

Report To: Council

Date of Meeting: 23 May 2017

Lead Officer: Democratic Services Manager

Report Author: Democratic Services Manager

Title: Annual Review of Political Balance and Appointment of Scrutiny Chairs

1. What is the report about?

This report contains information and requests decisions on committee-related issues.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Following the elections to the County Council on the 4 May 2017 this report requests confirmation of the membership of the political groups and the executive (Cabinet) arrangements.

This will allow the allocation of seats on the Council's committees which are scheduled to meet from the beginning of June.

The Council's Licensing Sub-Committee undertakes a quasi-judicial role in determining applications made under the Licensing Act 2003. The Act places strict timescales for the Council to determine applications and in accordance with these timescales a Sub-Committee meeting has been scheduled for the 5 June 2017. A Sub-Committee comprises 3 members of the full Licensing Committee and members will require training on licensing matters. Training can be arranged before the Sub-Committee meets. Previous members of the last Licensing Committee who have completed the requisite training are Councillors Joan Butterfield, Hugh Irving, Barry Mellor, Pete Prendergast and Huw Williams.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- (i) That Council considers the updated position (to be reported at the meeting) in relation to the membership of the political groups, the executive (Cabinet) arrangements and the allocation of the Scrutiny Committee chairing positions;
- (ii) That Council agrees the appointment of the Chair and membership of the Democratic Services Committee for the 2017 / 18 municipal year, subject to any changes notified by the Groups;
- (iii) That Council appoints 2 councillors to the Standards Committee.

4. Report details.

4.1 Committee Timetable

The new municipal year begins with the Annual Meeting of Council in May. The current timetable of committee meetings continues until the end of 2017 and is attached as Appendix 1. A draft timetable for 2018 is being prepared and will be brought to Council for consideration in July.

4.2 Annual Review of Political Balance

The Council is required to consider at least annually how the membership of its committees relates to the political balance of the Groups. At the time of writing this report the political groups on the Council had not formed after the recent elections though the process was underway and should be confirmed by the time Council meets.

Eligibility to sit on or chair certain committees may be dictated by certain factors. For example, whether or not a member is on Cabinet, the political group they are a member of, or whether all the political groups appoint members to Cabinet.

4.3 Democratic Services Committee

Section 11 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Council to appoint a committee to review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge democratic services functions, and to make reports and recommendations to the authority in relation to such provision.

The members of the Democratic Services Committee must be appointed by Full Council. There are to be no co-opted members. Under the Measure there may be no more than one member of the Cabinet on the Committee (who cannot be the Leader), but Council in May 2012 decided that the membership would be 11 councillors and would not include members of the Cabinet.

The Committee must be politically balanced and Council must appoint its chair who must not be a member of any of the political groups represented on the Cabinet.

4.4 Appointment of Chairs of Scrutiny Committees

There are three Scrutiny Committees and the allocation of the chairing positions is determined by the principles laid down in the 2011 Local Government (Wales) Measure. These allocations are based on the political make-up of the Cabinet and the Council which were not known at the time this report was written.

Neither the Measure nor the associated statutory guidance make provisions for changing or re-appointing scrutiny chairs, except where the political make-up of Cabinet changes or where a scrutiny chair is vacated for some reason. Any future changes to the appointment of chairs would therefore be a matter for the political groups entitled to allocate Scrutiny chairing positions to decide.

4.5 Standards Committee

The Council's Standards Committee membership includes 2 county councillors appointed by Council. There is no requirement for political balance in respect of these appointments and Council is therefore requested to appoint 2 members to the Committee.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The decisions and information arising from this report are central to the functioning of the democratic and committee systems which are essential elements of the Council's governance arrangements and contribute to the Council's corporate priorities.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The costs of maintaining a committee system are covered within existing budgets but the Council in 2015 made a commitment through its *Freedoms and Flexibilities* process to reduce the number of committee meetings being held to save the associated costs. Services throughout the Council may contribute to the meetings included in the timetable, usually by contributing information, reports and officer time.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

A Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

The annual timetable of meetings is an established process and meets the aims of the Equality Act. The principal 'service users' are the members of the committees and supporting officers although the press and public are also able to attend most meetings the interest of individuals or groups is likely to depend on the topic under consideration.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The issues covered in this report are being consulted upon with the political groups and all members of the Council.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no additional costs arising from the recommendations in this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Failure to confirm councillors' roles and membership of committees would be detrimental to the Council's governance arrangements.

11. Power to make the Decision

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972; Local Government and Housing Act 1989; Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.