

**COUNCIL MEETING
17 NOVEMBER 1999**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989: ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND
APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES
(Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Councillor Mrs Doyle notified the Chief Executive of her resignation from the Conservative Group on 19 July 1999. This report deals with the resulting issues which the Council will need to address to ensure that the allocation of seats on Committees and main Sub-Committees continues to follow the principles set down in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Council is consequently requested to consider any alterations necessary to current arrangements and to make any resultant changes in Committee appointments.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That:

- (i) for the remainder of the current municipal year, the total number of seats on ordinary Committees appointed by the Council shall be 101;
- (ii) that seats be allocated to party groups as follows:
- Conservative Group – 55 Labour Group – 44**
- (iii) Members be appointed to serve on the following Committees in accordance with nominations made by the political groups for the remainder of the current municipal year:

Name of Committee	Number of Members	Allocation to Groups			Substitute Members
		Con	Lab	Ind	
Strategy & Policy	15	8	7	0	3 : 3
Education	17*	10	7	0	3 : 3
Leisure Services	15	8	7	0	3 : 3
Planning & Transportation	15	8	6	1	3 : 3
Public & Environmental Services	15	8	6	1	3 : 3
Social Services & Housing	15	8	7	0	3 : 3
Direct Services Board	9	5	4	0	3 : 3
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	101	55	44	2	

* Does not include 2 voting representatives nominated by Oxford and Portsmouth Diocesan Councils

- (iv) the following formula for the allocation of seats on Sub-Committees be confirmed:-

Number of Members	Allocation of Seats
3	2 : 1
5	3 : 2
9	5 : 4
20*	11 : 8 : 1

* *Planning Control Sub-Committee*

3 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 3.1 The Borough Solicitor's advice has been taken into account in the report.

Borough Finance Officer

- 3.2 There are no significant financial implications arising from the above recommendations, although there will be a very small reduction in Attendance Allowance payable as a result of the change in Committee size from 16 to 15 Members.

Access Implications

- 3.3 None

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council's Committee structure was approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 5 May 1999. Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council must ensure that the political balance on Committees reflects the overall political complexion of the Council. In order to achieve this, the Council is required to observe the following principles as far as practicable in making appointments to ordinary Committees:

- (a) no Committee should comprise Members drawn from one political group only;
- (b) the majority of seats on each Committee should be allocated to a political group if the number of Members of the group is a majority of the Authority's membership;
- (c) subject to satisfying (a) and (b) above, the total number of seats allocated to each political group on all ordinary Committees should reflect the political balance of the Council; and
- (d) subject to (a) – (c) above, the number of seats on each Committee allocated to each political group should reflect the political balance of the Council.

These principles apply to all Committees appointed by the Council and to Sub-Committees appointed by those Committees.

- 4.2 Following the two by-elections held during the 1998/99 Municipal Year the proportion of seats held by the two groups represented on the Council were 55% (Conservative) and 45% (Labour). The review of allocations carried out at the annual meeting in May 1999 resulted in a total allocation of 60 seats (56.6%) to the Conservative Group and 46 seats to the Labour Group (43.4%).
- 4.3 Since the Annual Meeting, Councillor Mrs Doyle has resigned from the Conservative Group. The relative strengths of the two groups has, therefore, become Conservative 52.5% and Labour 45%. Councillor Mrs Doyle, as an independent Member, and represents 2.5% of the Council membership.
- 4.4 The Council is required under the terms of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 to carry out a review of the allocation of seats on Committees on certain specified occasions. The resignation of a Member from a political group is not one of those occasions. However, the number of seats currently allocated to the Majority Group now exceeds the group's proportionate entitlement by 4.1%. In addition, the Conservative group no longer holds an overall majority of seats on three Committees (Education, Planning & Transportation and Social Services & Housing). Consequently, the requirement that the majority of seats on each Committee should be allocated to a political group, if the number of Members of that group is a majority of the Authority's membership, is not being met and some adjustment is necessary to comply with the Act.
- 4.5 Given the requirement set out in paragraph 4.1 (b) above it is not possible to arrive at an arithmetically sound allocation to political groups within the existing Committee sizes of 16 Members. A minimum majority of 2 seats is inevitable on any Committee with an even number of Members and this majority will overstate the proportionality of the Conservative group. It is, therefore, recommended that for the remainder of the current municipal year, there should be a reduction in the size of Committees to 15 Members and that seats should be allocated as follows:

3 Committees of 15 Members allocated 8 (Conservative) : 7 (Labour)
2 Committees of 15 Members allocated 8 (Cons) : 6 (Lab) : 1 (Ind)
Education Committee of 19 Members allocated 10 (Cons) : 7 (Lab) plus 2 voting representatives nominated by Oxford & Portsmouth Diocesan Council
1 Committee (DSB) of 9 Members allocated 5 (Cons) : 4 (Lab)

This would give a revised total of 101 seats allocated as follows:

	No of Seats	%
Conservative Group	55	54.5
Labour Group	44	43.6
Independent	2	2.0

- 4.6 This allocation is a sufficiently close reflection of the relative proportioning of the 2 political groups and the independent Member. The Council is, therefore, recommended to adopt this formula as exemplified in the recommendations at paragraph 2 above.

- 4.7 Appointments to Sub Committees fall to be made by Committees which are also required to observe political proportionality rules. This is reflected in the formula agreed at the Annual Council Meeting. In some cases, the majority group does not hold a majority of seats on those Sub-Committees where Councillor Mrs Doyle has been appointed. In these cases the majority party group will need to submit an alternative nomination to the main committee in the current cycle of meetings in place of Councillor Mrs Doyle.

Background Papers

None – Published Works

Letter from Councillor Mrs Doyle (Exempt)

Contact for further information

Timothy Wheadon – 01344 355621

Malcolm Biggs – 01344 352006

Doc.Ref

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