

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER, 2015

**REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND THE ALLOCATION
OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

1. PURPOSE

Consequent on the election of Carol Reynolds at the Witney North Ward by-election held on 20 August, to review the allocation of seats on the Committees of the Council, in accordance with the rules relating to political balance.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the allocation of Committee seats to the political groups on the Council be as set out in the Table following paragraph 3.3 below, with immediate effect;
- (b) That any changes in the membership of Committees following this recalculation of political balance shall be notified to all members of the Council; and
- (c) That the remaining content of the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1. The Conservative candidate, Carol Reynolds, was successful in the election for the Witney North Ward held on 20 August 2015. Notification has been received that Mrs Reynolds wishes to be a member of the Conservative Group and, as required by the relevant Regulations, that notice was accompanied by a request signed by the Group Leader for a review of the allocation of seats on the Council's Committees in accordance with the political balance requirements.

3.2. The Council's Committees for 2015/16 were appointed at the annual meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2015 and, following the necessary arithmetical adjustments, those places were allocated as follows:

Committee	Seats	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	Other (Ind)	(Total)
Audit & General Purposes	17	14	1	2	0	17
Development Control	24	20	2	2	0	24
Human Resources	7	6	1	0	0	7
Urgency	11	9	1	1	0	11
Econ & Soc O & S	14	12	1	1	0	14
Fin & Man O & S	14	11	1	1	1	14
Environment O & S	14	11	1	1	1	14
Resulting Total	101	83	8	8	2	101

3.3. The following table shows the revised arithmetical calculation following the recent election, and also takes account of the fact that the Council previously decided to allocate an additional seat (i) on the Audit and General Purposes

Committee to the Labour Group; (ii) on the Human Resources Committee to the Liberal Democrats; and (iii) on the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Conservatives. Thus the changed calculation will result in the Conservative Group being allocated an additional seat on each of the Finance and Management and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which is a direct replacement of the seats allocated to former Councillor Snow at the annual meeting:

Committee	Seats	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	(Total)
(Total seats entitlement)	101	85	8	8	101
Audit & General Purposes	17	14	1	2	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	12	1	1	14
Fin & Man O & S	14	12	1	1	14
Environment O & S	14	12	1	1	14
Resulting Total	101	85	8	8	101

- 3.4. Council will recall that the rules of political balance do not apply to the Licensing Committee, but that it has previously nonetheless decided that the best way to allocate the seats was in accordance with the principles of political balance. The balance approved at the annual meeting was accordingly nine Conservatives and one each from the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups, and that apportionment of seats remains applicable with the revised overall political balance of the Council.
- 3.5. When the Conservative group notifies its appointments to the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and any other changes to Committee memberships arising from the election and the revised allocations, all members of the Council will be advised.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no financial implications.

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Chief Executive

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Background Papers:

None.