

MEETING: Annual Council

DATE: Wednesday 27 May 2015

SUBJECT: Application of political balance rules to the allocation of seats on Council bodies

REPORT OF: Senior Local Democracy Officer

Purpose: To bring before the annual meeting information governing the allocation of seats for the 2015/16 Council year in order that proposals and nominations can be put before the annual meeting of the Council.

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Recommendations: To agree the seat allocations set out in this report and otherwise decide:-

- (a) Whether Scrutiny Committee should comprise 7 or 8 seats (para. 2.4 below).
- (b) The number of places on Conservation Area Advisory Group (4 or reduce to 3) (para. 2.9 below).

1. Introduction

1.1 Whole council elections were held on 7 May 2015. The total number of councillors used in the calculation of committee seat numbers is 27 and the break down of seats between the two groups is 18 Liberal Democrats and 9 Conservatives. The seat allocations are set out below.

2. Current Structure

2.1 This paper is based on the current structure, however the Council's current constitutional arrangements allow for either a 7 or an 8 member Scrutiny Committee. A 7 seat option was chosen in 2014/15. This paper considers choice of an 8 seat option. Similarly, the size of the 2 Licensing Committees may be between 10 and 15. This paper assumes that membership of these committees will be 13 for 2015/16. Leaders have submitted nominations on this basis.

2.2 **Base percentages:-**

<i>No. of Councillors: 27</i>	<i>% seats on Council</i>
<i>Liberal Democrats 18</i>	66.66
<i>Conservatives 9</i>	33.33

2.3 **Committees.** The allocation of seats in accordance with the rules is as follows:-

Committee	No. of Seats	Controlling Group	Opposition
Planning	8	5	3
General Licensing	13	9	4
Audit and Governance	8	5	3
Totals:	29	19	10

2.4 **Scrutiny Committee.** This committee is not listed above as although the political balance rules apply the calculation and allocation of seats is required to be done separately. The reason for this has to do with the legislation under which "Scrutiny and Overview" committees are constituted. Although there is provision for an 8 seat committee, recent practice has been to have 7 members. **Given we are starting a new 4-year term and the change in political balance, it would be appropriate to ask Council to decide between 7 or 8 seats.** The proposed allocation of seats in accordance with the rules is therefore as follows for the 2 options:-

No. of Seats	Controlling Group	Opposition
7	5	2
8	5	3

2.5 **Licensing Act Committee.** This committee is not listed above as the political balance rules do not apply. It is however politically balanced as a matter of local discretion. See the paragraph below as to committee membership numbers.

2.6 **General Licensing Committee and Licensing Act Committee.** The law requires there to be not less than 10 members and not more than 15 members of a Licensing Act Committee. The Council has previously agreed that the membership of both the Licensing Committees should be the same and that the same member should chair both committees. There is some benefit in being able to select members for sub-committees from as wide a pool as possible. The nominations made last year were for a 13 member committee. 5 members are appointed as chairs of Licensing sub-committees.

2.9 **Advisory Bodies**

Body	No. of Seats	Controlling Group	Opposition
Conservation Area Advisory Group	4 (or 3)	2	2 (or 1)
Downland Forum	3 (or 4)	2 (or 3)	1

In 2014/15 the Conservation Area Advisory Group had 4 members. Past Council practice has been to allow the opposition an equality of seats. **In view of the change in political balance members may wish to review this.**

In 2014/15 the Downland Forum had 3 members and nominations have been made on the basis that this continues.

- 2.10 **Eastbourne Homes Limited.** The established practice is that the non-executive directors on the board comprise 4 councillors (or exceptionally, another person with relevant experience). As part of EHL's governance review it has been agreed that the board membership appointed by the Council should be reduced from 4 to 2. It is therefore asked that the respective Group Leaders should advise which one of their members should continue as a board member – either now or at a later date.
- 2.11 **Other Task Groups and Boards.** So far as is possible, groups are recommended to retain existing membership so as to maintain continuity and allow members to continue or complete work already begun.

David Robinson
Senior Local Democracy Officer

18 May 2015