

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL****4 FEBRUARY 2015****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****CHANGE IN POLITICAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP -  
ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES,  
WORKING GROUPS AND LEADERSHIP OF THE OPPOSITION****1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Following the transfer of Councillor Hutchison from the Independent Group to the Conservative Group and the resulting change in political balance, it is a requirement that the Council reconsiders and determines the allocation of seats on Committees and Sub-Committees in accordance with the political balance rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, S15-17 (as amended) for the period to the Annual Meeting in May 2015.
- 1.2 The Council is also required to consider whether there is any change to politically balanced Working Groups for the period to the Annual Meeting in 2015.
- 1.3 The Council is requested to appoint a Leader of the Opposition.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **To approve the political balance percentages and number of seats allocated to each political group as set out in the table at paragraphs 3.3;**
- 2.2 **To approve the political groups' allocation of Councillors to each Committee as set out at paragraph 3.4;**
- 2.3 **To note that in accordance with the political balance rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, S15-17 (as amended) political balance is to be achieved in total across all the Committees and within all individual Committees requiring political balance and to note also that political balance applies to Sub-Committees as required.**
- 2.4 **To note that as a result of the change in political group membership, there is no change to the Governance Sub Committees, Chairs, Vice Chairs, Forums, Partnerships, Outside Organisations, Lead Members and memberships of the Working Groups apart from the Cattle Market and the Melton Local Plan.**
- 2.5 **To note that as a result of the change in political group membership and being a group of 3 or less Members, the Independent Group is entitled to 1 substitute on politically balanced Committees of 10/11 Members.**
- 2.6 **To approve the changes in membership and substitutes of Committees, the Cattle Market and Melton Local Plan Working Groups as set out in Appendix A and which are specifically as follows:-**
  - (a) **Councillor Hutchison to take the additional Conservative seats on the Policy, Finance & Administration and Rural, Economic and Environmental**

**Affairs Committees and fill the Conservative Group vacancy on the Cattle Market Working Group.**

- (b) The non-aligned single Councillor, Councillor Gordon, be allocated 2 seats, these being on the Governance and Planning Committees;**
- (c) Councillor Bush to fill the Labour Group vacancy on the Melton Local Plan Working Group.**
- (d) The Independent Group has advised the following and this is reflected in Appendix A :-**
  - (i) Councillor Freer-Jones is to replace Councillor Hutchison on the PFA Committee and Councillor Twitney is the group's Substitute on that Committee**
  - (ii) Councillor Freer-Jones is to replace Councillor Hutchison on the Local Plan Working Group**
- (e) The Independent Group to advise the Chief Executive of**
  - (i) the Councillor to be removed from the Planning Committee**
  - (ii) the Substitute Councillor to the Planning Committee**
  - (iii) the Substitute Councillor to be removed from the REEA Committee**

**The Chief Executive thereafter to exercise her delegated authority.**

**2.7 To approve that Councillor Bush, being the Leader of the Labour Group, be appointed the Leader of the Opposition due to the Labour Group being the largest opposition group in accordance with Paragraph 2.2(e), Key Roles, Part 2, Articles of the Constitution. The Leader of the Opposition payment be made to Councillor Bush of £670.94 per annum.**

### **3.0 KEY ISSUES**

**3.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Sections 15-17 (as amended) explains that the Council is required to allocate seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance of the Council. The Act also states that political balance is required not only across the Committees but also within each Committee and Sub-Committee.**

**3.2 Where political balance requirements apply, the Council may vary the requirements by resolution provided that no Member of the Council votes against the resolution. Political groups are not entitled to have more than their allocated share of seats.**

**3.3 The following table shows the number of Councillors in each political group, the percentage of representation required within the Council and the allocation of seats over the 6 Committees that are required to be politically balanced :-**

<b>Group</b>	<b>No. of Councillors</b>	<b>Percentage</b>		<b>Allocation of Seats over 6 Committees</b>
Conservative	20	71%	(71.43)	40.47 = 41*
Labour	4	14%	(14.28)	7.98 = 8
Independent Group	3	11%	(10.71)	6.27 = 6
Single Councillor	1	4%	(3.57)	2.28 = 2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99.99</b>	<b>57 seats</b>

\* highest decimal number rounded up to meet the 57 seat requirement

3.4 The following table shows the allocation of seats in accordance with political balance given the percentages involved :-

