

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO COUNCIL

18 JULY 2012

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**Political Balance - Amendments to Council Committees, Panels etc
2011/2015**

SUMMARY

This report presents proposed changes to the membership of Council Committees/ Panels etc.

RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED that the changes, as detailed in Table 3, be approved.

DETAIL

1. At its Annual Meeting, held on Wednesday 25 May 2011, the Council approved appointments to its Committees and Panels for 2011/15.
2. Prior to the Annual Meeting the political groups were involved in a process that sought, as far as practicable, to establish political balance on each individual Council Committee /Panel and also achieve balance in terms of the total number of Committee/Panel seats available across the Council.
3. Officers facilitated this process throughout and, as part of it, provided a schedule to each group, detailing their allocation for each Committee/Panel.
4. This initial allocation rarely provides balance across the total number of Committee/Panel seats and the schedule therefore also notified groups of how many seats each needed to relinquish, or receive, in order to achieve balance. Obviously, achieving balance relied on each group relinquishing or receiving the exact numbers of seats notified to them.
6. The table below details the number of seats that groups were notified of and the actual number that they chose to relinquish or receive.

Table 1

Group	Relinquish		Receive	
	Notified	Actual	Notified	Actual
Labour	-	-	6	6
Conservatives	4	4	-	-
IBIS	5	9	-	-
TIA	5	6	-	-
Lib/Dems	-	-	2	2
BIA	-	-	6	3
Total	14	19	14	11
Resulting vacancies		5		3

7. The above resulted in 8 vacancies at the time appointments were presented to the Annual Meeting, in May 2011. All groups had had an opportunity to take up the seats they were entitled to and all practicable attempts to achieve balance across the whole of the Council had been exhausted. In order to reduce the number of vacancies being held, details of the 8 vacancies were presented to Council meetings in June and September 2011. 7 vacancies were filled, 5 by Labour and 2 by Liberal Democrats. 1 vacancy still remains. Clearly those groups who filled the vacancies would have more seats than necessary to achieve overall balance, whereas groups, which had effectively declined seats, would have less seats than necessary.

8. This is described in the table below

Table 2

Group	No. of seats to achieve balance	No. of seats currently held	variance
Labour	98	103	+5
Conservatives	43	43	-
IBIS	22	18	-4
TIA	18	17	-1
Lib/Dems	15	17	+2
BIA	7	4	-3
Vacancy	N/A	1	+1

9. It can be seen that political balance does not currently exist across the total number of Committee/Panel seats. However, this is acceptable, as every effort has been made to achieve balance and all groups have been afforded the opportunity to take the number of seats they are entitled to.

Recent Developments

10. IBIS has recently indicated that it wishes to take up all the seats it is entitled to. Tables 1 and 2 detail that IBIS originally chose to relinquish 9

seats, instead of the 5 notified to it. IBIS may therefore take 4 of those 9 seats and they have advised officers as follows:-

Education Support Panel
 Markets Forum
 Appeals and Complaints Committee
 Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee (CSI)

11. This will have a 'knock on' effect for the groups and Councillors which took up the relinquished or vacant seats, as detailed below:

Table 3

Committee/Panel etc	Change
Education Support Panel	replace Councillor Kennedy with Councillor Harrington
Markets Forum	replace Councillor Smith with Councillor Faulks
Appeals and Complaints Committee	replace Councillor Lewis with Councillor Patterson
CSI	replace Councillor Johnson with Councillor Kirby

12. The above changes would have a positive effect on the Council's overall balance, as shown below. Members will note that the figures in the variance column have reduced.

Table 4

Group	No. of seats to achieve balance	No. of seats currently held	variance
Labour	98	101	+3
Conservatives	43	43	-
IBIS	22	22	-
TIA	18	17	-1
Lib/Dems	15	15	-
BIA	7	4	-3
Vacancy	N/A	1	+1

13. In addition, the correct balance of each of the Committees/Panels, detailed in Table 3 will be achieved, or improved, by these changes.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

14. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal

15. Approval of the changes will improve Political Balance, on Council Committees and Panels, in accordance with Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. The report is considered to be a low risk category report.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

18. Enhancing democratic representation and local democracy is a key feature of the Council Plan.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

19. An assessment has not been considered necessary for the purpose of this report.

CONSULTATION

20. Consultation has been undertaken with relevant political groups.

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<u>Background Papers:</u>	Not applicable
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not ward specific
<u>Property Implications:</u>	Not applicable