

Council



18 May 2011

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: Council

Date: 18 May 2011

Report no: 1/11

Appointments to committees, joint bodies and outside bodies

Recommendations: that Council

1. appoints the committees and panels for the 2011/12 year, allocates seats to each political group and appoints councillors to sit on them in accordance with the wishes of the political groups as set out in the booklet entitled "membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies" circulated at the meeting;
2. appoints chairmen and vice-chairmen as set out in the booklet entitled "membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies" circulated at the meeting;
3. reappoints the Standards Committee comprising five district councillors, four independent members and three local council representatives as set out in the booklet entitled "membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies" circulated at the meeting;
4. appoints all local members representing the wards covered by the relevant area committees as set out in minute Co.16 of the Council held on 21 May 2003 to those committees for the 2011/12 municipal year;
5. agrees that members of a political group who are not voting members of a committee shall be substitute members with four preferred substitutes as set out in the "membership of meetings and representatives on outside bodies" booklet subject to the following exceptions:
 - (a) In the case of the Standards Committee there shall be no substitute members;
 - (b) In the case of the area committees there shall be no substitute members;
 - (c) In the case of the Personnel Committee there shall be up to eight named substitute members as set out in the "membership of meetings and representatives on outside bodies" booklet as well as the Leader and Opposition Leader who shall in addition to those eight named substitute members be substitute members also if not appointed to the committee;
 - (d) In the case of the Planning Committee, the right to act as a substitute member shall be open to all councillors of the same group but restricted to those who have received appropriate training;
 - (e) In the case of the Licensing Acts Committee there shall be no substitute members as this is not permitted;

- (f) In the case of the General Licensing Committee there shall be up to eight named substitute members as set out in the “membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies” booklet circulated at the meeting;
- (g) In the case of the Appeals Committee there shall be three named substitutes from each group
- 6. appoints members to the other groups as set out in the “membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies” booklet circulated at the meeting;
- 7. appoints members to the non-executive outside bodies as set out in the “membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies” booklet circulated at the meeting.

Purpose of Report

1. This report invites Council to appoint those committees required to be politically balanced together with the Licensing Acts Committee and the Standards Committee, area committees, other groups, joint committees and outside bodies.

Background

2. The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Council to appoint committees, review the political balance and allocate seats on these to reflect the political balance of the whole council.
3. In summary the Council has a duty to ensure the following principles are adhered to:
 - (i) not all seats are allocated to the same political group
 - (ii) a majority group should get the majority of seats on each committee
 - (iii) the seats allocated to groups on a committee reflect the membership of the Council as a whole
 - (iv) the allocation of the total number of seats on all committees reflects the membership as a whole
4. Ordinary committees are those that have decision-making powers but excluding the Licensing Acts Committee and the Standards Committee.

Strategic Objectives

5. This report supports the council’s corporate plan in that it ensures the council manages its business effectively. It is also in line with the council’s requirement to review the political complexion of committees and other bodies, having regard to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Political balance

6. Following the district council elections on 5 May 2011, the number of seats held by the various political parties is as follows:

- Conservative – 31
- Liberal Democrat – 19
- Labour – 1

7. As a single member the Labour councillor does not constitute a political group.

8. The ordinary committees and panels that are required to be politically balanced both individually and overall are as set out below.

- Scrutiny Committee - 12 members
- Planning Committee – 15 members
- Personnel Committee – 12 members
- General Licensing Committee – 15 members
- Audit and Governance Committee – 10 members
- Appeals Committee – 3 members

The terms of reference of the committees and panels are set out in the “membership of meetings and representatives on outside bodies” booklet and constitution.

Composition of committees

9. The tables below have been prepared as required by the 1989 Act and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 having regard to the existing arrangements of the Council.

10. The political balance calculation of entitlements is as follows: -

Group	Group Members/ Total on Council	Total number of committee seats	Proportionate number of seats on committees
Conservative Group	31/51	of 67 =	41
Liberal Democrat Group	19/51	of 67 =	25
		TOTAL	66(+1)

Committee	Total Membership	Lib Dems	Conservatives
Scrutiny Committee	12	4	7*
Planning	15	6	9
Personnel Committee	12	4	7*
General Licensing Committee	15	6	9
Audit and Governance Committee	10	4	6
Appeals Committee	3	1	2
TOTAL	67	25	40 (+1)

* Vacant seat

11. To obtain balance across the committees and overall the Conservative Group must gain a seat on either the scrutiny committee or personnel committee. The unfilled seat must be allocated to the non-group (labour) councillor.

Licensing Acts Committee

12. The Licensing Acts Committee is a statutory committee and is not required to be included in the calculation of political balance. There is therefore no effect on the overall political balance. Council is requested to appoint 15 councillors to the committee as set out in the “membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies” booklet circulated at the meeting.

Standards Committee

13. Council is required to appoint a Standards Committee under the Local Government Act 2000. That committee need not be politically balanced and must also include independent (non councillor) representatives, together with parish council representatives. The committee is currently made up of five district councillors, with four independent members and three parish representatives. At its meeting on 23 February 2011 Council re-appointed Mr David Howard, Mr Jeffery Lemon, Mr Mike Roberts and Mrs Vanessa Shenton as independent representatives to the Standards Committee until May 2015 or until the abolition of the Standards Committee if this is sooner. The three current parish representatives, Mrs Rita Atkinson, Mr Edward Carter and Mr Robert Fyfe were all re-elected at the recent parish council elections. Council is recommended to re-appoint the existing parish representatives and district councillors as set out in the “membership of meetings and representation on outside bodies” booklet circulated at the meeting.

Area Committees

14. In 2003, the Council established area committees. These consist of councillors for the relevant area only. Council is invited to confirm the membership of the area committees for the next municipal year as those local members representing those areas. The Council is asked to note that the area committees do not need to be politically balanced and therefore the area committees are not included in the calculation of seats to political groups. Council is requested to appoint councillors to the area committees as set out in the “membership of meetings and representatives on outside bodies” booklet.

Joint committees, other groups and outside bodies

15. Council is requested to appoint members to joint committees (Joint Staff Committee and Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) other groups and a number of outside bodies as set out in the “membership of meetings and representatives on outside bodies” booklet.

Financial Implications

16. There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

17. As set out in the body of the report.

Conclusion

16. In deciding the committees and panels it wishes to establish for the 2011/12 year, Council is required to allocate seats to political groups in the same proportion as they hold on the Council as a whole. Against that background, Council is invited to establish the committees and panels set out in the table in paragraph 10 of this report and to appoint councillors to them. Council is also invited to appoint councillors to the Licensing Acts Committee, the Standards Committee, the area committees, other groups and outside bodies.