Council	Agenda Item 39
21 October 2010	Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:		**Review of Committee Allocations**		
Date of Meeting:		**21 October 2010**		
Report of:		**The Chief Executive**		
Contact Officer:	Name:	**Mark Wall**	**Tel:**	**29-1006**
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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 decision of Councillor Bennett to join the Conservative Group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the revised memberships of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee be agreed as follows:

(a) Overview & Scrutiny Commission on the basis of 5 Conservative, 2 Labour, 2 Green and 1 Liberal Democrat Member; and

(b) Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the basis of 4 Conservative, 2 Labour and 2 Green Members.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

3.1 The decision of Councillor Bennett to join the Conservative Group 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 following the increase in the Conservative Group; the overall breakdown is as follows in the table below:

Conservative	47
Labour	23
Green	23
Lib Dem	4
Total	**97**

3.3 Previously the allocation of the 97 seats left two seats unallocated to any particular Group and in accordance with the convention recognised by the political groups, the seat was allocated to the Independent Member (Councillor Bennett) of the council.

3.4 The result of Councillor Bennett's decision to join the Conservative Group has meant that in looking at the allocations of seats to each group, a total of 97 seats can be allocated proportionately, with the Conservative Group's allocation increasing by 2 seats, the Labour Group's allocation decreasing by 1 seat and the seat previously held by Councillor Bennett as an Independent becoming a Conservative Group seat. The total number of seats allocated therefore is 97 with the seats allocated to the Green and Liberal Democrat Groups remaining unaltered.

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 Labour Group to drop a seat from the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, going down from 3 to 2.

3.6 The above proposal also takes 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.

3.7 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 affected Group Leaders 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 affected Group Leaders 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: 11 October 2010

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: 11 October 2010

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