

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 18 July 2018

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF THE COUNCIL AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES (REP1884)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To consider a report, which provides an update on the revised overall political balance of Waveney District Council, and to consider appointments to the Council's Committees.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mark Bee Leader of the Council
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Supporting Officer:	Nicola Wotton Democratic Services Manager 01502 523241 nicola.wotton@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The overall political composition of the Council must be reflected in the appointment of Members to Committees and Sub-Committees, in accordance with the political proportionality rules laid out in the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.
- 1.2 Following any change in overall political balance, the authority is required to undertake a review and to consider any implications for representation on the Council Committees.
- 1.3 Member appointments to Committees are made annually as part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements in support of the democratic process and to provide a mechanism for decisions to be made that have been reserved by law for such bodies to make or are functions under the Council's Constitution that have not been delegated to officers to decide. Appointments to Committees for the 2018/19 municipal year were agreed at the Annual Council meeting held on 16 May 2018.
- 1.4 A number of changes to the membership of Waveney District Council took place, following the publication of the meeting papers for the Annual Council meeting held on 16 May 2018. This report is to provide an update on the current political composition of the Council, following those changes.

2 POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

Previous Overall Political Composition of the Council

- 2.1 The Council is comprised of 48 Councillors in total. The previous overall political composition of the Council as at 17 May 2017 was:

Conservative Group	- 27
Labour Group	- 17
Independent Members	- 3
Green Party Member	- 1
Total	- 48

Current Overall Political Composition of the Council

- 2.2 Recently, there have been several changes to the political composition of Waveney District Council. A summary of which is shown below:
- 2.3 On the 30 April 2018, Councillor Sue Allen sadly passed away, which resulted in a vacancy in the Southwold and Reydon Ward.
- 2.4 On 7 May 2018, Councillor Sonia Barker resigned from Waveney District Council, which resulted in a vacancy for the Pakefield Ward.
- 2.5 The by-elections for the two vacant seats were scheduled to take place on Thursday, 12 July 2018.
- 2.6 On 16 May 2018, Councillor Nick Webb took the decision to join the Conservative Group, rather than be an Independent Councillor.
- 2.7 On 1 June 2018, Councillor Stephen Ardley was suspended from the Conservative Group, whilst an investigation was undertaken in relation to some comments that had been made on one of his social media accounts. Councillor Ardley was therefore an Independent Councillor pending the results of the investigation.

2.8 The current political composition of the Council is shown below:

Conservative Group	- 27
Labour Group	- 15
Independent Members	- 3
Green Party Members	- 1
Vacancies	- 2
Total	- 48

3 POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

3.1 There are currently 53 Committee places that need to be shared out on a politically proportionate basis. The results of the review of the political balance indicate the following:

The Conservative Group – no change

The Labour Group – no change

The Independent Members – no change

The Green Party Member – no change

3.2 A further review will take place, once the results of the by-elections for Southwold & Reydon and Pakefield Wards are known and an additional report will be brought back to Full Council for consideration.

4 SUBSTITUTION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Substitute representation is permitted within the Council's Constitution as part of the corporate governance arrangements in support of the democratic process and decision-making arrangements, which underpin the delivery of the Council's Strategic priorities, key themes and values, including those outlined in the East Suffolk Business Plan for 2015-2023.

4.2 Substitute Members may attend meetings to take the place of the ordinary Member (who will be absent for the whole of the meeting) for whom they are the designated substitute, by giving notice that they are a substitute by 12 noon on the day of the meeting, either in writing or orally, to an Officer in the Council's Democratic Services Team.

4.3 The substitution arrangements currently in place for the Council's Committees were agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 16 May 2018.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 requires that the overall political balance of the Council be reflected, where possible, in the appointment of Members to Committees and any Sub-Committees of the Council (known informally as the political balance rules).

5.2 Councillors are able to claim expenses for attending Council meetings which will be met from the Council's agreed Scheme of Members Allowances budget for 2018/19.

5.3 The appointment to Committees / Sub-Committees enables the work of the Council to be shared across all Council Members (where appropriate) and enables Councillors to undertake a range of duties that collectively underpin or deliver the democratic decision-making process within the Council.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

6.1 Decisions are implemented in accordance with the Council's Constitution and statutory legislation. Appointments to Committees enable Members to carry out their community leadership role and in considering the issues before them, help build a stronger, healthier and just society.

6.2 The decision to constitute and appoint to Committees will not in itself lead to the tackling of inequality, disadvantage and discrimination (particularly for the most vulnerable) but they will provide the framework for those issues to be addressed when making decisions or reviewing policies / services.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None. The Council is statutorily required to undertake a review should the overall political balance of the Council change and to consider the impact of this on the Council's Committees and Sub-Committees to ensure that where possible they are also politically balanced.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

8.1 To ensure that Members are appointed to Committees for the 2018/19 municipal year in accordance with the politically proportionality rules and that decision-making is undertaken in a democratic way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report on the current political proportionality of the Council be noted.
2. That Members note the results of the by-elections held on 12 July 2018 for the Pakefield and Southwold & Reydon Wards.
3. That the Membership of the Council's Committees be reviewed, following the results of the by-elections held on 12 July 2018 for the Pakefield and Southwold & Reydon Wards.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

The results of the by-election held on 12 July 2018 for the Pakefield and Southwold & Reydon Wards, with any resulting changes to the overall political proportionality of the Council and any changes to the membership of the Council's Committees.

(To be circulated at the meeting)

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None