

Annual Meeting of Council

11 May 2023

Appointments to Committees, Joint Panels/Boards and Election of Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Full Council is asked to review the allocation of committee seats in line with political balance rules and, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, make appointments to committees, joint panels and boards at the Annual Meeting of Council in line with the nominations from the Political Group Leaders. Full Council will also elect the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of the ordinary committees for the forthcoming municipal year.

Full Council is also asked to delegate authority to the Director of Legal & Democratic, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, to make in-year changes to committee appointments as and when required.

Recommendation:

- (a) That the allocation of committee seats in accordance with political balance rules, the appointments to ordinary committees and appointments to joint panels and boards, as nominated by the Political Group Leaders, be approved for 2023/24 as set out in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 respectively:
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal & Democratic in consultation with the appropriate Political Group Leader to make in-

year changes to committee, joint panels and board appointments;

- (c) That Full Council appoints committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen for the 2023/24 municipal year (nominations set out at Appendix 4).

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Dorset Council Procedure Rules (as set out in the Constitution).

1. Political Groups and Percentage Entitlement

1.1 Where membership of Dorset Council is divided into political groups the Council is required to review and allocate the total number of seats on ordinary committees in accordance with the strength of each political group.

1.2 The number of members of each political group and the percentage entitlement to the overall number of committee seats on ordinary committees is as follows:

Conservative Group – 43 members (52.44% entitlement)

Liberal Democrat Group - 27 members (33% entitlement)

Green Group – 5 members (6.09% entitlement)

ALL – 4 members (4.88% entitlement)

In addition committee seats are allocated to unaligned members:

Cllr Paul Kimber, Labour & Co-operative

Cllr Kate Wheller, Independent

Cllr David Gray, Independent

2. Allocation of Committee Seats and Appointments to Committees

2.1 The number of seats on ordinary committees (Appendix 1) are allocated to each political group in the same proportion as the overall size of each political group, as far as is practicable. This excludes appointments to the Cabinet, which are made by the Leader of Council, and any other panel or board where the political balance rules do not apply such as the Health and Well Being Board. In addition to appointments to Cabinet the Leader of Council is also entitled to appoint up to 6 members of the controlling group as Executive Lead members and these appointments will be reported to members at the Annual Meeting.

2.2 Where a political group has the majority of seats on the Council, it must also have, where practicable, a majority of on each individual committee to which appointments are made. This means that the Conservative Group, with 52.44% of seats on the Council is entitled to the majority of seats on all ordinary committees, where this is not possible to achieve a pragmatic approach has to be taken, for example

on the allocation of committee seats to the area planning committees and the Licensing Committee.

2.3 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out the 4 principles to be followed, as far as reasonably practicable, when working out political proportionality:

(a) Preventing domination by a single group: That not all the seats on a committee should be allocated to the same political group:

(b) Ensuring a majority group enjoys a majority on all committees: If one political group has a majority in the Full Council, that political group should have a majority on each committee:

(c) Aggregating all committee places and allocating fair shares: Subject to (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the ordinary committees of an authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total number of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority; and

(d) Ensuring as far as practicable fairness on each committee: Subject to (a) and (c) above, the number of the committee seats which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that committee as is borne by the number of members of the group to the membership of the authority.

2.4 Full Council may waive the political balance rules for any committee(s) where the Council wishes to appoint an alternative number of members from political groups. In order for political balance to be waived no member must vote against the motion, an objection by a single member would make it necessary to apply strict proportionality. This report assumes that the Council does not want an alternative arrangement to that prescribed in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

3. **Nominations to Joint Committees, Panels and Boards**

3.1 In addition to making appointments to the Council's ordinary committees there are a number of joint committees, panels and boards to which Dorset Councillors are appointed, including the Pension Fund Committee, Joint Public Health Board, Dorchester Markets Joint Panel and Joint Archives Advisory Board. Details are set out in Appendix 3 and Full Council is asked to approve the allocation of seats in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.

4. **Appointment of Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen**

- 4.1 In accordance with committee terms of reference as set out in the Constitution the appointment of committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen will take place at the Annual Meeting of Council unless Full Council agrees alternative arrangements. Under the current governance arrangements set out in the Constitution the Leader of Council will be the Chairman of Cabinet and the Deputy Leader of Council will be the Vice-chairman of Cabinet. The list of nominations for Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen is set out in Appendix 4, where more than one nomination is put forward a vote will be taken.

5. **Financial Implications**

Chairmen of committees receive a Special Responsibility Allowance in accordance with the Dorset Council Scheme of Members' Allowances.

6. **Environmental Implications** – No direct implications

7. **Well-being and Health Implications** – No direct implications

8. **Other Implications** - None

9. **Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

10. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

11. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Allocation of committee seats in accordance with political balance rules

Appendix 2 – Nominations to Committees 2023/24

Appendix 3- Nominations to Joint Committees, Panels and Boards 2023/24

Appendix 4 – Nominations for Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen 2023/24

12. **Background Papers** - None