

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

9 JUNE 2020

Title:

Review of Political Proportionality of the Council, allocation of committee seats, and appointments to committees for 2020/21

Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Ward, Leader of the Council

Head of Service: Robin Taylor, Head of Policy & Governance

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities, where Members are divided into political groups, to review periodically (and as soon as practicable after any change in the political composition of the council) the representation of the political groups on their principal committees to ensure that the seats are allocated in the same proportion as that in which the council as a whole is divided.
- 1.2 This report confirms the political composition of the Council following the by-election in the Milford ward, held on 12 February 2020, the allocation of seats on the principal committees (Annexe 1), and the appointment of members to committees for 2020/21 in accordance with the wishes of the political groups (Annexe 2).

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council notes:

- i. the proportional allocation of seats on the Principal Committees and SCC Local Committee in accordance with the political proportionality of the Council as detailed in Annexe 1; and,
- ii. the Group Leaders' nominations to the Principal Committees, as detailed in Annexe 2.

3. Reason for the recommendation

It is a statutory requirement to report to Annual Council on the political composition of the council, the allocation of committee seats to political groups in accordance with political proportionality, and to confirm the appointment of members to committee seats.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 Political Groups on the Council are formed in accordance with the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 when two or more councillors notify the Head of Policy & Governance, the Proper Officer, of their wish to be treated as a group.
- 4.2. The Conservatives, Farnham Residents, Liberal Democrats, Green Party, and Labour have registered as Political Group under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. There are two un-grouped Independent Members of the Council.
- 4.3. There is a total of 88 committee seats available on the Council's Principal Committees (four Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Audit, Standards, Licensing & Regulatory and Joint Planning Committees). The calculation of the proportional allocation of committee seats excludes the Executive and the Area Planning Committees. Where there are Sub-committees of the Principal Committees these are also governed by the political balance rules, with the exception of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committees.
- 4.4. The political breakdown of the Council is shown below, together with the rounded total number of committee seats per group:

	Cons.	Farnham Residents	Lib. Dem.	Green	Labour	Ind.	Total
No. of seats on the Council	22	15	14	2	2	2	57
Proportion	38.60%	26.32%	24.56%	3.51%	3.51%	3.51%	100.00%
No. of committee seats	34	23	22	3	3	3	88

- 4.5 The following principles apply to the allocation of seats (LG&HA1989, s15 (5)):
- (a) *Preventing domination by a single group:* That not all the seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) *Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committees:* That the majority of seats on each committee are allocated to a particular group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - (c) *Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares:* That, subject to (a) and (b), when allocating seats to a political group, the total number of their seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council, must reflect their proportion of the authority's membership; and
 - (d) *Ensuring as far as practicable fairness on each committee:* That, subject to (a) to (c), the number of seats on each committee is as far as possible in

proportion to the group's membership of the authority.

- 4.6 Seats are allocated to each committee as shown in Annexe 1, and following consultation with the Leaders of each of the political groups represented on the Council. Their agreement has been obtained to the calculations relating to the allocation of seats on committees in order to accommodate various rounding errors.

Appointments to Committee Places

- 4.7 The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 requires that once the Council has determined the allocation of committee places between the political groups, the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the committees. The nominations of the Group Leaders are shown on Annexe 2.

Area Planning Committees

- 4.8 The allocation of seats on the Area Planning Committees is calculated for each area. All the ward councillors in the Eastern Area are appointed to the Eastern Area Planning Committee. The Central, Southern and Western Area Planning Committees have more ward councillors than committee seats available. The committee seats for these three committees are allocated according to the political proportionality of the council seats within the relevant geographical area.
- 4.9 Notwithstanding the proposed new temporary planning committees, the four Area Planning Committee continue to exist and appointments have been made to these committees in readiness for when they resume meeting.

New Temporary Planning Committees (Subject to the agreement of recommendations of the Standards Committee)

- 4.10 In order to streamline planning committee decision-making whilst resources are stretched as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Group Leaders have agreed in principle to the temporary suspension of the Joint Planning Committee and four Area Planning Committees and to replace them on a temporary basis with two area-based politically proportional planning committees, WESTERN and EASTERN, each having 15 members. Subject to the agreement of Council of the recommendations of the Standards Committee in relation to these temporary planning committees, the Group Leaders' appointments to these committees are also set out in Annexe 2.

Surrey County Council Local Committee

- 4.11 The Waverley Borough Council has nine seats on the Surrey County Council Waverley Local Committee, allocated on a political proportional basis as shown in Annexe 1.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 5.1 The corporate governance of the Council provides the basis of the Council's work towards achieving all the Corporate Priorities.

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

The cost of servicing the Council's Committees will be met through existing budgets.

6.2 Risk management

N/A

6.3 Legal

The legal implications are set out in the body of the report..

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Council is under a statutory duty to ensure that equality and diversity is a key part of the decision making process of the Council. This is fundamental to the Council being able to meet its statutory responsibilities. There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no climate emergency implications arising from this report.

7. Consultation and engagement

- 7.1 Committee appointments have been made by Group Leaders.

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 This report fulfils statutory reporting requirements. There is no alternative option.

9. Governance journey

- 9.1 This report is being made to the Full Council for noting in accordance with statutory requirements.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Political proportionality and allocation of committee seats

Annexe 2 – Committee memberships 2020/21

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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