

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**7 JUNE 2014**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Report Prepared by Debbie Snook

**1. ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES**

1.1 The composition of the Council is now as follows:

Conservative	25
Liberal Democrat	19
Independent	5
UKIP	4
Labour	2
Total	55

1.1.1 This necessitates a review of the allocation of seats on Committees.

1.1.2 The revised allocation of seats on individual Committees is set out in Appendix A, together with details of the adjustments required, assuming a total of 115 seats on Committees as previously, no change in the size of Committees and the Planning Referrals Committee having representatives from the three largest political groups (not politically balanced). Appendix B demonstrates the political balance on the various Committee sizes.

1.1.3 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.

1.1.4 Members of the General Purposes Group have asked that consideration be given to the arrangements for meetings of the Group; specifically, the timing of meetings and the possible transfer of the Group's responsibilities elsewhere.

1.1.5 The General Purposes Group was set up to take away from full Council a number of detailed issues which should more appropriately be dealt with by a smaller group of Members.

1.1.6 The terms of reference of the Group are as follows:

1. To consider any matters relating to electoral registration, elections or electoral boundaries which have not been delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer or Returning Officer.
  2. To recommend to the Council the appointment of an Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.
  3. To be responsible for the appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances.
  4. To consider matters relating to the Mayoralty where appropriate.
  5. To approve the Council Tax Base.
  6. To appoint Council nominees to outside bodies and seminars as appropriate.
- 1.1.7 The Group met four times during 2013/14 and the average duration of meeting was 30 minutes. The Officers have reviewed the terms of reference of the Group, but have concluded that within the existing Committee framework, there is no scope for the transfer of its responsibilities elsewhere. It is considered that there are benefits of having a "sweep up" Committee, and that the Group should be retained, albeit with more thought being given to the timing of meetings so that they might precede or follow other meetings that Members of the Group attend. The allocation of seats on Committees has been calculated on the basis that the General Purposes Group is retained.
- 1.1.8 As set out in the Constitution, the Standards Committee has 3 Substitutes. It is proposed to increase the number of Substitutes for the Committee to one per political group represented on the Committee.

## **1.2 RECOMMENDED**

- 1.2.1 That the size and composition of the Planning Referrals Committee be determined, and that the Constitution be amended as appropriate.**
- 1.2.2 That the number of Substitutes for the Standards Committee be increased to one per Political Group represented on the Committee, and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.**
- 1.2.3 That the calculation for entitlement to seats on individual Committees and the requisite adjustments as set out in Appendix A be determined.**