



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

Council

on 17 January 2011

Report Title: **Changes to Political Groups, Appointments to Committees & Sub Bodies and change of date of the next Council meeting.**

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.
- 1.3 To note the change of date of the next Council meeting.

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 be agreed.
- 2.3 That the change of date of the next Council meeting to 24 February 2011 be noted (paragraph 9.2).

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 is supportive of the need to change the date of the Council meeting and has no further specific comment to make given that the other changes detailed 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 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 There are no changes to Member allowances or to Special Responsibility Allowances arising from this report.

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 9 December 2010 of a change to Political Groups within Haringey. With effect from that date Councillor Davies resigned from the Liberal Democrat Group and indicated that he would sit as an Independent Councillor representing the Fortis Green 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 Davies resigning from the Liberal Democrat Group and becoming an Independent Councillor, Labour Councillors now constitute 59.65% of the available seats on the Council; Liberal Democrat Councillors occupy 38.6%, and the Independent Member

occupies the remaining 1.75% 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:
- 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)
- 8.5 With the advent of an Independent member, the ability to achieve a precise balance is more difficult.
- 8.6 The number of seats available on Committees and Sub-Committees as agreed by Council on 24 May 2010 was 67. Of this number 39 or 58.21% are allocated to the Labour Group and 28 or 41.79% to the Liberal Democrat Group.
- 8.7 Councillor Bloch will fill the vacant position on the General Purposes Committee.
- 8.8 Councillor Davies will now be shown as an Independent member on the Muswell Hill Area Assembly membership.
- 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.
- 9. Change of date of next meeting.**
- 9.1 It is necessary to alter the date of the Council tax setting meeting as the GLA will not be confirming their precept until 23 February 2011.
- 9.2 Consequently it is proposed that the Council tax setting meeting be held on Thursday 24 February 2011.