

Agenda Item No:

Report No:

Report Title: **Change to Composition of the Conservative Group,
Committee Memberships and Remit of Planning Applications
Committee**

Report To: **Council**

Date: **6 December 2011**

Ward(s) Affected: **All**

Report By: **Corporate Head – Legal and Democratic Services**

Contact Officer(s)-

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Purpose of Report:

To report a change in the composition of the Conservative Group.

To confirm the changes and appointments to Committee memberships.

To amend the remit of the Planning Applications Committee.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1** To note that notice has been received from Councillor B Groves stating that he no longer wishes to be treated as a member of the Conservative Group.
 - 2** That the changes to the Committee memberships, as set out in paragraph 7 of the Report, be confirmed and noted.
 - 3** That the change to the remit of the Planning Applications Committee, as set out in the Appendix, be adopted.
 - 5** That the appointment of Councillor Don McBeth (Ditchling Parish Council) as a Town & Parish member of the Standards Committee be noted.
 - 6** That the Head of Democratic Services amends the Constitution to reflect the changes set out in this Report.
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Reasons for Recommendations

- 1** To comply with the Council's legal duties and to implement changes in accordance with the Constitution.

Information

Change to composition of the Conservative Group

- 2 The Chief Executive has received written notice from Councillor Barry Groves stating that he no longer wishes to be treated as a member of the Conservative Group.
- 3 Receipt of this notice does not trigger a review of the Council's political balance on committees. Apart from the review of political balance at Annual Council each year, reviews are only to be carried out at such other times as prescribed in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These are when written notice is given:
 - (a) that a new political group has been formed; or
 - (b) that a member wishes to join an existing political group, and that group requests a review of the Council's political balance; neither of which has occurred.
- 4 The political composition of the Council is now as follows:
 - Conservative Group – 21
 - Liberal Democrat Group – 18
 - Independent members – 2

Committee memberships

- 5 Following the recent Cabinet re-shuffle, the Leader of the Conservative Group has informed me that their Group wish to make some changes to appointments to Committees.
- 6 In accordance with Council Procedure Rules (Procedures for Appointments, page D23, paragraph 3.4), the Corporate Head – Legal and Democratic Services has made these appointments which now need to be confirmed formally by Council.
- 7 The changes to committee memberships are as follows:
 - 7.1 **Audit Committee** – Councillors B M Warren and I White to replace Councillors R Blackman and P L Franklin.
 - 7.2 **Devolution Committee** – Councillors P L Franklin and I White to replace Councillors A X Smith and B M Warren.
 - 7.3 **Employment Committee** – Councillors P L Franklin and J M Harrison-Hicks to replace Councillors J V S Page and A X Smith.
 - 7.4 **Scrutiny Committee** – Councillor J V Harris to replace Councillor R Blackman.
 - 7.5 **Southover Grange Sub-Committee** – Councillors I A Nicholson and J V S Page to replace Councillors S B Davy and D R Edmunds.

- 7.6 Standards Committee** – Councillors J V Harris and P A Howson to replace Councillors J M Harrison-Hicks and H J F Sheppard.

Planning Applications Committee

- 8** The remit of the Planning Applications Committee states that the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Committee shall be from different geographical areas of the District (Council Procedure Rules, page W20, paragraph 1.1).
- 9** Due to officer oversight, the Chair and Vice-Chair currently appointed represent the same ward (Peacehaven East). As soon as this oversight was brought to the attention of the Leader of the Conservative Group, he requested that it be put right.
- 10** On subsequent consideration of this rule, the Corporate Head – Legal and Democratic Services does not regard it as serving sufficient purpose to warrant retaining it. All members of the Committee are subject to the rules on interests and influence in the usual way, regardless of which ward they represent, so this is an unwarranted restraint. It is therefore recommended that this restriction be lifted and the Constitution amended accordingly.

Standards Committee

- 11** The Head of Democratic Services has been notified by the District Association of Local Councils that Councillor Don McBeth of Ditchling Parish Council has been nominated to sit on the Council's Standards Committee as one of its three Town & Parish members. This position was previously vacant.

Financial Appraisal

- 12** There are no financial implications arising from this Report.

Environmental Implications

- 13** I have completed the Environmental Implications Questionnaire and there are no significant effects as a result of this Report.

Risk Management Implications

- 14** There are no risk management implications arising as a result of this Report. If the recommendations are not implemented, the main risk will be that the Council fails to meet its legal duties and the requirements of the Constitution are not met.

Equality Implications

- 15** I have completed the initial Equality Impact Assessment screening exercise and no potential negative impacts were identified as a result of this Report. Therefore, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Background Papers

- 16** Notice received from Councillor B Groves.
Notice received from Leader of the Conservative Group.

Appendix

- 17** Part 11, Section 8 - Remit of Planning Applications Committee