

For publication

Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and Committee Appointments – 2016/17

Meeting:	Council
Date:	12 October, 2016
Report by:	Democratic Services Manager

1.0 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to review the political balance of Committees in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, following the notification to the Chief Executive of a change to political groups within Chesterfield Borough Council.

2.0 Recommendations

That the recent changes to the political composition of the Council be noted and that the following changes to the membership of committees as proposed by the political groups and shown at paragraph 4.1 be agreed.

3.0 Report details

Background

- 3.1 The Chief Executive was notified on 26 September, 2016 of a change to political groups within Chesterfield Borough Council. With effect from 5 October Councillor Jeannie Barr advised the Chief Executive that she was no longer a member of the Liberal Democrat Group and wished to be recognised as an Independent member.

3.2 The current composition of the Council is:

Labour:	38
Liberal Democrats:	8
UKIP:	1
Independent:	1

- 3.3 The last review of political balance took place at the Council's Annual meeting in April 2016. Wherever possible, Committees are constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. In terms of political balance, resulting from Councillor Jeannie Barr's resignation from the Liberal Democrat Group, it has been necessary to review the political balance of Committees.
- 3.4 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Section 15, requires Council to formally approve the revised political balance and revised allocation of places to the political groups in accordance with that political balance.
- 3.5 A local authority is treated as divided into political groups where at least one political group, which comprises at least two Members, is in existence.
- 3.6 The Council is obliged to review the representation of political groups and the determination of the allocation of seats in a number of prescribed instances and at least on an annual basis.
- 3.7 A determination of the allocation of seats by the Council must give effect to the following principles which are set out in Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The principles have to be applied in priority order as follows:-

(a) that not all the seats are allocated to the same political group;

(b) that the majority of seats are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group are a majority of the authority's membership;

c) subject to (a) and (b) above, that the total number of all seats

of the ordinary committees allocated to each particular political group reflects the group's proportion to the membership of the authority;

(d) subject to (a) – (c) above, that the number of seats allocated to a particular political group reflects that group's proportion of the membership of the authority.

- 3.8 Under the Local Government Act 2000, the Standards and Audit Committee is not subject to political balance requirements but by local choice the constitution says it will be politically balanced.
- 3.9 The effect of these principles is that, so far as practicable, seats should be allocated to the groups and individual members not in a political group in proportion to their membership as a whole, currently, Labour 38/48ths; Liberal Democrats 8/48ths, UKIP 1/48th and Independent 1/48th. Each of the calculations has been adjusted to ensure the total number of seats are apportioned.

Proposed allocations

- 3.10 Below is a table showing the proposed entitlements of the Groups. Where numbers appear in brackets they represent the change to the allocations agreed at the Annual Business Meeting of the Council held on 27 April, 2016.

Body	Majority Group	Lib Dem. Group	UKIP	Ind.
Planning Committee	12	3	0	0
Planning Sub Committee	2	1	0	0
Appeals and Regulatory Committee	11	3	1	0
Licensing Committee	12	1 (-1)	1	1(+1)
Employment and General Committee	5	1	0	0
Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum	11	2 (-1)	0	1(+1)

Body	Majority Group	Lib Dem. Group	UKIP	Ind.
Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee	6	2	0	0
Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	7	1	0	0
Standards and Audit Committee	4	1	0	0

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 That the recent changes to the political composition of the Council be noted and that the following changes to the membership of committees as proposed by the political groups be agreed:

Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum

- removal of Councillor J Barr as a Liberal Democrat member
- addition of Councillor J Barr as an Independent member

Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee

- removal of Councillor J Barr as a Liberal Democrat member
- addition of Councillor Niblock as a Liberal Democrat member

Licensing Committee

- removal of Councillor J Barr as a Liberal Democrat member
- addition of Councillor J Barr as an Independent member

Decision information

Key decision number	NA
Wards affected	ALL
Links to Council Plan priorities	To provide value for money services.

Document information

Report author	Contact number/email
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