

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2017

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

(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, for the period to the next annual meeting of the council or to the approval of any revised member meeting structures, whichever is the sooner;
- (b) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 3.5 below, subject to the necessary adjustments referred to in this report;
- (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 paragraph 3.6, and in order to ensure that each of the political groups shall have its overall entitlement of committee places, Council decides on (i) which of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Conservative and Labour Groups shall be allocated an additional seat; and (ii) on which two of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Liberal Democrat Group shall have one seat fewer than shown below;
- (f) That the Licensing Committee be re-constituted for 2017-2018, 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 paragraphs 3.7 and 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 39 Conservative Group members, five Liberal Democrat 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	Lab	(Total)
(Total seats entitlement)	101	82	11	8	101
Audit & General Purposes	17	14	2	1	17
Development Control	24	19	3	2	24
Human Resources	7	6	1	0	7
Urgency	11	9	1	1	11
Econ & Soc O & S	14	11	2	1	14
Fin & Man O & S	14	11	2	1	14
Environment O & S	14	11	2	1	14
Resulting Total	101	81	13	7	101
(Difference from entitlement in Row 1)		-1	+2	-1	

- 3.6. In order for the overall entitlements to be reached, (i) the Conservative and Labour Groups will need an additional seat on one of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees; and (ii) the Liberal Democrat Group will have to have only one seat on two of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Council will be advised whether the Groups are in agreement about where these changes should take place; but it is for Council to decide, as referenced in recommendation (e) above.
- 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 on-going number of members of the Committee it could decide to change the number for 2017/2018 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 2016/2017 there were nine Conservative members, one Labour and one Liberal Democrat.

- 3.8. Under the current political balance of the Council, the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups would have one member each if the Committee had between 10 and 13 members; but the Liberal Democrat Group would gain a second seat if the Committee was to have a membership of 14.
- 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.
- 3.11. Finally, it is appropriate to draw attention to the separate item which is due to be considered at the meeting, relating to the member meeting structure. In that context, Council should note that the decisions taken under this report will be effective until or unless Council approves a different structure, as referenced in the recommendation at 2(a) above.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

None applicable.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

6. RISKS

None

7. REASONS

The appointment of committees is a statutory requirement.

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Background Papers:
None