

**MEETING:** Annual Council

**DATE:** Wednesday 17 May 2006

**SUBJECT:** Application of Political Balance Rules to the Allocation of Seats on Council Bodies

**REPORT OF:** David Robinson, Local Democracy Manager

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**Purpose:** To bring before the Council information governing the allocation of seats for the 2006/07 Council year.

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**Recommendations:** (1) The Conservation Area Advisory Group be formally disbanded once the new Design Panel has been established.

(2) That the allocations set out in this report be adopted by the Council.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 A meeting of Group Leaders and deputy Leaders was held on 9 May 2006. An earlier version of this report was presented to that meeting.

## **2. Current Structure (Leader and Cabinet Model)**

2.1 This paper is based on the current structure and although the number of seats held by the 2 groups represented on the Council has now changed to 15/12; this has not however changed proportional allocation of seats on committees. . The option of an 8 member Scrutiny Committee has not therefore been put forward:-

### **2.2 Base percentages:-**

<i>No. of Councillors: 27</i>	<i>% seats on Council</i>
<i>Conservatives 15</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Liberal Democrats 12</i>	<i>44</i>

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

<b>Committee</b>	<b>No. of Seats</b>	<b>Controlling Group</b>	<b>Opposition</b>
Scrutiny	7	4	3
Planning	8	5	3
General Licensing	15	8	7
Standards	4	2	2
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>

2.4 **Standards Committee.** The political balance rules do not apply to the Standards Committee, however the Council has previously amended their Constitution to provide for both Groups to be equally represented on this Committee.

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

2.6 **Licensing Committees.** No recommendation is made at present with regard to reducing the membership of these committees nor in respect of the number of standing sub-committee chairmen. 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 also agreed that the membership of both Licensing Committees should be the same and that the same person should chair both committees. There is some benefit in being able to select members for sub-committees from as wide a pool as possible.

2.7 **Other Bodies**

<b>Body</b>	<b>No. of Seats</b>	<b>Controlling Group</b>	<b>Opposition</b>
Cons Area Adv.	3/4	2	1/2
Grants Task Group	3	2	1
Cleansing and Highways Forum	2	1	1
Downland Forum	4	2	2
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>12/13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5/6</b>

2.8 Adjustments may be made to give the controlling group a majority of seats, however, past Borough Council practice has been to allow an equality of seats on some advisory and consultative bodies notwithstanding one party's superior number of Council seats.

- 2.9 **Scrutiny/Performance Management Task Group.** The above assumes approval of the report earlier on the agenda for this Annual Council meeting in respect of enhanced Scrutiny Committee arrangements and the incorporation of the functions of the Performance Management Task Group's functions within that Committee's widened remit.
- 2.10 **Conservation Area Advisory Group.** Arrangements are well in hand for the establishment of an Architect's Panel (or Design Panel as it is likely to be called), which it is intended should absorb the functions of the Conservation Area Advisory Group. However, at this time, it will be necessary to maintain the CAAG in being pending full operation of the new panel. Council, is however, recommended to provide for the disbandment of this Group once the new Panel is in being.
- 2.11 **Joint Staff Committee.** The current constitution provides for the 6 seats to be shared equally between the two largest groups.
- 2.12 **Eastbourne Buses Board.** The tradition has been for the Board to comprise 2 members from each of the largest political groups. This has held true irrespective of the overall proportion of seats. The Chairman of the Board has come from the controlling group.
- 2.13 **Eastbourne Homes.** It has been proposed that the non-executive directors on the board include council officers. Following discussions with Group Leaders it is recommended that 4 councillor nominations be made, with 2 councillors being appointed from each political group and that a fifth nomination of an officer be made in due course.
- 2.14 **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**  
**Local Democracy Manager**

**11 May 2006**

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