



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	Council – Wednesday 19 May 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item No. 12
Subject	Appointment of Committees
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Keith Butler, Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01993 861521 Email: keith.butler@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To appoint the Committees of the Council, in accordance with the Constitution and, where applicable, the rules relating to political balance.
Annexes	None
Recommendations	<p>(a) That the Committees indicated in paragraph 1.2 be appointed, with the specified membership, for the period to the next annual meeting of the council;</p> <p>(b) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups and the non-grouped members in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 2.3 subject to the Council deciding (i) on which two of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Conservative Group should be allocated an additional seat; and (ii) on which of those two Committees the Liberal Democrats and non-grouped members respectively should surrender a seat;</p> <p>(c) That, as a consequence of the political balance figures and the foregoing decisions, Council determines which of the non-aligned members is allocated: (i) a seat on the Audit and General Purposes Committee; (ii) two seats on the Development Control Committee; (iii) a seat on the Urgency Committee; and (iv) a seat on the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees as approved by Council under recommendation (b) above;</p> <p>(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;</p>

	<p>(e) That the Licensing Committee be re-constituted for 2021-2022, with a membership in the range of 10-15; and</p> <p>(f) 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 2.6 and 2.7 below, and be filled in accordance with their wishes.</p>
Corporate priorities	N/A
Key Decision	N/A
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

I. BACKGROUND

1.1. 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.

1.2. 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)

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1. 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.

2.2. 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, eight Labour and Co-operative Party Group members and three Independent/Green Party members who are not part of a political group.

2.3. 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	Non Grp	(Total)
(Total seats entitlement)	94	54	19	15	6	94
Audit & General Purposes	17	6	4	3	1	17
Development Control	24	13	5	4	2	24
Urgency	11	6	2	2	1	11
Econ & Soc O & S	14	8	3	2	1	15
Environment O & S	14	8	3	2	1	15
Fin & Man O & S	14	8	3	2	1	15
Resulting Total	94	52	20	15	7	94
Required Adjustment		+2	-1	0	-1	

2.4. The application of the arithmetic leads to the Conservative Group being allocated two seats too few; and to the Liberal Democrat Group and the non-grouped members each being allocated one too many. These imbalances relate to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and mean that Council must decide (i) on which two of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees the Conservative Group should be allocated an additional seat; and (ii) on which of those two Committees

the Liberal Democrat Group will have one seat fewer, and on which there will not be an allocation to a Councillor who is not a Group member.

- 2.5. It is important to note that whilst (i) the political groups may express a preference as to where the precise adjustments are made; and (ii) each individual non-grouped 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.
- 2.6. 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 2021/2022 if it wished.
- 2.7. 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. 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	9	3	2	1
14	8	3	2	1
13	8	2	2	1
12	7	2	2	1
11	6	2	2	1
10	6	2	1	1

- 2.8. It is hoped that the wishes of the political groups, and of the non-grouped members, in relation to the allocation and filling of seats will be tabled at the meeting.
- 2.9. 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. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. This report has no financial implications.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The report takes account of the statutory requirements as contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Committees and Political Groups Regulations 1990.

5. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 5.1. Subject to any advice as to the statutory position which may be required to be given at the meeting, council is able to vary the allocations of seats to the political groups and the non-grouped members.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1. None