

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	8 October 2013
REPORT TITLE	Changes to the Political Composition of the Council
Report of	Democratic Services Manager
WARDS AFFECTED	All

Summary of report: To consider an urgent report which, in light of the recent changes to the political composition of the Council, seeks to make necessary revisions to the membership of Council Bodies for the remainder of the 2013/14 Municipal Year. The report also seeks approval to update the Council Constitution to ensure that any future amendments to the political composition of the Council be formally reported to the next Council meeting.

In addition, the report also wishes to highlight that the establishment of a fourth Political Group has implications upon the Scheme of Members' Allowances and will necessitate the need to reconvene the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Financial implications: There are no financial implications of note arising from this report at present. However, there may be financial implications following any future changes to the Scheme of Members' Allowances.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. with immediate effect, the membership of Council Bodies for 2013/14 be amended as outlined at paragraph 1.3 below;
2. the Council Constitution be amended to ensure that it is a requirement for any future amendments to the political composition of the Council to be formally reported to the next meeting of the Council; and
3. in light of the most recent amendments to the political composition of the Council, the need to reconvene the Independent Remuneration Panel be noted.

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1. BACKGROUND

Membership of Council Bodies 2013/14

- 1.1 A number of changes have arisen to the political composition of the Council since the appointments to Council Bodies were approved for 2013/14 at Annual Council on 21 May 2013 (Minute CM 15 refers).
- 1.2 The extent of the changes have now resulted in the membership of Council Bodies no longer being politically balanced.
- 1.3 As a consequence, Group Leaders have been consulted on the updated political balance table and the proposed changes to the membership are as follows:-
 - That Cllr Morse retains his seat on Community Services, but as an Independent Conservative (not a Conservative);
 - That the Independent Conservative Group gains a seat on the Audit Committee, in place of Cllr Wilde, who has resigned from this position. Cllr Morse has been nominated to fill this vacancy; and
 - Cllr Clish-Green is no longer able to be a named substitute for Cllr Wilde on either the Audit Committee or the Planning and Licensing Committee.

Political Composition of the Council

- 1.4 The current political composition of the Council is as follows:-

Conservative Group – 15 Members;
Independent Group – 10 Members;
Lib Dem Group – 2 Members;
Independent Conservative Group – 2 Members; and
Non-aligned – 2 Members.

- 1.5 A Member has suggested that it should now be a constitutional requirement for any future changes to the political composition to be formally reported to the next Council meeting for noting purposes.

Scheme of Members' Allowances

- 1.6 One of the implications of the establishment of an Independent Conservative Group is that the adopted Scheme of Members' Allowances currently only makes provision for the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Leader of the largest Group and two other Groups.
- 1.7 Therefore, it is worth the Council noting that it will be necessary to reconvene the Independent Remuneration Panel in due course to consider and make its recommendations to the Council on a revised Scheme.

2. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that appointments to certain bodies must achieve a political balance.
- 2.2 The Council is also responsible for making and amending appointments to Council Bodies.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 The risk management implications are shown at the end of this report in the strategic risks template.

Corporate priorities engaged:	All
Statutory powers:	Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
Considerations of equality and human rights:	Not affected by this report
Biodiversity considerations:	Not affected by this report
Sustainability considerations:	Not affected by this report
Crime and disorder implications:	Not affected by this report
Background papers:	Political Balance Table Council Constitution Annual Council Summons and Minutes – 21 May 2013 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003.
Appendices attached:	None

STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Appointing Politically Balanced Committees	Failure to appoint politically balanced Committees will be in breach of the provisions outlined in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.	3	1	3	↔	By the Council agreeing the revisions to the membership of Council Bodies will ensure political balance.	Head of Corporate Services

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