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# Update on the Appointment of and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2023/24 Municipal Year

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Extraordinary Council
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	19 December 2023
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Lee Dillon
<b>Report Author:</b>	Sarah Clarke
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	C4477

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 At the Annual Meeting of Council which took place on the 25 May 2023, Council considered and approved a report detailing the allocation and appointment of seats on Committees.
- 1.2 The Council has a duty under section 15 of the Local Government Housing Act 1989, to review the allocation of seats as soon as practicable following any change to the groups. Following the formation of a new political group, known as the Minority Group, this report proposes a number of changes to the allocation of seats and appointments to Committees.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council notes that under paragraph 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice has been received that the Members set out in paragraph 5.2 are to be regarded as Members of the Liberal Democrat, Conservative, and Minority Groups respectively.
- 2.2 That the Council approves the allocation of seats to the Political Groups in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989, as set out in Table A at paragraph 5.8 of the report.
- 2.3 That the Council approves the changes to the membership of Committees detailed in Appendix A to this report.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	No new implications arising from this report. Members Allowances are met from within existing budgets in accordance with the proposals agreed by Council.			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None			
<b>Legal:</b>	The allocation of seats to the Political Groups is in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 and related regulations mentioned in the report.			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None			
<b>Property:</b>	None			
<b>Policy:</b>	The appointments and allocations will be made in accordance with the Council's statutory obligations.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>		X		
<b>Core Business:</b>		X		
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Relevant Members have been consulted.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report sets out the Membership of the Political Groups following receipt on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, of a notice pursuant to regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 that a number of Members wished to be treated as a political group known as the Minority Group. As a result of that change, the Council is required under the provisions of the Local Government Housing Act 1989 to review the allocation of seats to different groups.
- 4.2 The Council is required to appoint Committees and other Member bodies that are not part of the Executive.

- 4.3 The report proposes some minor changes to the allocation of seats on Committees to the different political groups, and proposes a number of changes to the Membership of Committees.

## 5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 This report sets out the Membership of the Political Groups and the proposed allocation of Committee seats to the different Groups.

### Political Groups

- 5.2 In accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the under-mentioned Members have given notice of their wish to be regarded as Members of the Political Groups set out below.

<b>Liberal Democrat Group</b>	<b>Conservative Group</b>	<b>Minority Group</b>
Antony Amirtharaj	Dennis Benneyworth	Adrian Abbs
Phil Barnett	Dominic Boeck	Carolyne Culver
Jeff Brooks	Paul Dick	David Marsh
Nick Carter	Clive Hooker	Clive Taylor
Patrick Clark	Paul Kander	
Heather Codling	Jane Langford	
Martin Colston	Ross Mackinnon	
Jeremy Cottam	Biji Oloko	
Iain Cottingham	Richard Somner	
Laura Coyle	Jo Stewart	
Lee Dillon	Howard Woollaston	
Billy Drummond		
Nigel Foot		
Denise Gaines		
Stuart Gourley		
Owen Jeffery		
Janine Lewis		
Alan Macro		
Geoffrey Mayes		
Erik Pattenden		
Justin Pemberton		
Vicky Poole		
Chris Read		
Matthew Shakespeare		
Stephanie Steevenson		
Louise Sturgess		
Martha Vickers		
Tony Vickers		

- 5.3 It is proposed at recommendation 2.1, that the Council notes that under Paragraph 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice has been received that the Members set out in Paragraph 5.2 are to be regarded as Members of the Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Minority Groups respectively.
- 5.4 The Council is required to appoint Committees and other Member bodies that are not part of the Executive. Membership of the Council's Committees is agreed annually at the May Council meeting and must be reviewed as soon as practicable following a change in membership of the Groups.

### **Allocation of Seats**

- 5.5 The political balance of the Council currently stands as follows:

	<b>Number of Members</b> No.	<b>Political Composition</b> %
Liberal Democrat Group	28	65.12%
Conservative Group	11	25.58%
Minority Group	4	9.3%
	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

- 5.6 In allocating seats on Committees, the Council must give effect to the requirements for political balance on Committees as prescribed by section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These requirements apply only to voting members of the Committee.
- 5.7 This section creates a sequential test that must be adhered to when allocating seats to the Committees of Council, which provides as follows:
- (1) Not all seats on any Committee are to be allocated to the same political group.
  - (2) The majority of seats on any Committee must be allocated to the majority group.
  - (3) Subject to the satisfaction of the above statutory criteria, the total number of seats on ordinary Committees must be allocated to political groups in the same proportion as their representation on the Council.
  - (4) Subject to all the above, the number of seats on each Committee must be the same proportion as the political group's representation on full Council.

Having regard to the above, it is proposed that the seats on Committees should be allocated as follows:

<b>Table A</b>				
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Total Number of Seats</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat Group</b>	<b>Conservative Group</b>	<b>Minority Group</b>
Scrutiny Commission	9	5	3	1
Health Scrutiny Committee	5	4	1	0
Licensing Committee	12	7	3	2
District Planning Committee	11	8	2	1
Eastern Area Planning Committee	9	5	3	1
Western Area Planning Committee	9	5	3	1
Personnel Committee	5	4	1	0
Appeals Panel	12	9	3	0
Governance Committee	9	6	2	1
<i>Number of committee seats based on % of Council</i>		<i>52.8</i>	<i>20.7</i>	<i>7.5</i>
<b>Number of Seats Allocated</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Percentage of Seats on Council</i>		<i>65.1%</i>	<i>25.6%</i>	<i>9.3%</i>
<b>Percentage of Seats Allocated</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>

5.8 It is recommended (at 2.2) that the Council agrees to the allocation of seats to the Political Groups in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 as set out in Table A above.

## **Substitutes**

- 5.9 The Council is also required to determine the number of substitute Members that may be appointed in respect of each Committee, and this was determined by Council in May 2023.
- 5.10 Proposed changes to the substitutes for each Committee, if required, will be detailed at Appendix A.

## **Appointment to Committees**

- 5.11 Appendix A is a list of proposed changes to the membership of Committees.
- 5.12 It is proposed that the Council approves the appointment of Members to the Committees as set out in Appendix A, which are in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.

## **Proposals**

- 5.13 As detailed in this report, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, 28 Members wish to be regarded as members of the Liberal Democrat Group, 11 Members wish to be regarded as members of the Conservative Group, and 4 Members wish to be regarded as members of the Minority Group.
- 5.14 Members, and where appropriate substitutes, will be appointed to 8 Committees totalling 81 seats. In this case 53 of these seats will be allocated to Liberal Democrat Members, 21 to Conservative Members, and 7 to Minority Group Members.
- 5.15 It is proposed that the appointments to Committees are made in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups and as set out in this report.

## **6 Other options considered**

- 6.1 None as the Council is required to consider and review membership of committees on an annual basis and following a change to the membership of Political Groups.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 Members are asked to agree the updated allocation of seats on the Committees for the 2023/24 Municipal Year as detailed at Table A, and to approve the changes to membership of Committees as detailed in Appendix A.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A – Proposed changes to membership of Committees (to follow)

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## Background Papers:

Report for the 'Appointment of and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2023/24 Municipal Year' that considered at the meeting of Council on the 25th May 2023:

<https://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/documents/s113285/FINAL%20-%20Allocations%20Report%202023%202024.pdf>

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

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