

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCIL

29<sup>th</sup> June 2023

## Cabinet Member with Responsibility for HR and Corporate Services: Councillor Mike Hallam

Report Title	Changes to Political Balance and Committee Places
Report Author	Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:paul.hanson@westnorthants.gov.uk">paul.hanson@westnorthants.gov.uk</a>

### List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	15/06/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	15/06/2023
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	12/06/2023

### List of Appendices

None

#### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. This report invites the Council to review the changes to the political balance of the Council and approve changes to the membership of committees.

#### 2. Recommendations

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2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a. Notes the change to the distribution of seats held by political groups on the Council and determines the allocation of seats on committees to the groups as listed in Section 5;

- b. Appoints members to the committees listed in Section 5 below to give effect to the wishes expressed by the political groups to which the seats have been allocated.

### 3. Reason for Recommendations

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- 3.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council is required to review the allocation of committee seats when there is a change to the political balance of the Council. The Council is also responsible for appointing members to committees to give effect to such changes.

### 4. Report Background

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- 4.1 At its annual meeting on 18 May 2023, the Council confirmed the political balance of the Council and the allocation of seats on committees between Political Groups. Since that meeting, the number of seats held by the Conservative Group has reduced from 65 to 64. The member in question has now joined the independent group on the Council, increasing its membership to 3.
- 4.2 In order to maintain the correct political balance, this change has necessitated a recalculation of the allocation of places on the Council's committees. The allocation of seats between the committees is now as follows:

Committee	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrats	Independent Group	Un-grouped Independent	Total
Alcohol & Gambling Licensing Committee*	10 (was 11)	3	1	1 (was 0)	0	15
Taxi & General Licensing Committee*	10 (was 11)	3	1	1 (was 0)	0	15
Strategic Planning Committee	9	3	1	0	0	13
Planning Committee (North)	8	2	1	0	0	11
Planning Committee (South)	8	2	0	1	0	11
ASC & Health Scrutiny Committee	7	3	0	0	1	11
Corporate Scrutiny Committee	7	2	1	1	0	11
Children's Scrutiny Committee	8	2	1	0	0	11
Place Scrutiny Committee	8	2	0	1	0	11

Senior Appointments	5	2	0	0	0	7
Audit and Governance	6	2	1	0	0	9
Democracy and Standards	6	2	1	0	0	9
Pensions Committee	5	2	0	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>141</b>

- 4.3 In order to maintain the overall balance on the Council it is proposed to allocate seats on the Alcohol and Gambling and Taxi and General Licensing Committees to the independent group. The exact allocation to the Conservative Group on these committee has reduced from 10.5 seats to 10.3 each, necessitating the change. The Conservative Group have advised that Councillor Jake Roberts will be replaced by a member of the Independent Group with immediate effect.
- 4.4 Groups have also provided notice of the following changes to committee, which are included with this report for reference.

#### **Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Dermot Bambridge has stepped down from this Committee. He will be replaced by Councillor Jake Roberts. Councillor Alison Eastwood will become vice-chair.

#### **Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Daniel Cribbin has stepped down from this Committee. He will be replaced by Councillor Brian Sargeant.

#### **Local Pension Board**

Councillor Ken Pritchard has stepped down from this Committee. He will be replaced by Councillor Gregg Lunn.

### **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 Once the Council becomes aware of a change that affects the allocation of committee seats to political groups, it must review the allocation at the next available opportunity.

### **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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#### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

#### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 The Council has obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and its associated regulations to review the representation of political groups and determine the allocations of seats. This was last completed at the meeting of Annual Council on 18 May 2023. Since then, further changes have occurred that impact on the membership of political groups, requiring a further review to be undertaken.

### 6.3 **Risk**

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.'

### 6.4 **Consultation and Communications**

6.4.1 There are no implications arising from the proposals.

### 6.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 None. The allocation of seats to political groups is a matter that only the full Council may determine.

### 6.6 **Climate Impact**

6.6.1 None.

### 6.7 **Community Impact**

6.7.1 None.

## 7. **Background Papers**

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7.1 None.