

**COUNCIL**

Wednesday, 23 January 2019

**POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY OF THE COUNCIL AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES (REP1946)**

**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 last changes in July 2018, is shown below:

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

- 2.3 On 14 November 2018, Councillor C Topping resigned from the Conservative Group and joined the Green Party.
- 2.4 On 26 December 2018, Councillor P Light also resigned from the Conservative Group and became an Independent Councillor. He has since decided not to be allied with any of the other Independent Councillors at Waveney District Council.
- 2.5 As a result, the political composition of the Council is now as follows:

Conservative Group	- 24
Labour Group	- 15
Independent Members	- 6
Green Party Members	- 2
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. Due to recent developments, it has not been possible to finalise the allocation of the Committee places in time for the publication of the meeting papers for this Full Council meeting. An update will therefore be circulated in due course, published on the website and copies will also be provided at the meeting.

### 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 the Annual Council meeting, further discussions have taken place among the Minority Opposition Group Members and changes to their 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 Councillor P Light, now an Independent Councillor, has decided not to take part in the Substitution arrangements with the other Independent Councillors.
- 4.7 The Green Party Councillors, the Liberal Democrat Councillor and Councillor P Light, the new Independent Councillor, have also agreed to have informal Minority Opposition Group Substitution arrangements, so that they can substitute for each other only.

### 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.
- 5.4 The Leader of the Independent Group will only be able to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance for 5 Members, as Councillor Light does not wish to be aligned with any of the other Independent Councillors.
- 5.5 As there are now 2 Green Party Members, they are entitled to appoint a Group Leader and to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance in this respect. However, the Green Party

Members have decided that they do not wish to appoint a Group Leader and they have therefore chosen not to claim the Special Responsibility Allowance for that position.

## **6 APPOINTMENTS TO WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

- 6.1 An update on any changes to the Council's appointments to its Working Groups and Outside Bodies will be provided at the Full Council meeting, as appropriate.

## **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 political 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 proposed changes to the Appointments to Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies, as listed in Appendix A to the report, be approved.
3. That the Substitution arrangements, outlined in paragraph 4 of the report, be approved.

### **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A</b>	Proposed Changes to the Appointments to Committees and Working Groups and Outside Bodies – <b>TO FOLLOW AND HARD COPIES WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE MEETING</b>
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**BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**