

Report for: Full Council 19 July 2021

Title: **Change to Political composition and Appointments to Committees 2021/22**

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Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non-Key Decision:** Non-Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

- To note the changes to the political groups as notified to the Chief Executive.
- To agree a change to the Committee Memberships

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Council is asked to:
1. Note the changes to the political composition set out at paragraph 4.3.
 2. To agree the resultant changes to Council Committee memberships as detailed in paragraph 4.6 and attached at Appendix 1.

4. Background information

- 4.1 On the 28th of May 2021, the Chief Executive was informed by Cllr James Chiriyankandath in writing that he no longer wished to be treated as a member of the Labour group; This was in accordance with Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 – 10b.
- 4.2 Cllr Chiriyankandath further notified the Council of his resignation from the Pensions Committee and Board.
- 4.3 The political balance of the Council of 57 councillors is now as follows:

Labour	41 councillors (71.9%)
Liberal Democrats	15 councillors (26.3%)
Independent	1 Councillor (1.75%)

- 4.4 The Council is required to ensure that appointments to which the statutory political balance rules apply are made in accordance with those rules. The relevant rules are summarised below (see paragraph). The Annual Meeting of the Council appoints Committees of the Council in accordance with Article 4.02(k) of the Constitution. The Council is required to comply with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 in terms of political balance when appointing 'ordinary' committees – that is, committees appointed under section 102(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972.

These rules provide that seats on 'ordinary' committees must be allocated in line with the following principles, so far as reasonably practicable:

- (a) that not all the seats on a body are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to the political group which has the majority of the Council's membership;
 - (c) that, subject to principles (a) and (b) above, the proportion of seats allocated to each political group out of the total number of seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council shall be in the same proportion as their share of membership of the Council as a whole; and
 - (d) that, subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, the number of seats on each individual body shall be allocated to each political group in the same proportion as their share of membership of the Council as a whole.
- 4.5 The number of seats currently available on Ordinary Committees is 56. The seat number increased from the previous Municipal year number of 47 due to decommissioning of the Regulatory Committee and establishment of the Licensing Committee and Strategic Planning Committee.
- 4.6 The Independent Member could not remain on the Pensions Committee and Board as this a Council Member membership of 6 with 4 Labour Members and 2 Liberal Democrat Members and would mean that compliance with rule 4.4(b) was not possible. The Labour Chief Whip advised on the 5th of July, the nomination of Cllr Pat Berryman to the Pensions Committee and Board for Full Council agreement, giving effect to the wishes of the Labour group.
- 4.7 It has been the past practice to appoint Independent Members to the Corporate Committee. However, the Independent Member has indicated that he does not wish to take up this seat for this Municipal year. There are currently 9 Labour members and 3 Liberal Democrat Members on the Corporate Committee. Reducing the Labour group allocation by 1 seat and allocating the seat to the Liberal Democrat Group would mean that in consequence, Labour would receive 40 Committee seats (71.4% of the total number of seats available) and Liberal Democrats 16 seats (28.6% of the total number). The Liberal Democrat group would therefore have a percentage of Committee seats that is 2.3% higher than their percentage share of the total number of councillors and

Labour group would have 0.5% lower percentage share. Keeping to the current seat allocation of 41 Labour and 15 Liberal Democrat would mean that Labour has 73.2% of the total number of seats and this is 1.2% higher percentage share, and the Liberal Democrats would have 26.8% percentage allocation which is 0.5% higher percentage share.

4.8 Therefore, keeping to the current seat allocation means, both Political parties have a slightly higher percentage allocation, and the Council is complying with the principle set out at paragraph 4.4(c) above, so far as reasonably practicable. The fact that there is an Independent councillor, who does not wish to take up a committee place, means that strict compliance with the principle set out at paragraph 4.4(c) is not possible.

4.9 In calculating the allocation of seats on ordinary committees, the following bodies were excluded because these bodies are excluded from the statutory rules on political balance:

- The Cabinet.
- The disciplinary pool.
- Licensing Sub-Committees (Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Committee).
- The Health and Wellbeing Board.

4.10 Changes to appointments can be made at any stage during the Municipal Year with the changes being reported to the Council as appropriate.

5. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities) Finance and Procurement

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report.

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5.2 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.

5.3 In section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, principle (b) states that a party with a majority on full Council shall have a majority of seats on each individual body. This principle takes precedence over principles (c) and (d) which require political groups to be represented on the ordinary committees taken as a whole and on the bodies individually in proportion to their representation on Full Council.

5.4 Principle (c) concerning proportionate allocation of seats across all the ordinary committees of the council takes precedence over the principle (d) concerning proportionate allocation on any individual body.

6. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Committee Memberships

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

7.1 Background documents:

- *Appointments to Cttees 2021- 22*
- *Haringey Council's Constitution*

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

7.3 To inspect them or to discuss this report further, please contact Ayshe Simsek on 0208 489 2929.