

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Council	Date:	26 September 2019
Subject:	Political Balance on Committees - Review		
Report Of:	Jon McGinty, Head of Paid Service		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To make changes to the size and membership of Committees to ensure statutory political balance following the by-elections held on 25 July 2019.
- 1.2 To make consequential amendments to the Council's constitution.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE**

- (1) To increase the size of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (from 15 to 17 members), the Audit and Governance Committee (from 7 to 9 members) and the General Purposes Committee (from 7 to 9 members) with immediate effect;
- (2) To receive appointments from each political group represented on the Council to fill the new or vacant seats and reflect the changes on committees;
- (3) To authorise the Head of Paid Service, after consultation with the Monitoring Officer, to amend the Constitution to remove specific references to committee sizes from the Constitution;

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 By-elections were held in Barnwood Ward and Podsmead Ward on Thursday 25 July 2019. Both seats were gained by members of the Liberal Democrat Group, increasing the size of that group from 7 to 9 Councillors. Consequently, there is a need to review the political balance of the Council and make any necessary changes to the political composition of committees.

- 3.2 Table 1 below indicates the political balance of the Council before and after the by-elections

	Old Composition		New Composition	
	Seats	%	Seats	%
Conservative	21	53.8	20	51.3
Labour	10	25.6	9	23.1
Liberal Democrat	7	17.9	9	23.1
Other	1	2.5	1	2.5

- 3.3 To comply with the statutory requirement broadly to reflect the political balance of the Council on each committee (the rules do not apply to Cabinet) it is necessary to ensure that where one group has an overall majority on the Council, that group also has an overall majority on each committee and that the numerical parity of the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups is reflected, so far as possible, on each committee or on the total number of committee places, or both.
- 3.4 To deliver this balance across committees it is necessary to increase the size of the O&S, Audit and Governance and General Purposes Committee. The sizes of planning and Licensing Committees remain unchanged. It is also necessary to alter the political composition of Committees as follows

	Seats	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Other
Overview and Scrutiny	17 (+2)	9 (+1)	4	4 (+1)	0
Planning	13	7 (-1)	3	3 (+1)	0
Licensing & Enforcement	13	7	3	3	0
Audit and Governance	9 (+2)	5 (+1)	2	2 (+1)	0
General Purposes	9 (+2)	5 (+1)	2	2 (+1)	0

- 3.5 Because the sizes of Committees are set out in the Constitution it is necessary to formally amend the constitution to bring about these changes. To avoid this in future Council is asked to consider authorising the Head of Paid Service to amend the Constitution to remove specific committee sizes and allow Group Leaders to agree the political composition and size of Committees, with the Council reserving the right to have a final say if Group Leaders are unable to agree.
- 3.6 In accordance with Article 14.02(a) of the Council's Constitution, members of the General Purposes Committee were consulted on these proposals prior to their presentation to Council.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 None

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 None

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 To comply with statutory requirements to achieve and maintain political balance on Committees

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 None

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require the overall political balance of Council to be reflected in Committees (so far as possible) and to review the political balance when necessary (for example where the political balance changes as a result of a by-election). This report seeks to comply with those obligations.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 None

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

11.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact; therefore, a full PIA was not required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 None

Sustainability

12.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 None

Background Documents: None