2014/15	APP	CSA	PLNG	GOV	PFA	REEA	TOTAL
Conservative	3 (3.55%)	7 (7.10%)	8 (7.81%)	7 (7.10%)	8 (7.10%)	8 (7.81%)	<b>41</b>
Labour	1 (0.70%)	2 (1.40%)	1 (1.54%)	1 (1.40%)	1 (1.40%)	2 (1.54%)	<b>8</b>
Independent	1 (0.55%)	1 (1.10%)	1 (1.21%)	1 (1.10%)	1 (1.10%)	1 (1.21%)	<b>6</b>
Single Cllr	0 (0.2%)	0 (0.4%)	1 (0.44%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.4%)	0 (0.44%)	<b>2</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>57</b>

3.5 Paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 show that the main change in the allocation of seats on the above Committees as a result of the change in political group membership is that the Conservative Group has gained 2 seats and the Independent Group has lost 2 seats.

3.6 As mentioned above in 3.1, the seats must balance across Committees and within Committees. The 3 main groups balance across Committees and the non-aligned Single Councillor has been allocated the remaining 2 seats. Officers have been advised of the wishes of the Conservative, Labour and Independent Groups. These are that the Conservative Group receive an additional seat on each of the PFA and REEA Committees, the Independent Group loses a seat on the Planning and REEA Committees. The Labour Group has indicated that their preference is to have the extra seat (of a 10 seat committee) on CSA and the Labour Group does not wish to take up its second seat on Planning. The allocation for the Single Councillor is 2 seats and these are to be on the Planning and Governance Committees. Which follows political balance allocations.

3.7 It be noted that the latest position of the Governance Sub Committees 1 and 2 is as follows. The percentages could allow for the Conservative Group to take an additional seat however in the interests of fairness and ensuring political proportionality when dealing with complaints against Members, the status quo is proposed.

2014/15	Governance Sub Cttees 1 & 2	TOTAL
Conservative	3.55%	<b>3</b>
Labour	0.70%	<b>1</b>
Independent	0.55%	<b>1</b>
Single Cllr	0.2%	<b>0</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>5</b>

3.8 The Licensing & Regulatory Committee does not require to be politically balanced and is therefore not included in the political balance calculations.

3.9 Under the political balance position applied in paragraph 3.3, the Council is to consider political balance of the Working Groups where this is required. There is no change to the political balance of the Working Groups however there are some membership changes which are shown within the recommendations at 2.5.

3.10 Appendix A sets out the political groups' membership proposals to the relevant Committees and the nominations to the Cattle Market and Melton Local Plan Working Groups for the period to the Annual Meeting in May 2015 as also explained within recommendation 2.5.

3.11 Under the terms of the Council's Substitute Policy, it is to be noted that as a result of the change in political group membership and being a group of 3 or less Members, the Independent Group is now entitled to 1 substitute on politically balanced Committees of 10/11 Members and this is reflected in Appendix A and paragraphs 2.5(d) and (e) above.

3.12 Under Part 2 of Articles of the Constitution, Key Roles para. 2.2(e) Leader of the Opposition states: *The Council recognises other Group Leaders and will appoint a Leader of the Opposition, being the Leader of the largest opposition group.* The recent change in political group membership has resulted in the Labour Group having one more Member than the Independent Group therefore it is the largest opposition group and as such its Leader may be appointed the Leader of the Opposition and receive the associated payment for this role of £670.94 per annum.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Council has followed its existing arrangements, practices and procedures in seeking the wishes of the Political Groups set out in this report.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme is within the Corporate and Democratic Budget and there is provision for the Leader of the Opposition payment within that budget.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 The legislation relating to political balance and associated interpretation is contained within this report.

#### **7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no community safety implications in this report.

#### **8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 The Council has an equal opportunities and diversity policy and Councillors are required to receive training on equalities. Therefore when appointing Members to their roles, it is assumed that Group Leaders would take equalities issues into consideration.

#### **9.0 RISKS**

9.1 There are no risk implications in this report.

#### **10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no climate change implications in this report.

#### **11.0 CONSULTATION**

11.1 There has been consultation with the political Group Leaders.

## 12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards are affected by this report.

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Contact Officer: Senior Democracy Officer

Date: January 2015

Appendices : Appendix A - Membership of Committees 2014/15

Background Papers: Local Government & Housing Act 1989, S15-17 (as amended)

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