

# Review of Political Balance and Appointment to Committees 2022 to 2023

<b>Report number:</b>	<b>AGM/WS/22/001</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Annual Council</b>	17 May 2022
<b>Cabinet member:</b>	Councillor John Griffiths Leader of the Council Telephone: 01284 757001 Email: <a href="mailto:john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk">john.griffiths@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Teresa Halliday Monitoring Officer Telephone: 01284 757144 Email: <a href="mailto:teresa.halliday@westsuffolk.gov.uk">teresa.halliday@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	

**Decisions Plan:** This report refers to non-executive matters and therefore is not required to be included on the Decisions Plan.

**Wards impacted:** None

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that Council approves:

- 1. The Committees for the 2022 to 2023 municipal year and the terms of reference for those committees as per the West Suffolk Council Constitution, Part 3b, section 2: "Responsibility for Council (non-executive) Functions".**
- 2. An increase to the membership of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to a total of 13 members.**
- 3. The political balance and allocation of seats and substitutes on Committees as per Appendix A to Report number: AGM/WS/22/001.**

Continued.....

- 4. Delegation for Group Leaders to nominate members from their Groups to seats and as substitutes on Committees.**

## 1. Context to this report

- 1.1 As per the West Suffolk Council Constitution, at each Annual Meeting, the Council will:
- a. Decide which committees to establish for the municipal year.
  - b. Decide the size and agree terms of reference for those committees.
  - c. Decide the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules.
  - d. Receive, or arrange the delegation of, nominations and appointment of councillors to serve on each committee.

## 2. Proposals within this report

### Establishing Committees and their terms of reference

- 2.1 The Council's committees and the terms of reference for those committees are included in the West Suffolk Council Constitution, Part 3b, section 2: "Responsibility for Council (non-executive) Functions". This is available at [Part 3 - Section 2 - Responsibility for Council Non Executive Functions April 2021.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#) or from the Democratic Services team at West Suffolk Council.
- 2.2 Council is requested, as it was at its Annual Meeting in May 2021, to approve the number of seats and terms of reference as contained in Part 3b, section 2 of the Constitution with the following amendment:
- To increase the membership of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to a total of 13 members.
  -
- 2.3 This amendment is being proposed following careful consideration of the rules on calculating political balance and overall distribution of seats on politically balanced Committees, see section 2.5 of this report. Increasing the total membership on the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee provides a more equitable distribution of seats overall.

### Allocation of seats and substitutes in accordance with the political balance rules

- 2.4 The allocation of seats and substitutes to committees must respect the requirement to ensure that relevant committees are politically balanced, in that they reflect the number of councillors who belong to each political group within the Council.

- 2.5 The rules on allocating seats are that, as far as possible:
- a. Not all seats on a committee can be given to a single political group
  - b. The majority group must be allocated the majority of seats on a committee
  - c. Subject to a. and b., the proportion of seats on ordinary committees allocated to a group must be proportionate to the total number of seats held by that group
  - d. Subject to a. b. and c., the proportion of seats on all committees allocated to a group must be proportionate to the total number of seats held by that group
- 2.6 The committees to which these rules apply are as follows:
- Development Control Committee (16 seats and 8 substitutes)
  - Licensing and Regulatory Committee (15 seats and 7 substitutes)
  - Overview and Scrutiny Committee (16 seats and 8 substitutes)
  - Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (13 seats, subject to Council approval (see section 2.2 of this report), and 6 substitutes)
  - Standards Committee (6 seats and 3 substitutes)
  - Officer Appointments Committee (6 seats and 3 substitutes)
  - Officer Appeals Committee (6 seats and 3 substitutes)
  -
- 2.7 Councillors who are not members of a political group can be allocated seats by the Council and they can then agree between them who will take the seats, or the Council may be required to vote on which non-grouped councillor is appointed to each committee. The Council currently has one non-grouped member.
- 2.8 The calculation to allocate seats to political groups requires the rounding up or down of calculated figures to give whole numbers. It is therefore very difficult to create a perfect allocation of seats and some adjustments may be needed to create an equitable allocation between political groups. This can include adjusting the number of councillors that sit on each committee. The proposed allocation of seats and substitutes to committees is attached at Appendix A to this report.

### **The appointment of councillors to Committees**

- 2.9 Subject to Council approval of the allocation of seats and substitutes on committees, the Group Leaders are asked to nominate which members from their group will be appointed to the seats and to notify the Monitoring Officer of those nominations.
- 2.10 It should be noted that each Group that is represented on a committee has been allocated a substitute place on that committee and the remaining substitute seats have then been distributed by political balance.

- 2.11 The nominations should be made to the Monitoring Officer within 14 days, on which the Monitoring Officer will appoint members to Committees.

### **3. Alternative options that have been considered**

- 3.1 None

### **4. Consultation and engagement undertaken**

- 4.1 None

### **5. Risks associated with the proposals**

- 5.1 None

### **6. Implications arising from the proposals**

- 6.1 None

### **7. Appendices referenced in this report**

- 7.1 Appendix A: Allocation of seats and substitutes to Committees

### **8. Background documents associated with this report**

- 8.1 West Suffolk Council Constitution, Part 3b, section 2: "Responsibility for Council (non-executive) Functions": [Part 3 - Section 2 - Responsibility for Council Non Executive Functions April 2021.pdf \(westsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)