

**REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON THE COBTREE
MANOR ESTATE CHARITY COMMITTEE**

Final Decision-Maker	Maidstone Borough Council acting as Corporate Trustee of the Charity Known as the Cobtree Manor Estate
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ryan O'Connell, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager Debbie Snook, Democratic Services Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Following the recent changes in the composition of the Council, a review has been undertaken of the allocation of seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee. The Council, acting as Corporate Trustee, is asked to agree the allocation of seats on the Committee and to accept the wishes of Group Leaders regarding the membership of the Committee.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to Council Acting as Corporate Trustee of the Charity Known as the Cobtree Manor Estate:

1. That the allocation of seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee as set out below be approved:

Conservative	3
Liberal Democrat	1
Independent	0
The Maidstone Group	1
Labour	0
Cllr McKay (Unaligned Independent Member)	0

2. That the wishes of the Group Leaders regarding the membership of the Committee be accepted.

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Borough Council Acting as Corporate Trustee of the Charity Known as the Cobtree Manor Estate	8 December 2021

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1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	N/A	Democratic Services Officer
Cross Cutting Objectives	N/A	Democratic Services Officer
Risk Management	See section 5 below	Democratic Services Officer
Financial	The Committee forms part of the original plan for the committee system of governance and as such there are no additional financial implications.	Section 151 Officer
Staffing	There are no staffing implications	Democratic Services Officer
Legal	The Council must allocate seats on Committees to the different political groups to reflect the size of each political group – Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It is possible to have Committees that are not politically balanced provided that when alternative arrangements are put to the vote, no Member of the Council votes against them. The appointments to the Committees should reflect the wishes of the political groups – Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (as amended).	Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific issues arise.	Corporate Insight, Communities and

		Governance Team
Equalities	The review will ensure an equitable political representation in the membership of Committees.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer
Crime and Disorder	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer
Procurement	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	No specific issues arise.	Democratic Services Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to ensure political proportionality in the membership of Committees. Following the establishment of The Maidstone Group and the decision of Councillor McKay to resign from the Labour Group and to sit as an unaligned Independent Member, the composition of the Council has changed, and this necessitates a review of the allocation of seats on Committees, including the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee which comprises five Members.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 To achieve political balance, the allocation of seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee would be as follows:

Conservative	3
Liberal Democrat	1
Independent	0
The Maidstone Group	1
Labour	0
Cllr McKay (Unaligned Independent Member)	0

3.2 Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides for exceptions to the political balance requirements. Essentially, the Council can amend the political balance of a Committee provided that notice of the intention to give such consideration has been given to all Members of the Council and that when the alternative arrangements are put to the vote at the Council meeting, no Member of the Council votes against them.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed, following consultation with Group Leaders, that the allocation of seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee be as set out in paragraph 3.1 above.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The review of the allocation of seats on the Committee will ensure an appropriate political balance in the membership of the Committee. The prompt and correct allocation of seats on Committees is vital to maintaining an effective and transparent governance framework.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Group Leaders have been consulted on the proposed allocation of seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once the allocation of seats has been decided upon, there is a duty to give effect to the allocation by making appointments to them in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders on behalf of their respective Political Groups. The Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee has indicated previously that it wishes to retain, as far as possible, the same membership for continuity purposes.
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None