

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is not a key decision and has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's access to information rules)

Report of the Leader of the Council

CABINET

29 MAY 2012

CAB12/008

TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Forward Plan Reference – May12/08)

Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)

1. The Council resolved at its meeting on 9 May 2012 that there should be a review of the Constitution and Membership of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, particularly to consider whether it should not be politically balanced.
2. The recommendation is proposed to allow openness and transparency in the scrutiny arrangements for the new Cabinet and Leader Model of governance without the constraints of compliance with the political balance rules.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended to Council, that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is not politically balanced and that the membership is increased from 9 to 10 members, to comprise 8 members of the Conservative Group and 2 members of the Opposition Group.

Contact Details

Name: Cllr James Waters
Title: Leader of the Council
Telephone: 01638 719324
E mail: james.waters@forest-heath.gov.uk

Cabinet Member

Cllr James Waters
Leader of the Council

Lead Officer

Peter Heard
Legal Services Manager
01638 719309
peter.heard@forest-heath.gov.uk

How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?

1. The recommendation will assist the Council in meeting all of its strategic priorities through ensuring a proper system of governance.

Wards affected

2. All Wards affected.

Key issues

3. Compliance with legislation. In order to have a Committee which is not politically balanced in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and associated regulations it is necessary for this proposition to be included on the agenda of a Council meeting stating clearly that this recommendation will be discussed and voted upon. At the meeting it is necessary for those present to vote in favour save for those who abstain.
4. Underlying ethos. The Council's clearly stated aim is to ensure that as part of the governance arrangements changes to a Leader and Cabinet Model there should be appropriate and open scrutiny which will assist in the development of services for the residents of the district. To ensure that this is as open and transparent as possible it is considered that greater involvement from the opposition party is advisable and would be allowed under the normal political balance rules.

Other options considered

5. A politically balanced Committee was the original option considered but the review which leads to this decision was resolved by Council.

Community impact

6. It is expected that improved scrutiny will lead to better outcomes for the community in terms of service delivery.

What consultation has been undertaken and what were the outcomes?

7. Consultation has been undertaken with the group leaders.

Financial and resource implications

8. There are none.

Risk management implications

9. There are none.

Legal/Policy implications

10. The legal implications are discussed under Key Issues above.

Documents attached

None.

Background papers

None.