

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17 SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

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1. REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

1.1 Following the Staplehurst by-election, the composition of the Council is now:

Conservative	24
Liberal Democrat	20
Independent	5
UKIP	4
Labour	2

1.1.1 A request has been received for a review to be carried out of the arrangements for the allocation of seats to political groups pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

1.1.2 Elsewhere on the agenda, the Council is asked to agree to the amalgamation of the Licensing and Licensing Act 2003 Committees into one Committee (the Licensing Committee) with a membership of 12 to allow cross party representation.

1.1.3 The following documents are attached providing two scenarios in case the Council does not agree to the amalgamation of the two Licensing Committees:

Scenario 1

A document (Appendix A) showing the revised allocation of seats on Committees to reflect the results of the Staplehurst by-election, together with details of the adjustments required to achieve overall political balance. The calculation assumes a total of 115 seats on Committees as previously, no change in the number and size of Committees and the Planning Referrals Committee comprising three Members, one from each of the largest political groups which is as set out in the Constitution, but not politically balanced. Appendix B demonstrates the political balance on the various Committee sizes for this scenario.

Scenario 2

A document (Appendix C) showing (a) the revised allocation of seats on Committees to reflect the results of the Staplehurst by-election and the proposed amalgamation of the Licensing and Licensing Act 2003 Committees into one Committee (the Licensing Committee) with a membership of 12 to allow cross party representation and (b) details of the adjustments required to achieve overall political balance. The calculation assumes a total of 105 seats on Committees, no change in the size of the other Committees, and the Planning Referrals Committee comprising three Members, one from each of the largest political groups which is as set out in the Constitution, but not politically balanced. Appendix D demonstrates the political balance on the various Committee sizes for this scenario.

- 1.1.4 Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides for exceptions to the political balance requirements. In essence, 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.

1.2 RECOMMENDED

- 1.2.1 That the calculation for entitlement to seats on individual Committees and the requisite adjustments for scenario 1 or scenario 2, as appropriate, be determined**