

Part A

**Report to:** Council

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday, 25 May 2021

**Report author:** Democratic Services Manager

**Title:** Establishment of Committees and Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 Council Procedural Rule 1.2 provides for nominations for membership of Committees and Sub-Committees to be made by the political groups (as designated under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.)

1.2 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Regulations require that seats on ordinary Committees are allocated in accordance with political balance. This provision also extends to scrutiny committees as they are being set up directly by the Council.

**2.0 Risks**

2.1

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	<b>Risk Rating</b> (combination of severity and likelihood)
Not complying with the principles of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Regulations	Could leave the council open to challenge	Groups have been asked to make nominations and any vacancies will be voted on at the meeting	Treat	2

### 3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Council unanimously agrees that the Standards Committee is not politically balanced - see paragraph 4.4.1.
- 3.2 That Council agrees the establishment of politically balanced committees as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.
- 3.3 The Council agrees the establishment of non-politically balanced committees as set out in paragraph 4.2.
- 3.4 The Council agrees the appointment of Members to politically balanced committees as set out in paragraph 4.3.1 of the report and Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The Council appoints chairs and vice chairs to the committees listed in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 and Appendix 1.

#### Further information:

Sandra Hancock  
Sandra.Hancock@Watford.gov.uk

**Report approved by:** Group Head of Democracy and Governance

### 4.0 Detailed proposal

#### 4.1 Politically balanced committees

1.	Licensing Committee	15 seats
2.	Development Management Committee	9 seats
3.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 seats
4.	Finance Scrutiny Committee	9 seats
5.	Council Functions Committee	7 seats
6.	Audit Committee	5 seats
7.	Chief Officer Pay Panel	5 seats
8.	Appointments and Disciplinary Committee	5 seats
9.	Appeals Panel	5 seats
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69 seats</b>

## 4.2 Non-politically balanced committees

1.	Major Projects Forum	7 seats (at least one from each Group)
2.	Constitution Working Party	7 seats (at least one from each Group)
3.	Member Development Group	Up to 10 seats (at least one from each Group).
4.	Planning Policy Advisory Group	9 Members (at least one from each Group one of whom must be the Planning Portfolio holder).
5.	Housing Policy Advisory Group	7 members (at least one from each Group including the Portfolio Holder)
6.	Standards Committee	5 seats (3 Lib Dems + 2 opposition)
7.	Sustainability Forum	9 seats (at least one from each Group)
8.	Health and Wellbeing Forum	9 seats (at least one from each Group including the Community Portfolio Holder)

4.3 Seats on politically balanced committees are allocated on a proportional basis of 46 to the Liberal Democrat Group, 19 to the Labour Group and 4 to the Independent Democrats.

4.3.1 Seats on committees have been allocated as follows:

			<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>Ind Dem</b>
1.	Licensing Committee	<b>15 seats</b>	10	4	1
2.	Development Management Committee	<b>9 seats</b>	6	3	
3.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	<b>9 seats</b>	6	2	1

4.	Finance Scrutiny Committee	<b>9 seats</b>	6	2	1
5.	Council Functions	<b>7 seats</b>	5	1	1
6.	Audit Committee	<b>5 seats</b>	3	2	
7.	Chief Officer Pay Panel	<b>5 seats</b>	3	2	
8.	Appointments and Disciplinary Committee	<b>5 seats</b>	4	1	
9.	Appeals Panel	<b>5 seats</b>	3	2	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69 seats</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>

4.3.2 Group leaders have been asked to nominate Members to committees. Any seats not agreed beforehand will be dealt with at the Annual Council meeting.

4.3.3. Members should note that members of the Cabinet cannot sit on a scrutiny committee and that the Mayor is not included for the purpose of political balance and therefore cannot be appointed to any of these committees.

#### 4.4 **Non-politically balanced committees**

##### 4.4.1 **Standards Committee**

The Localism Act 2011 resulted in a large number of changes to the Standards regime which came into effect on 1 July 2012.

At its annual meeting in May 2012 council established a Standards Committee which took effect from 1 July 2012 comprising five elected members of the Council. Council agreed unanimously that the committee would not be constituted on the lines of proportionality. If Council wishes to continue this approach then it must again unanimously agree that the committee is not constituted on the lines of proportionality.

The Mayor cannot be appointed to this committee.

##### 4.4.2 **Major Projects Forum, Constitution Working Party, Planning Policy Advisory Group, Housing Policy Advisory Group, Sustainability Forum, Health and Wellbeing Forum**

These are not decision making bodies and should include at least one Member from each Group. Planning Policy Advisory Group, Housing Policy Advisory Group and Health and Wellbeing Forum should include the relevant portfolio holders.

#### **4.4.3 Member Development Group**

This Group comprises up to 10 members and should include at least one representative from each political group who will act as training champion to encourage members of their Group to participate in training and development activities. In 2018/19 the Group took on the role of Champions for the Members Portal. During 2019/20 members tested the forms which were developed as part of the Watford 2020 Programme. The forms have been completed and are live. During 2020/21 the group reviewed the forms and provided officers with suggestions for updates. This will continue through the forthcoming year.

#### **4.5 Licensing Committee**

The Council is required to have a Licensing Committee. It is able to appoint sub-committees of three members from the main committee to deal with:

- Determining new and variation applications submitted under the Licensing Act 2003 where representations have been received.
- Conducting reviews of premises' licences and club premises' certificates as requested.
- Gaming machine applications for licensed premises requesting five or more machines.
- Conducting reviews of gaming premises as required.
- Determining new and variation applications submitted under the Gambling Act where representations have been received.
- Consideration of appeals from licensed hackney carriage/private hire drivers when their licence is being revoked by the Council.
- Determining Temporary Event Notices when representations had been received. These hearings have to be held at short notice.

Hearings usually take place during the day. Chairs of the sub committees are elected at each meeting and for that meeting only.

#### **4.6 Nominations from Political Groups**

4.6.1 Group Leaders have been asked to consider and agree nominations prior to Annual Council. Nominations received so far are attached as Appendix 1. Any appointments not determined in this way will be put to the Annual Council meeting and agreed through a voting process.

- 4.6.2 Members are also required to agree the appointment of chairs and vice chairs to the committees listed in 3.1 and 3.1.2 above.

The Planning Policy Advisory Group, Housing Policy Advisory Group, Major Projects Forum and Health and Wellbeing Forum are chaired by the Portfolio Holders.

As agreed at Constitution Working Party, the Chair of Finance Scrutiny should be drawn from the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Nominations received are shown in Appendix 1.

- 4.6.3 Groups should have regard to the specific training requirements which **must** be undertaken by all members of the Development Management and Licensing Committees. Members who do not undertake the relevant training are unable to participate in meetings of these committees, including acting as replacements or debating related issues at Council meetings. It is therefore advisable for all councillors to undergo training in these areas regardless of whether they are actual members of the Licensing or Development Management Committees. It was also agreed at Council that members should have scrutiny training every two years in order to sit on the scrutiny committees.

During the COVID-19 pandemic all training was arranged as a virtual meeting and this will be continued during 2021/22, at least for the first few months.

## 5.0 **Implications**

### 5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications.

### 5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the legal implications are set out in the report.

### 5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

- 5.3.1 The allocation of seats is carried out in accordance with Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Regulations, which require that seats on ordinary committees are allocated in accordance with political balance.

#### 5.3.2 Data Protection Impact Assessment

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

## 5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 None.

## 5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 None.

## 5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 None.

## 5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Nominations to committees and positions of chairs and vice-chairs

### **Background papers**

Emails to groups from Democratic Services Manager

Completed nomination forms from the political groups