



Haringey Council

Agenda item: **7**

**Council**

**on 20 July 2009**

Report Title: **Changes to Political Groups, Cabinet Portfolios and Appointments to Committees and 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 membership numbers resulting from the recent changes in political group composition.
- 1.3 To agree changes to Cabinet portfolios.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the changes to Political Group composition as detailed in paragraph 8.1 be noted.
- 2.2 That the membership of the Audit Committee be increased by one Conservative position in order to reflect proportionality in the overall number of seats on the Council.
- 2.3 That the resultant changes to Council body memberships as detailed in paragraphs 8.5 & 8.6 be agreed.
- 2.4 That the changes to Cabinet portfolios and reduction of one Cabinet member, as detailed in Appendix 1, 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 comments that there will be a resultant saving to Special Responsibility Allowances of £23,691 arising from the proposed reduction of one Cabinet Member. The remaining changes detailed in this report will have no direct 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 There must be two or more Members to constitute a "political group" which has a legal right to be allocated seats on Committees.

### **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 There will be a resultant saving of £23,691 to Special Responsibility Allowances arising from the proposed reduction of one Cabinet Member.

### **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to ensure there is political balance on its Committees.

### **8. Background**

8.1 The Chief Executive was notified on 8 July 2009 of a change to Political Groups within Haringey. With effect from that date, Councillor Dobbie ceased to be a member of the Labour Party and the Labour Group and will sit as a Conservative Councillor until the next Council elections.

- 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 Dobbie resigning from the Labour Party and becoming a Conservative Councillor, consideration was given to proportionality across Committees. Labour Councillors now constitute 54.39% of the available seats on the Council; the Liberal Democrats occupy 43.86% and Conservatives occupy the remaining 1.75% of the 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. Although 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, it is nevertheless proposed that a seat be offered.
- 8.3 In calculating the allocation of seats on Committees, the following bodies were excluded:
- the Cabinet and its subordinate bodies
  - the disciplinary pool
  - Licensing Committee
  - the Standards Committee and
  - other Committees where membership is determined on the basis of electoral ward represented (eg. Area Assemblies)
- 8.4 It is proposed that the number of seats available on Committees and Sub-Committees, as agreed at the Annual Meeting, be increased by one on the Audit Committee and that the Audit Committee be now based on a membership of 8 with a 4/3/1 split to the Labour Group. All other membership numbers would remain unchanged. On this basis a total of 64 seats were available on Committees and Sub-Committees; 35 or 54.69% are allocated to the Labour Group, 28 or 43.75% to the Liberal Democrat Group and 1 or 1.56% to the Conservative Party.
- 8.5 Councillor Dobbie will be offered a seat on the Audit Committee. Councillor Dobbie will also now be shown as a Conservative member on the Wood Green Area Assembly membership.
- 8.6 The Labour Group have also notified the following committee changes:
- Councillor Cooke to replace Councillor Bob Harris on Pensions Committee.
  - Councillor Dodds to replace Councillor Jones on Standards Committee.
- 8.7 Councillor Cooke resigned as a Cabinet Member on 17 June 2009. It is proposed that the position is not filled and that the portfolio of the former Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise be divided amongst those Cabinet Members as shown in the attached Appendix. It should be noted that Planning Policy has now been split with the policy relating to spatial planning being the responsibility of the Leader

and policy relating to development control and building control being the responsibility of Cllr Canver.

- 8.8 Resulting from the reduction in the number of Cabinet members it will be necessary to amend Article 7 Paragraph 7.02 of the Constitution, which requires there to be precisely 9 Cabinet Members apart from the Leader. This suspension will have effect until a further review of the necessary Constitutional changes arising from the Council's preferred Leadership model has been made. There is a separate report and recommendation on this issue from the Constitution Review Working Group.
- 8.9 Changes to appointments can be made at any stage during the Municipal Year with the changes being reported to the Council as appropriate.