

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2017**

**ALLOCATION OF COMMITTEE SEATS TO THE POLITICAL GROUPS**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

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

**I. PURPOSE**

To consider the apportionment of seats on the Committees of the Council, in accordance with the Constitution and, where applicable, the rules relating to political balance, consequent on the outcome of the by-election held in The Bartons Ward on Thursday 4 May.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (a) That the previously approved allocation of seats to the political groups be varied as set out under paragraph 3.3 below, by allocating one additional seat on the Development Control Committee to the Conservative Group, and by reducing the allocation to the Liberal Democrat Group from three to two seats; and
- (b) That (i) the additional seat be filled in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group; and (ii) the Liberal Democrat Group be requested to notify the Head of the Paid Service as to which of its members currently appointed to the Development Control Committee will cease to be a member of the Committee.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. At the annual meeting of the Council held 26 April 2017 the Council constituted Committees for 2017/18 and apportioned the seats on those Committees in accordance with the rules on political balance. That apportionment was based on the 48 councillors then in membership, and a balance of 39 Conservative; 5 Liberal Democrat and 4 Labour members.
- 3.2. On Thursday 4 May, Mr C J A Virgin was elected as councillor for The Bartons Ward, and he subsequently joined the Conservative Group on the Council, leading to the current political balance of 40 Conservative; 5 Liberal Democrat and 4 Labour members. In accordance with the Regulations, the Leader of the Conservative Group has since requested the re-apportionment of seats to reflect the revised political balance.
- 3.3. This variation in the political balance leads to one change only in the apportionment of seats, which is that the Conservative Group becomes entitled to one additional seat on the Development Control Committee, and the Liberal Democrat Group to one seat fewer. The Councillor newly appointed to the Committee will automatically be appointed to either the Lowlands or Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee according to the Ward for which he or she is an elected councillor.
- 3.4. Table I below (i) reflects that change; and (ii) takes account of how the Council previously allocated the seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure that the overall seats entitlement of each political group was correct.

**Table I – Allocation of Seats**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>(Total)</b>
(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	2	14
Fin & Man O & S	14	12	1	1	14
Environment O & S	14	11	2	1	14
Resulting Total	101	83	10	8	101

3.5. The rules of political balance do not apply to the Licensing Committee, but in line with previous practice Council appointed the Committee in accordance with the principles of political balance, allocating nine seats to the Conservative Group, and one seat to each of the other Groups. The change in balance following the by-election does not impact on those allocations.

**4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

None applicable.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications.

**6. RISKS**

None

**7. REASONS**

The apportionment of seats in accordance with the rules of political balance is a statutory requirement.

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Background Papers:

None