

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 January 2022</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Political Balance on Committees and Various Appointments</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Head of Paid Service</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tanya Davies, Policy and Governance Manager</b>		
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>None</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the circumstances surrounding the review of political balance were not known until after the agenda had been published.

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To make changes to the membership of committees to ensure statutory political balance following Councillor Alastair Chambers' move to become an Independent Councillor.
- 1.2 To note the appointments to vacant seats on committees resulting from changes to the Cabinet.

### 2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (1) Approve the proposed changes to membership of Committees as set out in this report.
- (2) Receive and note the following nominations to Committees as required by the proposed changes:
  - Planning Committee – 1 additional seat (Liberal Democrat) – nomination to be sought.
  - Licensing and Enforcement Committee - – 1 additional seat (Liberal Democrat) – nomination to be sought.
  - Planning Policy Members Working Group – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Jaro Kubaszczyk

- (3) Note the following appointments to vacant seats resulting from changes to the Cabinet:
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Andrew Gravells
  - General Purposes Committee – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Andrew Gravells.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Councillor Alastair Chambers became an Independent Councillor on 26 January 2022. There are now 24 Conservative, 11 Liberal Democrat, 3 Labour, and 1 Independent Councillor. 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 change:

	Old Composition		New Composition	
	Seats	%	Seats	%
Conservative	25	64.10%	24	61.54%
Liberal Democrat	11	28.21%	11	28.21%
Labour	3	7.69%	3	7.69%
Other	0	0%	1	2.56%

3.3 When applied to the total number of committee seats (56) seats these percentages give the following aggregate entitlement (rounded up/down to the nearest whole seat) for each Group:

Conservative	61.54% of 56 =	<b>34</b> (34.46) (-2)
Liberal Democrat	28.21% of 56 =	<b>16</b> (15.8)
Labour	7.69% of 56 =	<b>4</b> (4.31)

**Variance in total seats = -2**

3.4 Noting that Independent Councillors, unless aligned as an independent group, have no entitlement to seats on Committees, when the same percentages are applied to the number of seats on each committee/body they give the following provisional entitlement to seats on each committee/body, rounded up or down to the nearest whole seat (the numbers in brackets represent any changes to the current committee composition):

Committee	Size	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	Other	Seat Variance
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16	10	5	1	0	0
Planning Committee	12	7(-1)	3	1	0	-1
Licensing and Enforcement Committee	12	7(-1)	3	1	0	-1
Audit and Governance Committee	8	5	2	1	0	0
General Purposes Committee	8	5	2	1	0	0
TOTAL	56	34	15	5	0	-2

3.5 The calculation above results in a total variance of -2 seats across all committees/bodies subject to political proportionality. To reach the total available number of seats (56), it is proposed that allocations are adjusted as follows:

Committee	Size	Con	Lib Dem	Lab	Other	Seat Variance
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16	10	5	1	0	0
Planning Committee	12	7	4	1	0	0
Licensing and Enforcement Committee	12	7	4	1	0	0
Audit and Governance Committee	8	5	2	1	0	0
General Purposes Committee	8	5	2	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

3.6 The number of seats based on proportionality and each political party's entitlement is therefore as follows:

	Provisional allocation	Entitlement to seats on committees/bodies based on proportionality/Widdicombe principles	Variation
<b>Conservative</b>	34	34	0
<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	16	17	+1
<b>Labour</b>	4	5	+1
<b>Other</b>	0	0	0

### **Other changes to committee roles and membership**

3.7 In accordance with the Constitution, representation on Planning Policy Member Working Group is not subject to the political balance rules, therefore it is proposed the allocation of seats is not changed. In May, the Labour Group chose not to take up their allocated seat and the Liberal Democrat Group instead appointed to that seat.

3.8 Councillor Gravells stood down from the Cabinet on 18 November 2021 and Councillor Stephanie Chambers was appointed as Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy on 1 January 2022. The Conservative Group has appointed Councillor Gravells to their vacant seats on Overview and Scrutiny Committee and General Purposes Committee.

### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

4.1 None

### **5.0 Environmental Considerations**

5.1 None.

## **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

6.1 None

## **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 To comply with statutory requirements to achieve and maintain political balance on Committees and to fill any vacant roles and seats on committees.

## **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

8.1 None

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

9.1 None

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

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 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.)

## **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 None

## **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

12.1 A PIA is not required.

## **13.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

13.1 None

### Sustainability

13.2 None

### Staffing & Trade Union

13.3 None

**Background Documents:** None