

Slough Borough Council

REPORT TO: Annual Council **DATE:** 16 May 2024

CONTACT OFFICER: Alexander Polak, Head of Governance & Scrutiny
(For all enquiries)

WARD(S): All

PART I FOR DECISION

APPOINTMENT OF CABINET, COMMITTEES, OTHER BODIES AND THEIR CHAIRS, AND ALLOCATION OF POLITICAL GROUP OFFICER SUPPORT

1 Purpose of Report

To appoint members to the committees and other specified bodies of the Council as set out in the Constitution, in line with the rules of political proportionality, including any adjustments to the sizes of committees as necessary to assist with the application of proportionality.

To agree the appointment of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of those committees, and other specified bodies.

To allocate Political Group Officer support to Political Groups.

To receive the report of the Leader on the appointment of the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet.

2. Recommendations

The Council is requested to resolve:

- (a) That Committees and other bodies be appointed, that their sizes be adjusted as necessary to facilitate proportionality, and seats thereon allocated to political groups in accordance with the rules of proportionality where applicable, all as per **Appendix 1** (TO FOLLOW)
- (b) That appointments be made to Committees and other bodies in accordance with the nominations received from political groups as per **Appendix 2**. (TO FOLLOW)
- (c) That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the above bodies be appointed as per **Appendix 2**. (TO FOLLOW)
- (d) That the report of the Leader on appointment of the Deputy Leader and Lead Members (the Cabinet) and their portfolios be received as per **Appendix 2**.
- (e) That Political Group Officer support to Political Groups is agreed for the 2024/25 municipal year.
- (f) To approve the timetable of ordinary meetings of the Council for 2024/2025 as set out in the report.

Commissioners Review

Commissioners have no specific comments on the report.

3. **Strategic Priorities**

Effective, transparent, and equitable democratic and decision-making processes are an essential pre-requisite to the delivery of all the Council's priorities.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Legal Implications

The recommendations within this report meet legal requirements (primarily the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations). The proposals have no workforce implications and any financial implications have been reflected within the approved budget.

The rules for the allocation of seats are set out in Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the 1989 Act) and the Local Government Committee and Political Group Regulations 1990. The Council has an obligation to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements for political proportionality in relation to the allocation of seats and the nominations to them where members are organised into different political groups. Should the Council wish to not apply the political proportionality requirement, then it may only do so in accordance with section 17 of the 1989 Act and provided that no member of the Council votes against.

(b) Financial Implications

The Scheme of Members Allowances allocates Special Responsibility Allowances and these are included in the Council's budget.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 It is a requirement to appoint to the Committees and other bodies as set out in the Constitution.

Allocation of Seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Bodies

- 5.2 The Council, in undertaking its duty to allocate seats to political groups is required, as far as reasonably practicable, to give effect to the statutory principles below:
- (i) Where an authority has two or more political groups, no formal committee may comprise Members from just one political group;
 - (ii) Where a majority of Members are from one political group, that political group must have a majority of the seats on each committee;
 - (iii) Without being inconsistent with (i) and (ii) above, the number of seats on the ordinary committees which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on all the committees of

the Council as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority

- (iv) Without being inconsistent with (i) to (iii) above, , that the number of seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Council.

The political proportionality rules also apply to those outside bodies dealing with local government matters to which the Council appoints three or more representatives.

- 5.3 The Council is asked to agree the allocation of seats on committees, sub-committees and other bodies and to appoint to those seats. The allocation of seats on those Committees where proportionality applies has been calculated and is set out in **Appendix 1** (to follow).
- 5.4 Some committees have specific training requirements before members can sit on those committees. In these cases, those members will be offered that training before the first meeting and may not attend until that training has been completed. In other cases, there are legal requirements or constraints on e.g. whether Cabinet Members can or must be appointed to certain committees. The proposals in **Appendix 2** (to follow) will take account of these requirements.
- 5.5 Nominations from political groups for appointments to seats on Committees, etc. have been sought and will be circulated as **Appendix 2** when received.

Allocation of Political Group Officer Support

- 5.6 Under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 Councils are free to decide whether to have Political Group Support Officers. If they do have such roles in their officer structure, then a political group qualifies for support if it comprises at least 10% of the membership of the Authority. Statements of Group membership have not yet all been received at the time of writing. However as of the election in May 2023 the Conservative Group secured 21 seats (50%) Labour Group secured 18 seats (43%) and the Liberal Democrats Group 3 seats (7%). As the Liberal Democrat political group does not have at least 10% of the membership, it is not entitled to any political group officer support.
- 5.7 A political group cannot have more than one political assistant and the total number of political assistants is limited to three. In the previous municipal year, the Conservative Group and Labour Group both received 37 hours of support per week. The Council will need to take a decision on support provided to political groups based on the Groups' Memoranda once received.

Dates of Council Meetings – 2024/25

- 5.8 The Constitution requires the timetable of ordinary meetings of the Council for the forthcoming year to be approved at the Annual Meeting. The dates of Council meetings (all taking place at 7.00pm) for 2024/25 were previously agreed at the Council meeting on 25th April 2024 and are as follows:
- 25th July 2024
 - 26th September 2024

- 28th November 2024
- 23rd January 2025
- 27th February 2025 (Budget - Extraordinary)
- 24th April 2025
- 15th May 2025 (Annual)

6. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Allocation of Seats

Appendix 2 - Cabinet and Committee and other bodies - appointments in accordance with proportionality rules where applicable

7. **Background Papers**

None.