



Council

on 18 July 2011

Report Title: **Changes to Political Groups, Appointments to Committees & Sub Bodies.**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): n/a

Report of: **Chief Executive**

Wards(s) affected:

Report for: Non key decision.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To note the changes to Political Groups as notified to the Chief Executive.
- 1.2 To agree changes to Committee memberships.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the changes to Political Group composition as detailed in paragraphs 8.1 & 8.2 be noted.
- 2.2 That the resultant changes to Council body memberships as detailed in paragraphs 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9 be agreed.

Report Authorised by: **Chief Executive**

Contact Officer: **Ken Pryor, Deputy Head of Local Democracy and Member Services**
Tel: **0208 489 2915**

3. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 3.1 The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted on this report and confirms that there will be a saving in Special Responsibility Allowances of £7875. There are no other financial implications.

4. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 4.1 The report sets out those Council bodies to which the political balance rules apply.

The 1989 Act requires political balance in the distribution of seats on committees to be undertaken “so far as is reasonably practicable” thus recognising that a mathematically precise split between political parties cannot always be achieved.

4.2 The rules in section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 require that a party with a majority on full Council shall have a majority of seats on each non-executive body and this rule takes precedence over the rules requiring an exact political balance on those bodies individually and taken as a whole.

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Background papers

5.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

5.2 Local Government Act 2000.

5.3 Report to Annual Council on Committee Appointments

The background papers are located at River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ.

To inspect them or to discuss this report further, please contact Ken Pryor on 0208 489 2915.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The proposed reduction in membership of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will result in a saving of one band 1 Special Responsibility Allowance of £7875.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to ensure there is political balance on its non-executive Committees so far as reasonably practicable.

8. Background

8.1 The Chief Executive was notified on 13 July 2011 of a change to Political Groups within Haringey. With effect from that date Councillor Weber indicated that she would serve as an “Independent Liberal Democrat Councillor” for the Crouch End Ward.

8.2 The Annual Meeting appoints Committees of the Council. Wherever possible bodies are constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in terms of political balance. Resulting from Councillor Weber becoming an Independent Liberal Democrat Councillor the proportionality split is as follows: Labour Councillors now constitute 59.65% of the available seats on the Council; Liberal Democrat Councillors occupy 36.84%, and the Independent Members occupy the remaining 3.51% of seats. Where practicable the allocation of seats on Committees should be in line with the proportion of seats on the Council held by the political groups. The rule about proportionate allocation of seats on bodies overall takes

precedence over the rule about proportionate allocation on any individual body.

- 8.3 There is no requirement to offer a seat to a single member as they do not constitute a "political group" under the definition in the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (S.I. 1553) Regulation 8.
- 8.4 In calculating the allocation of seats on Committees, the following bodies were excluded because they are excluded from the statutory rules on political balance:
 - the Cabinet and its subordinate bodies
 - the disciplinary pool
 - the Standards Committee and
 - other Committees where membership is determined on the basis of electoral ward represented (eg. Area Committees)
- 8.5 With the advent of Independent members, the ability to achieve a precise balance is more difficult.
- 8.6 The number of seats available on Committees and Sub-Committees is 52. Of this number 30 or 57.69% are allocated to the Labour Group and 22 or 42.31% to the Liberal Democrat Group.
- 8.7 The Liberal Democrat Group have requested that Councillor Winskill be appointed as Chair of the Crouch End, Hornsey and Stroud Green Area Committee. Assuming that the Council confirm this appointment, it will result in Councillor Winskill also sitting on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as an Area Committee Chair. He currently sits on Overview & Scrutiny Committee as an additional member.
- 8.8 It is proposed that the number of Liberal Democrat places on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be reduced therefore by one, giving a 5/3 split. This will result in a reduction of one band 1 Special Responsibility Allowance. The adjusted proportionality split in the number of Committee and Sub-Committee seats will result in the Labour Group will occupying 30 or 58.82% and the Liberal Democrat Group occupying 21 or 41.18%.
- 8.9 Councillor Weber will now be shown as an Independent Liberal Democrat Councillor on the Crouch End, Hornsey and Stroud Green Area Committee membership.
- 8.10 Changes to appointments can be made at any stage during the Municipal Year with the changes being reported to the Council as appropriate.