

Report to: **Council**

Date: **6 December 2018**

Title: **POLITICAL COMPOSITION AND COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

Portfolio Area: **Leader of Council**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision) **Immediately following this meeting.**

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Council RESOLVES, with immediate effect and for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year, that:

- 1. the Political Composition of the Council be noted as follows:**
 - **24 Conservative Group Members;**
 - **6 Opposition Group Members; and**
 - **1 Vacancy;**
- 2. an Affordable Housing Delivery Working Group comprising of 3 Members be established with Cllrs Bastone, Birch and Pearce appointed to serve on it and that, for the purposes of Members' Allowances, attendance at meetings of this Group be regarded as an 'approved duty'; and**

3. Cllr I Bramble be appointed as one of the three Devon District Council representatives on the Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee and that, for the purposes of Members' Allowance, attendance at meetings of this Outside Body be regarded as an 'approved duty'.

1. Executive summary

Political Composition

1.1 Members will be aware that, with effect from 15 November 2018, Cllr Elizabeth Huntley tendered her resignation from the office of South Hams District Council. This report outlines the revised political composition of the Council for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year;

Affordable Housing Delivery Working Group

1.2 Officers have been working on ideas and options to deliver affordable housing in the South Hams and it is considered timely to formally establish a Working Group to enable for Member input. It is proposed that this Group consists of 3 Members and Cllrs Bastone, Birch and Pearce have been nominated to serve on this Group.

Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee

1.3 The Council has been formally requested to appoint one of the three Devon District Council representatives to serve on the Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee and this report recommends that Cllr I Bramble be appointed to fulfil this role.

2. Background

Political Composition

2.1 Following Elizabeth Huntley's resignation, the political composition of the Council is as follows:

- Conservative Group Members: 24;
- Opposition Group Members: 6; and
- Vacancy: 1.

2.2 This resignation does present an opportunity to revisit the appointments that have been made to Council Bodies for 2018/19;

- 2.2 Both Group Leaders have been consulted and both have confirmed their wish for the vacant seat to be retained on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel;

Affordable Housing Delivery Working Group

- 2.3 Whilst the Terms of Reference of the Affordable Housing Delivery Working Group will be approved at its first meeting, the main purpose of the Group will be to obtain Member input and buy-in to potential affordable housing delivery solutions to ensure that they meet the objective of additional housing provision at an affordable cost;
- 2.4 It is important to stress that this Working Group will not have any formal decision-making powers;
- 2.5 Whilst such Working Groups are not required to be politically balanced, it is good practice to ensure that they are and both Group Leaders have been invited to submit their nominations;
- 2.6 In so doing, it is recommended that the Council establish a Working Group of 3 Members, with its composition being as follows:
- Cllr Bastone;
 - Cllr Birch; and
 - Cllr Pearce.
- 2.7 The Group will be tasked with appointing a Chairman at its first meeting and, for the purposes of Members' Allowances, it is also recommended that attendance at meetings of this Group be regarded as an 'approved duty';
- 2.8 As is the case with other equivalent Working Groups, meeting dates and times will be publicised (for the information of the wider membership) via the Members' Bulletin;

Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee

- 2.9 Having received the formal request to appoint a Member to serve on the Joint Scrutiny Committee, the Council has also been informed that it cannot nominate its Leader, Deputy Leader or any other Executive Member to this position;
- 2.10 Both Group Leaders have been invited to submit their nominations and Cllr Bramble has subsequently been nominated to fulfil this role
- 2.11 For the purposes of Members' Allowances, it is recommended that this Committee be added to the list of Outside Bodies and, therefore, attendance at meetings of this Committee be regarded as an 'approved duty'.

3. Options available and consideration of risk

Political Composition

3.1 The Council's governance arrangements make it a requirement for all 31 Members of the Council to serve on one of either: the Executive (6 Members); the Development Management Committee (12 Members); and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (13 Members). As the largest of these three Council Bodies, it is felt that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel is in the best position to temporarily absorb the current seat vacancy.

Affordable Housing Delivery Working Group

3.2 The establishment of this Working Group will ensure cross party Member involvement in the drive to deliver Affordable Housing in the South Hams. In addition, the Group will provide a forum for officers to present potential Affordable Housing Delivery products and solutions and to gauge the level of appetite and (in principle) support for such initiatives amongst Members.

Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee

3.3 The Council could decide that it is unwilling to accept the invitation to nominate a Member to represent it on the Joint Committee. However, this would result in the Council (and the other District Councils) being disadvantaged by not having a seat at the table and, as a result, its views not being represented at meetings of this Committee.

4. Implications

Legal/Governance		The Council Constitution requires that all formal appointments are determined by the full Council.
Financial		The financial implications are two-fold: 1. The vacancy on the Council will result in an approximate £2,146 saving in the Member Allowances Budget; and 2. By approving the appointments to an additional Working Group and Outside Body, Members will be entitled to claim travel and subsistence for attendance at these meetings.
Risk		There are no additional risks directly related to this report.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		There are no equality and diversity implications directly related to this report.

Safeguarding		There are no safeguarding implications directly related to this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		There are no community safety or crime and disorder implications directly related to this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		There are no health, safety and wellbeing implications directly related to this report.
Other implications		N/A

Supporting Information

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

Council Constitution

Political Balance Provisions