

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2019
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;
- (b) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups and the non-aligned members in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 3.5, subject to the Council deciding (i) on which of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Labour and Co-operative Party Group should be allocated only two seats; and (ii) that on the remaining two Overview and Scrutiny Committees a seat will not be allocated to one of the non-aligned members;
- (c) That Members be appointed to each of the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, where applicable;
- (d) That as a consequence of the foregoing decisions, Council determines which of the non-aligned members is allocated a seat on the Audit and General Purposes, Development Control and Urgency Committees; and which is allocated a seat on the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will include a non-aligned member;
- (e) 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; and
- (f) That the Licensing Committee be re-constituted for 2019-2020, 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 3.8 to 3.10 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:

Finance and Management	(between nine and sixteen members)
Economic and Social	(between nine and sixteen members)
Environment	(between nine and sixteen members)
Audit & General Purposes	(seventeen members)
Development Control	(twenty four 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 28 Conservative Group members, ten Liberal Democrat Group members, nine Labour and Co-operative Party Group members and two Independent (non-aligned) members.

3.5. The rounding of the figures in accordance with the rules leads to the situation indicated in the following Table:

Committee	Seats	Con	Lib Dem	Lab & Co-op	Ind	(Total)
(Total seats entitlement)	94	54	19	17	4	94
Audit & General Purposes	17	10	3	3	1	17
Development Control	24	14	5	4	1	24
Urgency	11	6	2	2	1	11
Econ & Soc O & S	14	8	3	3	1	15
Environment O & S	14	8	3	3	1	15
Fin & Man O & S	14	8	3	3	1	15
Resulting Total	94	54	19	18	6	97
Required Adjustment				-1	-2	

3.6. The application of the arithmetic leads to the Labour and Co-operative Group being allocated one seat above its entitlement, and the non-aligned members two seats over the entitlement. These imbalances relate to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and mean that Council must decide (i) on which of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Labour and Co-operative Party Group should be allocated only two seats; and (ii) that on the remaining two Overview and Scrutiny Committees a seat will not be allocated to one of the non-aligned members.

3.7. It is important to note that whilst (i) the Labour and Co-operative Party Group and the non-aligned members may express a preference as to where the precise adjustments are made; and (ii) each individual non-aligned member may express a preference as to

the specific Committees to which they are appointed, those are both decisions which have to be made by Council in considering this report.

- 3.8. 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 2019/2020 if it wished.
- 3.9. 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 2018/2019 there were nine Conservative Group members, and one each from the Liberal Democrat and Labour and Co-operative Party Groups.
- 3.10. Under the current political balance of the Council, the allocation of seats would be as follows:

No of seats	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	Ind
15	8	3	3	1
14	8	3	3	0
13	8	3	2	0
12	7	3	2	0
11	7	2	2	0
10	6	2	2	0

- 3.11. It is hoped that the wishes of the political groups, and of the non-aligned members, in relation to the allocation and filling of seats will be tabled at the meeting.
- 3.12. 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. 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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Date: 4 May 2019

Background Papers:
None