

Agenda Item No: 14 **Report No:** 30/15
Report Title: Changes to Memberships
Report To: Council **Date:** 25 February 2015
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Catherine Knight, Assistant Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer(s)-

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Purpose of Report:

To report a change in the membership of the Council.

To report a change in the composition of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Independent Group.

To confirm the changes and appointments to Committee memberships.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To note that notice was received from Councillor James Page stating that he wished to resign as a councillor from Lewes District Council.
 - 2 To note that notices have been received from Councillor Amanda Dean stating that she no longer wishes to be treated as a member of the Liberal Democrat Group or the Independent Group, and that she wishes to be treated as an Independent councillor.
 - 3 That the changes to the Committee memberships, as set out in paragraphs 13 and 15 of the Report, be confirmed and noted.
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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.

Change to membership of the Council

- 2 In December 2014, the Chief Executive received written notice from Councillor James Page stating that he wished to resign as a councillor from Lewes District Council.

- 3 In accordance with electoral legislation, as the vacancy occurred within six months before the day on which Councillor Page would regularly have retired, a by-election cannot take place and the vacancy will be filled at the next ordinary elections in May 2015.
- 4 Councillor Page's resignation creates a casual vacancy for an Outside Body representative on the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), Lewes & Seaford. Councillor Page had been the representative since May 2011 so was a Conservative councillor when first appointed to this Outside Body. On this basis, the Leader of the Conservative Group has been asked to put forward a representative.
- 5 In accordance with Council Procedure Rules for filling a vacancy on an Outside Body (Procedures for Appointments, page D24, paragraph 4.3), once Councillor Blackman has proposed a representative, the agreement of the other Group Leaders will be sought to the proposed appointment, pending confirmation at the next available Cabinet meeting.

Change to composition of Political Groups

- 6 The Chief Executive received written notice from Councillor Amanda Dean stating that she no longer wished to be treated as a member of the Liberal Democrat Group and that she wished to be treated as an Independent councillor.
- 7 The Chief Executive received a further written notice from Councillors Ruth O'Keeffe and Amanda Dean stating that they wished to form an Independent Group, as opposed to being standalone Independent councillors. Receipt of this notice triggered a review of the Council's political balance on committees as a new political group had been constituted.
- 8 The Chief Executive received a subsequent written notice from Councillor Amanda Dean stating that she no longer wished to be treated as a member of the Independent Group and that she wished to revert to being treated as an Independent councillor.
- 9 As Councillor Dean no longer wishes to be treated as a member of the Independent Group, this results in the demise of the Independent Group (as a political group must comprise two or more members) and its entitlement to seats on committees in its own right.
- 10 The political composition of the Council is now as follows:
 - Conservative Group – 19
 - Liberal Democrat Group – 17
 - UKIP Group – 2
 - Independent members – 2
- 11 The political proportionality figures for Committees and Other Bodies which reflect the Council's current composition are attached. For information, the Group Leaders have confirmed their wish to maintain the current position regarding previously gifted seats until the next review of proportionality in May

2015, namely one seat on Planning Applications Committee (gifted to Councillor O’Keeffe by the UKIP Group), one seat on Scrutiny Committee (gifted to Councillor O’Keeffe by the Conservative Group) and one seat on Scrutiny Committee (gifted to the Conservative Group by the UKIP Group, and occupied by Councillor Cyril Sugarman).

Committee memberships

- 12** The seats occupied by Councillor Dean on the Devolution Committee, Planning Applications Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Housing Consultative Panel continue to be seats which are allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group.
- 13** The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group has informed me that their Group wish to make changes to these committee memberships as follows:
 - 13.1 Devolution Committee** – Councillor Jon Stockdale to replace Councillor Amanda Dean.
 - 13.2 Planning Applications Committee** – Councillor Michael Chartier to replace Councillor Amanda Dean.
 - 13.3 Scrutiny Committee** – Councillor Steve Saunders to replace Councillor Amanda Dean.
 - 13.4 Housing Consultative Panel** – Councillor Ian Eiloart to replace Councillor Amanda Dean.
- 14** In accordance with Council Procedure Rules (Procedures for Appointments, page D23, paragraph 3.4), the Assistant Director of Corporate Services has made these appointments which now need to be confirmed formally by Council.
- 15** Following the review of political balance on committees, the only reallocation of seats required is the gain of one seat by the Conservative Group on Landport Bottom Management Committee, which was previously allocated to Councillor Ruth O’Keeffe when she formed an Independent Group with Councillor Sam Adeniji.
- 16** The Leader of the Conservative Group has been asked to indicate who his Group wish to appoint to the Landport Bottom Management Committee to fill this seat.

Financial Appraisal

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

Legal Implications

- 18** None over and above those set out in the body of this Report.

Sustainability Implications

- 19** There are no significant effects as a result of this Report.

Risk Management Implications

- 20** 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 Screening

- 21** No potential negative impacts were identified as a result of this Report. Therefore, a full Equality Analysis is not required.

Background Papers

- 22** None

Appendix

- 23** Current political balance on memberships of Committees and Other Bodies