

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor L Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	18 May 2022

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Council will be asked to consider the appointment of its committees, in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Local Government Act 1972.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To appoint the following Council committees, with powers and duties as set out in the Council's Constitution:

- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee
- Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
- Audit Committee
- Appeals Committee
- Planning Committee
- Standards Committee
- Chief Officers Employment Committee

2.2 To appoint a Scrutiny Leadership Board, with the powers set out in the Council's constitution and for the Board to continue to have an adjusted political balance membership of three Labour, four Conservative (to be made up of the Chairs, Vice Chairs of the three Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee) and also to add the non-aligned Independent Member as Chair of the Committee in line with the recommendation of agenda item 10.

2.3 To agree the political balance attached at Appendix 11(a) and appointments to the above committees at Appendix 11(b) (the latter will be circulated separately) and to delegate authority to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee to confirm appointments to co-opted positions throughout the year.

2.4 To reappoint the Licensing Committee with the powers and duties as set out in the Constitution (equating to a membership of 13 and a composition of seven Labour, five Conservative and one Blackpool Independent).

- 2.5 Subject to (2.4) above, to request the Licensing Committee to re-appoint the Public Protection Sub-Committee, with the powers and duties, as set out in the Constitution including the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- 2.6 To agree that any membership changes to committees or sub-committees during the course of the Municipal Year be reported to the Director of Governance and Partnerships by the relevant Group Leader for implementation.
- 2.7 Subject to the approval of the above recommendations, to agree to the memberships of the committees of the Council and their Chairs and Vice Chairs as set out in Appendix 11(b) (to be circulated separately) and that delegated authority is given to the committees themselves to determine changes to Chairs and Vice Chairs, in line with the principles set out in this report should the need arise for change during the municipal year.
- 2.8 To confirm the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board as set out in Appendix 11(b) (to be circulated separately).
- 2.9 Subject to the approval of the above recommendations, to agree that the Director of Governance and Partnerships be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To enable Council business to be transacted by various committees and for the size of the committees to reflect the current political balance of the political groups on the Council. This will also meet statutory requirements.
- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

There are no other options other than a different or varied set of committees; however, the current committees have been appointed by Council in recent years and help transact the business of Council efficiently.

4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The appointment of Council committees will help the Council achieve all its priorities.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Proposed committees – the committees are set out below:

- Scrutiny Leadership Board
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee
- Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee
- Audit Committee
- Appeals Committee
- Planning Committee
- Standards Committee
- Chief Officers Employment Committee

5.2 The last review of the political balance requirements was undertaken in September 2021. That allocation of seats to committees and the structure has been the foundation from which this annual review has been undertaken. Earlier this month, Councillor M Mitchell who had already left the Labour Group, was added as a member of the Blackpool Independents Group. This makes the political membership of the council to be currently 20 Labour, 16 Conservative, 3 Blackpool Independents and three non-aligned independent members – Councillor Blackburn, Councillor Cain and Councillor Mrs Callow. The Annual Meeting is the once yearly occasion to review the political balance calculations in order to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the associated regulations and this report seeks to do that.

5.3 Although not subject to political balance rules, it is recommended that the same methodology be applied to the Licensing Committee and for a committee to equate to a membership of 13, then there would be seven Labour councillors, five Conservative councillors and one Blackpool Independent group councillor.

5.4 The Licensing Committee would also need to appoint one permanent sub-committee - Public Protection - which is subject to the political balance rules and therefore has to be included in the aggregated proportionality calculations.

5.5 A full schedule of political balance calculations for all the proposed committees and the permanent sub-committee is attached at Appendix 11(a). These have been allocated by ‘political group’. A ‘political group’ is one, which has been constituted in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and consists of at least two members. The three non-aligned independents, as they are not part of a political group, are not automatically entitled to a seat on a committee. The reduction in the Labour Group membership

has meant that there are an increased number of committees where the Labour Group do not have an overall majority. The addition of a member to the Blackpool Independents Group has given that group one additional seat overall.

5.6 Using the structure of committees previously agreed by Council then under the political balance calculations overall the allocation of seats by Group is as follows:

- Labour Group – 35 seats
- Conservative Group – 28 seats
- Blackpool Independent Group – 5 seats

These are the calculations identified at stage 3 of the attached schedule at Appendix 11a. When the formulae is applied to each committee then to align back to the stage 3 group numbers there has to be some adjustments made to give each group their allocated number of seats. This has been done on the schedule at Appendix 11a, following normal practice which has been to consult the Group Leaders.

5.7 In June 2021, the Executive appointed a Shareholder Committee comprising of the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Council as substantive members and the Deputy Leader of the Principal Opposition Group as a co-opted member. As a committee of the Executive, this committee is not subject to this annual review and will continue with its current membership until the local elections in May 2023.

5.8 **Appointment of Chairs** – these can be undertaken by either the Council or the committees themselves. Appendix 11(b) (to be circulated separately) lists the notified names of committee members and proposed chair and vice-chair positions. The appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair for the Public Protection Sub-Committee is a matter for the Licensing Committee to deal with. It is also recommended that the committees be given delegated authority to determine any changes to the Chair or Vice Chair positions where changes are necessary during the course of the Municipal Year, in line with the principles set out in this report.

5.9 It is recommended that as has been previous practice, the following principles be applied:

- the Chair of the Audit Committee is from the principal opposition group and the Vice Chair from the majority group
- the Chair positions in all three Scrutiny Committees be filled by majority group councillors and the Vice Chair positions be filled by principal opposition councillors
- the Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee be filled by a principal opposition councillor
- all other proposals for Chairs and Vice Chairs are filled by councillors from the majority group.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 11(a) - Political balance calculations

Appendix 11(b) - Proposed membership of the Council's committees and the Health and Wellbeing Board (To be circulated separately)

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to review periodically the political composition of the Authority and how this is applied to appointments to Council bodies. The rules for securing political balance on committees and sub-committees appointed by local authorities are contained in sections 15 and 16 of the Act and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations, 1990. See:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1990/1553/regulation/17/made>

7.0 Equalities considerations:

7.1 There are no equalities considerations.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Special responsibility allowances for the proposed Chairs and Vice Chairs are met from the Members Allowances' budget.

9.0 Risk management considerations:

9.1 Failure to appoint certain committees will hinder the Council in maintaining its statutory duties i.e. consideration of planning applications, hearing of appeals etc.

10.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

11.1 The Group Leaders put forward nominations for their representatives to serve on the recommended committees.

12.0 Background papers:

12.1 There are no additional background papers to this report.

