



<u>Committee and date</u>
Council
3 rd May 2012
10.00 a.m.

<u>Item</u>
10
Public

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report deals with the overall constitution of committees, the overall entitlement of seats for each of the political groups and the proportionate allocation of seats between the groups across all committees.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council confirms the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the 2012/13 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

REPORT

3.0 Local Government and Housing Act 1989

- 3.1 The provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 require the Council to review the representation of each political group on committees, panels etc. at each annual meeting or as soon as practicable after that meeting. The regulations require that all Scrutiny, Standing and Regulatory Committees are politically balanced across the total number of committee places. Subject to that overriding requirement, each committee must also be politically balanced, as far as it is reasonably practicable.
- 3.2 The Executive (Cabinet) is not subject to the political balance rules and neither is the Standards Committee.
- 3.3 Advisory Committees and other ad hoc bodies and groups are not subject to the political balance rules either, but traditionally political proportionality has been applied to them outside the overall aggregate balance referred to in paragraph 2.1 above.

4.0 Constitution of Committees

- 4.1 The Council is requested to approve the overall constitution of committees.
- 4.2 This requires 81 seats to be allocated proportionately across all committees and the Council is requested to approve the overall constitution as set out below:

<u>Committee Name</u>	<u>Seats per Committee</u>
Healthy Communities Scrutiny Committee	10
Performance and Strategy Scrutiny Committee	10
Protecting and Enhancing our Environment Scrutiny Committee	10
Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee	10
Safe and Confident Communities Scrutiny Committee	10
Pensions Committee	4
Audit Committee	5
Human Resources Committee	7
Strategic Licensing Committee	15
Total	<u>81</u>

5.0 Allocation of Seats

- 5.1 The Council is required to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups for the coming years.
- 5.2 The recent Abbey by-election saw the Liberal Democrat Group gain the seat for that electoral division from the Conservative Group. Consequently the change in political balance has seen the Liberal Democrat Group gain an extra seat in place of a seat allocated to the Conservative Group on the Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee. In accordance with this change, the maximum number of seats available to each group within the political balance rules will be:

<u>Group Name</u>	<u>Seats per Group</u>
Conservatives	56
Liberal Democrats	15
Labour	8
Independent	2
Total	<u>81</u>

- 5.2 The proportionate allocation of seats to the political groups across all committees is set out in Appendix 1 and the proposed allocation of these totals to individual members, in accordance with the wishes of the respective Group Leaders, is set out in Appendix 2 to this report (To Follow).

- 5.3 The Council is entitled to 11 seats on the Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority. Under the present arrangements, the Conservative Group is entitled to 8 seats, the Liberal Democrat Group 2 seats and the Labour Group 1 seat.
- 5.4 Shropshire is entitled to 2 seats on the West Mercia Police Authority in accordance with the agreed formula which is based on the 9 seats being apportioned on the basis of population. (A report relating to the establishment of a new Shadow West Mercia Police and Crime Panel to oversee the effectiveness of the Police and Crime Commissioner following the election in November 2012 is included separately for consideration on the agenda.)
- 5.5 The proposed allocation of seats meets the legal requirements, however, should the Council wish, it is possible to agree allocations which are not strictly politically balanced if no member descents.

6.0 Appointment of Area Planning Committees

- 6.1 With regard to the allocation of seats of the area based Planning Committees (North, South and Central – 11 members of each) the Constitution requires members to be drawn from each of the individual areas, North, South and Central and for this reason the political balance rules have been disapplied. However, it has been agreed by Council that in order to recognise the local representation of each of the areas, the members of each of the Area Planning and Licensing Committees will reflect the political balance of each local area.
- 6.2 The recent Abbey by-election which saw the Liberal Democrat gaining the seat from the Conservative Group has therefore resulted in the Liberal Democrat Group gaining an extra seat on the Central Planning Committee in place of a Conservative Group member.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations made thereunder.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The contents of this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal: Not Applicable

Risk Management Appraisal

The Council is obliged to ensure that the membership of committees and related bodies is proportionate to individual group membership.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Not Applicable

Cabinet Member: Keith Barrow

Local Members: All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Constitution of Committees and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Appendix 2 – Proposed Allocation of Seats to Political Groups (To Follow)