing number of members of the Committee it could decide to change the number for 2015/2016 if it wished.

Notwithstanding the fact that the rules of political balance do not apply, the Council previously decided that the best way to allocate the seats was in accordance with the principles of political balance, and in 2014/2015 there were nine Conservative members, one Labour and one Liberal Democrat/Independent.

- 3.8. Under the current political balance of the Council, the Labour and Liberal Democrat/Independent Groups would have one member each if the Committee had between 10 and 13 members.
- 3.9. It is hoped that the wishes of each of the political groups in relation to the filling of the allocated seats will be tabled at the meeting.
- 3.10. Council should also be aware that the political balance requirements may be disregarded if any decision to do so is made without any member voting against.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no financial implications.

David Neudegg

Chief Executive

(Author: Keith Butler, Tel: (01993) 861521; EMail: keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk)

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Background Papers:

None.