

Subject:	Review of Committee Allocations		
Date of Meeting:	8 October 2009		
Report of:	Chief Executive		
Contact Officer:	Name: Mark Wall	Tel: 29-1006	
	E-mail: mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk		
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 To consider the proposed changes to the make-up and membership of various committees following the result of the Goldsmid Ward By-election.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the revised memberships of the Council's Licensing and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committees be agreed as follows:
- (a) Licensing Committee on the basis of 7 Conservative, 3 Labour, 4 Green and 1 Liberal Democrat Member; and
- (b) Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the basis of 3 Conservative, 2 Labour and 3 Green Members.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 The result of the Goldsmid By-election has led to a change in the overall balance of the political make-up of the Council. This has led to a review of the allocation of the seats available to each of the political groups represented on the council and the need to revise the membership of some of the council's committees.
- 3.2 There are 97 seats to be allocated and based on the size of each of the political groups on the council the overall breakdown is as follows in the table below:

Prior to the By-election:		Following the By-election	
Conservative	47	Conservative	45
Labour	23	Labour	23
Green	22	Green	23
Lib Dem	4	Lib Dem	4
Independent	1	Independent	1
Total	97	Total	96
		<i>remainder</i>	1

- 3.3 Previously the allocation of the 97 seats left one seat unallocated to any particular Group and in accordance with the convention recognised by the political groups, the seat was allocated to the Independent Member of the council.
- 3.4 The result of the by-election has meant that in looking at the allocations of seats to each group, a total of 95 seats can be allocated proportionately, with the Conservative Group's allocation going down by 2 seats and the Green Group's allocation increasing by 1 seat. The total number of seats allocated therefore is 96 taking into account the one currently held by the Independent Councillor. This then leaves 1 seat to be allocated.
- 3.5 Following discussions with the Leaders of the Groups affected, and taking into account the political balance regulations; there is a need for the Conservative Group to drop a seat from Licensing Committee, going down from 8 to 7.
- 3.6 It has also been agreed that the Conservative Group will give up a seat on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, thereby going down from 4 to 3.
- 3.7 The Council then has the option to allocate the two vacant seats taking into account the following:
- (a) That the Green Group has indicated a preference for an additional seat on the Licensing Committee, taking their allocation up from 3 to 4; and
 - (b) That should the council approve the allocation of the seat in (a) above; the vacant seat on the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) should be filled by the Green Group until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2010 when all committee allocations are reviewed and appointed to.
- 3.7.1 The council is under a duty to allocate the seats available on committees and therefore in order to facilitate the allocation of the remaining seat on HOSC to the Green Group an informal agreement has been reached between the Convenor of the Green Group and Leader of the Labour Group. The agreement also allows for the Labour Group to hold the seat

during the next municipal year should there be no changes to the allocations of seats at the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2010.

- 3.8 The above proposals also take into account that the council has previously agreed not to include the Personnel Committee in the overall number of seats to be allocated. This was agreed to enable Personnel Appeal hearings to be called without having to adhere to the requirements of proportionality and to establish a cross-party pool of Members who could be called upon to serve on appeal hearings.
- 3.9 The inclusion of the Personnel Committee, which consists of 3 Members would result in an additional seat being allocated to the Conservative, Labour and Green Groups and therefore not affect the proposals listed above. However, by leaving the Committee outside of the political balance requirements, it enables the calling of appeal hearings with varying memberships.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The two Group Leaders and the Convenor have been consulted on the various changes that were required to comply with the regulations covering the need to maintain political balance on committees. Having taken into account the various options available to them, the Group Leaders and the Convenor have agreed to the proposed changes to the allocations for the committees detailed in 2.1 above for the remainder of the municipal year.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 27 July 2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The proposals in this report comply with the requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and associated guidance.

There are no adverse Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

Date: 27 July 2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The changes to the allocations of committee seats maintain a political balance and thereby ensure an equal distribution for all Groups.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 There are no direct sustainability issues arising from the report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There is a risk that agreement cannot be achieved on the proposed allocations and that the full membership of the committees in question cannot be achieved.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 There are no corporate/city wide issues arising from the report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms:

None

Background Documents:

None