

Meeting:	Council	Date:	23 February 2023
Subject:	Review of Political Balance on Committees and Various Appointments		
Report Of:	Head of Paid Service		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Tanya Davies, Policy and Governance Manager		
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider changes to the membership of committees to ensure statutory political balance following Councillor Dawn Melvin's resignation from the Council and Councillor Brendon O'Donnell's move to become an Independent Councillor.
- 1.2 To note the appointments to vacant seats on committees and outside bodies resulting from the above.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) Note that no changes be made to the allocation of seats on Committees at this time and a further review will take place following the Westgate by-election.
- (2) Receive and note the following nominations to Committees as required by the proposed changes:
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Taylor.
 - Licensing and Enforcement Committee – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Kubaszczyk.
 - Planning Committee – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Campbell.
 - Audit and Governance Committee – 1 vacant seat (Conservative) – Councillor Morgan.
- (3) Note that Dawn Melvin will continue her term as the Council's representative on the Board of Gloucestershire Airport Limited.
- (4) Note that Councillor Finnegan has been appointed to the vacant position on the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel.

- (5) Note that Councillor Campbell be appointed to the vacant position on Gloucester Charities Trust.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Councillor Brendon O'Donnell became an Independent Councillor on 4 February 2023. Councillor Melvin resigned on 10 February 2023. There are now 22 Conservative, 11 Liberal Democrat, 3 Labour, 2 Independent Councillors and 1 vacancy. Consequently, there is a need to review the political balance of the Council and make any necessary changes to the political composition of committees and appointment to outside bodies.
- 3.2 Table 1 below indicates the political balance of the Council before and after the changes:

	Old Composition		New Composition	
	Seats	%	Seats	%
Conservative	24	61.54%	22	56.41%
Liberal Democrat	11	28.21%	11	28.21%
Labour	3	7.69%	3	7.69%
Other (including vacancies)	1	2.56%	3	7.69%

- 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	56.41% of 56 =	32 (31.58) (-2)
Liberal Democrat	28.21% of 56 =	16 (15.8)
Labour	7.69% of 56 =	4 (4.31)

Variance in total seats = -4

- 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	9 (-1)	5	1	0	-1
Planning Committee	12	7	3	1	0	-1
Licensing and Enforcement Committee	12	7	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	33	15	5	0	-3

- 3.5 The calculation above results in a total variance of -3 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
TOTAL	56	34	17	5	0	0

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
Conservative	32	34	+2
Liberal Democrat	16	17	+1
Labour	4	5	+1
Other	0	0	0

3.7 The position proposed above maintains the status quo, noting that a further review will be required following the by-election for the vacant seat.

3.8 As a result of the resignations, the Conservative Group is required to nominate Councillors to fill the vacant seats. The nominations are set out in Recommendation 2.1 (2).

3.9 Nominations to the Planning Policy Working Group and the Climate Change Working Group, which are not decision-making bodies and are not formally subject to political proportionality, will be reviewed following the by-election.

3.10 Regarding Outside Body positions, Dawn Melvin will continue her term as the Council's representative on the Board of Gloucestershire Airport Limited; Councillor Finnegan has already been appointed to the vacant seat on the Gloucestershire Policy and Crime Panel; and, it is proposed that Councillor Campbell be appointed to the vacant position on Gloucester Charities Trust.

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

Staffing & Trade Union

13.2 None

Background Documents: None