



<u>Committee and Date</u>
Annual Council
18 June 2009

<u>Item</u>
11

<u>Paper</u>
E

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CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

1.0 Recommendation

- (a) That the Council confirms the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the 2009/10 municipal year.
- (b) That the membership of the Panel to appoint the Chief Executive of Shropshire Council be confirmed.
- (c) To note the composition of the Cross Party Reference Group on Primary School Organisation in Shropshire.

REPORT

2.0 Background

- 2.1 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 is reasonably practicable.
- 2.2 The Executive (Cabinet) is not subject to the political balance rules and neither is the Standards Committee.
- 2.3 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.

3.0 Constitution of Committees and Panels

- 3.1 The Council is requested to approve the overall constitution of committees under the political arrangements approved by the Council forming part of the business case for one council for Shropshire, as amended, in April 2008. This requires 97 seats to be allocated proportionately across all committees.

- 3.2 The Council is requested to approve the overall constitution of committees and panels as set out below:

Health Overview and Crime Reduction Scrutiny Committee	10 seats
Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10 seats
Community Services Scrutiny Committee	10 seats
Development Services Scrutiny Committee	10 seats
Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee	10 seats
Pensions Committee	4 seats
Audit Committee	5 seats
Strategic Licensing Committee	11 seats
Strategic Regulatory Committee	11 seats
Economic Recession Committee	9 seats
Human Resources Committee	7 seats
TOTAL	97 seats

4.0 Allocation of Seats

- 4.1 The Council is required to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups for the coming year. In accordance with the political balance rules the maximum number of seats available to each of the groups will be:

Conservatives	71 seats
Liberal Democrats	14 seats
Labour	9 seats
Independents	3 seats
TOTAL	97 seats

- 4.2 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 members is set out in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 4.3 The Council is entitled to 11 seats on the Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority. Under the present arrangements, the Conservative Group is now entitled to 8 seats, the Liberal Democrat Group 2 seats and the Labour Group 1 seat each.
- 4.4 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. There are 6 vacancies at present and, given the requirement for the Authority to be politically balanced, 5 must be apportioned to Conservative members and 1 to a Liberal Democrat member. However, before a final decision can be reached, agreement over the allocation of seats needs to be reached with Worcestershire who are entitled to 4 of the 6 seats.
- 4.5 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 dissents.

5.0 Appointment of Area Regulatory and Licensing Committees

- 5.1 With regard to the allocation of seats on the area-based Regulatory Committees (North, South and Central – 11 members on each) and the area-based Licensing and Safety Committees (North, South and Central – 5 members on each), the Constitution, requires members to be drawn from each of the individual areas (north, south and central), 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 Regulatory and Licensing and Safety Committees will reflect the political balance of each local area.
- 5.2 The proposed allocation of seats in each of these Area Committees is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. As the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each of the Area Committees will also be ex officio members of the Strategic Regulatory and Strategic Licensing Committees, respectively, they will be elected first on the rising of the Council to enable the composition of the Strategic Committees to be determined later in the meeting.

6.0 Appointment Panel

- 6.1 At its meeting on 19 March the Implementation Executive agreed that the Interim Chief Executive and Head of HR and Development be authorised to commence the appointment process for the Chief Executive of Shropshire Council. The Implementation Executive also agreed the Job Description and Job Specification and that the long-listing, short-listing and final selection decision making should be made by a panel of Council Members appointed at the first meeting of the new Shropshire Council on 18 June. The Member Panel for the selection of the Recruitment Agency was approved by the IE and Odgers were subsequently chosen.
- 6.2 The proposed Member Panel for the appointment, which is to be politically balanced according to the make-up of the new Shropshire Council, will be tabled at the meeting. The final recruitment decision will then be approved by the Council on 16 July 2009.

7.0 Independent Policy Commission

- 7.1 The Cross Party Reference Group on Primary School Organisation will comprise 5 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat plus 1 Labour Group members. This is in keeping with the political balance of the new Council.

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

The 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

The Leader of the Council

Local Member

All

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Constitution of Committees and allocation of seats to political groups
Appendix 2 – Proposed allocation of seats to political groups (to be tabled)