

## COUNCIL

Wednesday, 19 September 2018

### POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF THE COUNCIL AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES (REP1903)

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To consider a report on the revised overall political balance of Waveney District Council, and to consider appointments to the Council's Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies, following recent developments.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards in the District
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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Mark Bee Leader of the Council
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<b>Supporting Officer:</b>	Nicola Wotton Democratic Services Manager 01502 523241 <a href="mailto:nicola.wotton@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">nicola.wotton@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a>
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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 had been agreed at the Annual Council meeting held on 16 May 2018.
- 1.4 This report is to provide an update on the current political composition of the Council, following a number of 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.
- 2.2 The previous political composition of the Council, following the 2 by-elections in July 2018 is shown below:

Conservative Group	- 28
Labour Group	- 15
Independent Members	- 3
Green Party Members	- 1
Liberal Democrat Members	- 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>- 48</b>

- 2.3 Since the last Full Council meeting on 18 July 2018, Councillor S Ardley has become an Independent Councillor on a permanent basis, following an internal review by the Conservative Group. After consideration, Councillors N Webb and K Grant have decided to leave the Conservative Group and become Independent Councillors too.
- 2.4 As a result of these changes, the current political composition of the Council is as follows:

Conservative Group	- 26
Labour Group	- 15
Independent Members	- 5
Green Party Members	- 1
Liberal Democrat Members	- 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>- 48</b>

### **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 – The Conservative Group are now entitled to 29 seats (5 seats on the Audit & Governance Committee, 7 seats on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 7 seats on the Planning Committee, 8 seats on the Licensing Committee and 2 seats on the Joint Appointments Committee).

The Labour Group – The Labour Group are now entitled to 17 seats (3 seats on the Audit & Governance Committee, 4 seats on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 4 seats on the Planning Committee, 5 seats on the Licensing Committee and 1 seat on the Joint Appointments Committee).

The Independent Members – The Independent Members are now entitled to 5 seats (1 seat on the Audit & Governance Committee, 1 seat on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 1 seat on the Planning Committee, 2 seats on the Licensing Committee and no seats on the Joint Appointments Committee).

The Green Party Member – The Green Party Member is entitled to 1 seat on the Planning Committee.

The Liberal Democrat Party Member – The Liberal Democrat Member is entitled to 1 seat on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### **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 for the Council's Committees were previously agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 16 May 2018 and they remain unchanged for the Conservative Group and the Labour Group.
- 4.4 Since that time, further discussions have taken place among the Minority Opposition Group Members and changes to the Substitution arrangements have been agreed.
- 4.5 The five Independent Councillors have agreed Substitution arrangements, so that they can substitute for each other only.
- 4.6 The Green Party Councillor and the Liberal Democrat Councillor have also agreed Substitution arrangements, so that they can substitute for each other only.

### **5 GROUP LEADER FOR THE INDEPENDENTS**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, any group with two Members or more is entitled to appoint a Group Leader. Following discussions with the Independent Councillors, it has been agreed that Councillor S Ardley be appointed as Group Leader for the Independent Councillors.

- 5.2 As such, Councillor Ardley will be entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for undertaking this role and this will commence with immediate effect.

## **6 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 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).
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.

## **7 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

## **8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 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.

## **9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 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 the changes to the Committee Memberships, as listed in Appendix A to the report be approved.
3. That the changes to the Outside Body appointments, as listed in Appendix B to the report be approved.
4. That the changes to the Working Groups appointments, as listed in Appendix C to the report be approved.
5. That Full Council notes that Councillor S Ardley has been appointed as the Leader of the Independent Councillors and as such he will be entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for undertaking this role.
6. That the Substitution arrangements, as outlined within the report, be approved.

## **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A</b>	Proposed Changes to the Appointments to Committees
<b>Appendix B</b>	Proposed Changes to the Outside Body Appointments
<b>Appendix C</b>	Proposed Changes to the Working Group Appointments

**BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**