

Council report



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: COUNCIL

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Appointments to committees, panels and joint committees 2016/17

Recommendations

That Council:

1. appoints the committees and panels for the 2016/17 year, allocates seats to each political group and appoints councillors and substitutes to sit on them in accordance with paragraphs 8-13 of this report and as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
2. appoints chairmen and vice-chairmen as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
3. appoints all local members representing the wards covered by the relevant area committees to those committees for the 2016/17 municipal year;
4. appoints councillors to the Licensing Acts Committee in accordance with paragraphs 15-17 of this report and as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
5. appoints a representative and a substitute on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
6. appoints a representative and an observer substitute on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel;
7. authorises the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel seat and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader;
8. authorises the head of legal and democratic services to amend the constitution as necessary to reflect the arrangements set out in this report.

Purpose of report

1. This report invites Council to agree appointments to those committees required to be politically balanced together with the area committees and the Licensing Acts Committee. It also invites Council to make appointments to joint bodies.

Background

2. The Council is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint committees, review the political balance and to appoint councillors to the committees annually.
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 area committees.

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 regards to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Political balance

6. The number of seats held by the various political groups is currently as follows:

Conservative	29	(76.32%)
Liberal Democrat	9	(23.68%)
7. The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require a constituted political group to be two or more members.

Composition of committees

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

Committee	Members	Comments
Vale Scrutiny Committee	9	
Joint Scrutiny Committee	5	10 in total with South Oxfordshire District Council
Joint Audit and Governance Committee	4	8 in total with South Oxfordshire District Council
Planning Committee	11	
General Licensing Committee	12	
Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee	6	
Appeals Panel	3	
Joint Staff Committee	3	6 in total with South Oxfordshire District Council
Corporate Services Joint Scrutiny Committee	2	10 in total with Hart, Mendip and South Oxfordshire district councils and Havant Borough Council
Totals	55	

- Officers propose that the membership of the General Licensing Committee and the Licensing Acts Committee are the same, although they are two separate entities. This allows for a sufficiently large, well trained pool of councillors from which to draw the Taxi Licensing and Licensing Panels, and avoids confusion as to which members are on which committee. These committees may appoint the same, or different chairmen and vice chairmen.
 - The co-chairs of the Joint Scrutiny committee should be the same as the chairs of the district Scrutiny committees to eliminate potential conflict around the call in arrangements and work programmes.
9. The terms of reference of the committees and panels are set out in the constitution and in subsequent agreed council minutes.
10. At its meeting in February Council authorised the chief executive in consultation with the chairman of the Scrutiny Committee to finalise the terms of reference of the

Corporate Services Joint Scrutiny Committee which will be included in the council's constitution. No changes are proposed to existing committees.

11. The political balance calculation and the entitlements to seats on committees are set out in the tables below. Fractional entitlements of less than one half are rounded down and entitlements of one half or more are rounded up.

Group	Group members	Total of council	Total number of committee seats
Conservative	29	76.32%	42
Liberal Democrat	9	23.68%	13
TOTAL	38	100%	55

Committee	Total number of seats	Conservative	Liberal Democrat
Scrutiny	9	7	2
Planning	11	8	3
General Licensing Committee	12	9	3
Appeals Panel	3	2	1
Joint Scrutiny	5	4	1
Joint Audit and Governance	4	3	1
Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee	6	5	1
Joint Staff Committee	3	2	1
Corporate Services Joint Scrutiny Committee	2	2	0
Total	55	42	13

12. If the Council wishes to allocate any seats not in accordance with the political balance requirements it can only do so if no councillor votes against the proposal.

Substitutes

13. Any member of a group may substitute for another member of their group on scrutiny, joint scrutiny, corporate services joint scrutiny, joint audit and governance and community governance and electoral issues committees. Appropriately trained

group members may substitute for other members of their group on planning and general licensing committees.

Area Committees

14. In 2003, the Council established area committees with the terms of reference set out in the council's constitution. The areas were revised by Council in May 2015. In January 2011 the Executive delegated the award of community grants to the area committees. The area committees 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 schedule circulated at the meeting.

Licensing Acts Committees

15. The Licensing Acts Committee is a statutory committee and is not required to be included in the calculation of political balance. The committee meets rarely to deal with licensing and gambling policy matters but a membership of 12 provides a pool of councillors from which panels of three can be drawn to deal with hearings relating to personal licence holders and premises licence applications and reviews.
16. Council has previously agreed to appoint a committee in accordance with the political balance of the Council. The membership will mirror the membership of the General Licensing Committee and will, therefore, be politically balanced but will not in itself contribute to the total political balance of the council's committees.
17. As a statutory committee with a specified membership substitutes may not be appointed.

Appointments

18. Officers have invited group leaders to submit the names of councillors they wish to sit on each of the above bodies. A table of nominations will be circulated at the meeting.

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19. Council is invited to appoint a representative and a named substitute to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

20. Council is invited to appoint a representative to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. The constitution of the panel does not provide for formally appointed substitutes but Council may appoint one in an observer capacity.

Financial implications

21. There are no direct financial implications.

Legal implications

22. These are set out in the body of the report.

Conclusion

23. In deciding the committees and panels it wishes to establish for the 2016/17 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 8 of this report and to appoint councillors to them. Council is also invited to appoint councillors to the area committees and the Licensing Acts Committee and to appoint representatives to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. If all committee and panel seats and substitute places are not filled at the meeting, Council is invited to delegate authority to the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader. Council is also invited to delegate authority to the head of legal and democratic services to amend the constitution as necessary.

Background Papers: None