

MEETING: Annual Council

DATE: Wednesday 8 May 2013

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 2013/14 Council year in order that proposals and nominations can be put before the annual meeting of the Council.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Whole council elections were last held in May 2011 and not due to be held again until 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 15 Liberal Democrats and 12 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 2012/13. This paper assumes continuation of the 7 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 2013/14. 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 15</i>	56
<i>Conservatives 12</i>	44

- 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	7	6
Audit and Governance	8	5	3
Totals:	29	17	12

- 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. The current political proportions favours a 7 seat committee. (An 8 seat committee would require a 5/3 split.) The proposed allocation of seats in accordance with the rules is therefore as follows:-

No. of Seats	Controlling Group	Opposition
7	4	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 for this year assume a 13 member committee. Although there is provision for 5 members to be appointed as chairs of Licensing sub-committees, only 3 nominations have been made.

- 2.9 **Advisory Bodies**

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

In 2012/13 the Conservation Area Advisory Group had 4 members. Past Council practice has been to allow the opposition an equality of seats.

In 2012/13 the Downland Forum had 3 members and nominations have been made on the basis that this continues.

- 2.10 **Eastbourne Homes.** The established practice is that the non-executive directors on the board comprise 4 councillors (or exceptionally, another person with relevant experience).
- 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

29 April 2013

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