

Committee/Date:	Council 25 May 2022
Report Title:	Establishment and Appointment of Committees and Other Council Bodies 2022/23
Directorate:	Finance & Governance
Contact Details:	Mark Hynes, Director of Governance and Law Tel: 020 8496 4848 Email: mark.hynes@walthamforest.gov.uk
Wards affected:	None specifically
Public Access	Open

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report concerns the establishment of committees and appointment of councillors on committees and other bodies in 2022/23. It is the Council's duty to ensure that appointments to which the political balance regulations relating are made in accordance with those regulations. In respect of the Local Authority Trading Company, the report gives details regarding the establishment of the wholly owned company, which is reflected in the appointments.
- 1.2 A list is attached of the committees and other Council bodies concerned (**Appendix A**). This shows the number of seats proposed for each body in 2022/23. A 'ready reckoner' for use as a guide in allocating seats to political parties to reflect the political balance of the Council is attached (**Appendix B**).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. Council is asked to:
- 2.1.1. **appoint** standing committees for the Municipal Year 2022/23 (taking into account the changes set out below);
 - 2.1.2. **decide** the number of seats on all committees;
 - 2.1.3. **determine** the allocation of seats on committees to party groups, in accordance with the political balance rules;
 - 2.1.4. **appoint** councillors to sit on committees in accordance with nominations made by the Group Whips;
 - 2.1.5. **appoint** the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees for 2022/23;
 - 2.1.6. **appoint** councillors to serve on the other Council bodies listed in **Appendix A**;

(Specific proposals and nominations submitted by the Group Whips will be circulated with the Order Paper for the meeting.)

- 2.1.7. **agree** that the terms of reference of Standing Committees for 2022/23 shall be as set out in the Council's Constitution;
- 2.1.8. **note** the membership of the Board of Directors of the Local Authority Trading Company;
- 2.1.9. **note** that the Neighbourhood Scrutiny Committee has been renamed to the Climate Scrutiny Committee;
- 2.1.10. **agree** that all councillors will be appointed as supernumerary members to substitute when a named member of a committee is unable to attend a meeting, in accordance with the Council's scheme for the appointment of substitute members; Group Leaders and/or Group Whips being able to agree substitutions in respect of members of their party groups; that in respect of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Executive members may be substituted only by other members of the Executive; and that, in respect of any Scrutiny Committee, Executive members cannot serve as substitutes. (Note: The supernumerary arrangements do not apply to the Cabinet);
- 2.1.11. **agree** the consequential amendments to the Constitution arising from these decisions are to be finalised and published by the Director of Governance and Law.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The Council is required, under the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (ss. 15-17) and the Regulations made under that Act, to comply with political balance rules when appointing 'Ordinary' Committees (i.e. committees appointed under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972).
- 3.2. The Rules provide that seats on 'Ordinary' Committees must be allocated in line with the following principles in order of precedence:
 - (a) That not all seats on a body are allocated to the same political group.
 - (b) That the majority of seats on the body are allocated to a political group which has a majority of the Council's membership.
 - (c) That, subject to principles (a) and (b) above, the total number of seats across all the ordinary Committees shall be allocated to each political group in the proportion of their size on the Council as a whole.
 - (d) That, subject to principles (a) to (c) above, seats on each individual body shall be allocated to each political group in the same proportion as to their size on the Council as a whole.
- 3.3. Principle (d) (but not principles (a), (b) or (c)) also applies to sub-committees and advisory committees.
- 3.4. The political balance of the authority (60 councillors) is as follows:

Labour	46 councillors (76.67%)
Conservative	13 councillors (21.67%)
Independent	1 councillor (1.67%)

4. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Ordinary Committees

- 4.1. Ordinary Committees are those appointed under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. Ordinary Committees appointed by the Council, and the current number of seats on each are as follows:

Audit & Governance Committee	5 seats (4 of which are allocated to councillors, and one to an independent person, non-voting member)
Licensing (General) Committee	15 seats
Pensions Fund Committee	5 seats
Planning Committee	5 seats
Staffing committee	10 seats
TOTAL	39 SEATS FOR COUNCILLORS (plus one Independent Person)

- 4.2. If seats on these committees are allocated so that each of the committees concerned reflects (as closely as possible) the overall political balance of the Council, the result would be as follows:

Table A – allocation of seats on individual bodies in proportion to each party’s size on the Council (The proposed allocation of seats is shown in **bold**.)

Committee	Councillor Membership	Lab (46)	Cons (13)	Ind (1)	Notes:
Audit and Governance Committee	4	3 (3.06)	1 (0.87)	0 (0.08)	Plus one independent co-opted member.
Licensing (General) Committee	15	12 (11.5)	3 (3.25)	0 (0.25)	
Pension Fund Committee	5	4 (3.83)	1 (1.08)	0 (0.08)	
Planning Committee	5	4 (3.83)	1 (1.08)	0 (0.08)	
Staffing Committee	10	8 (7.66)	2 (2.16)	0 (0.16)	

- 4.3. If seats are allocated as shown above, the total number of seats allocated to each party, compared to each party's overall entitlement to seats as required by principle (c) (i.e., that the total number of all the seats to be allocated reflects, **as closely as practicable**, the strength of each group on the Council as a whole), would be:

Table B – Total number of seats allocated to each party

	Total number of seats (Ordinary committees)	Lab	Con	Ind
Total of all seats that would result from the allocations shown in Table A	39	31	8	0
Entitlement in accordance with principle (c)	39	31	8	0

Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Advisory and relevant other committees and Outside Bodies

- 4.4. Principles (a), (b) and (d) of the Rules also apply to Overview & Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees. However, because these are bodies established under the Local Government Act 2000 (and not section 101 or 102 of the Local Government Act 1972), they are not included when calculating the total number of seats on ordinary committees (principle c).
- 4.5. Consequently, Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees should be balanced but on an individual basis. The same situation applies to advisory committees (relating to Council functions) and certain outside bodies.
- 4.6. The proportionality arrangements may be varied by the Council provided no committee subject to political balance is made up solely of members of one political group, and no Member of the Council votes against alternative arrangements. (Local Government & Housing Act 1989 s17(1)(b)).

5. COMMITTEES NOT SUBJECT TO THE POLITICAL BALANCE RULES

- 5.1. The following bodies are entirely excluded from the Political Balance Rules:

The Cabinet

- 5.1.1. The Cabinet is appointed by the Leader and may comprise councillors from one political group only. It must have 2 to 9 members in addition to the Leader.

Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Committee

5.1.2. The Political Balance Rules do not apply to this Committee nor its sub-committees (although they do apply to the Licensing (General) Committee and its sub-committees). However, it is normal practice to constitute the sub-committees (panels) in accordance with political balance (i.e., two Labour members and one Conservative Member) as far as practicable. Membership of the sub-committees is drawn from the membership of the parent committee. The Terms of Reference of the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Committee will be reviewed this year and outcomes reported to Audit and Governance Committee for recommendation to a later meeting of full Council.

Health and Wellbeing Board

5.1.3. Although the Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires the Council to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board as a section 102 committee, The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 modified and disapplied certain provisions of section 102 (and other sections of the Local Government Act 1972), as well as the political balance provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Appointments to the Health and Wellbeing Board therefore do not figure in the political balance calculations.

6. LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING COMPANY

6.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 12 July 2016, approval was given to the establishment of the wholly owned company, the Local Authority Trading Company (LATC). The structure of the LATC was agreed by Cabinet on 16 May 2017, along with the Terms of Reference and membership of the Shareholder Committee (a committee of Cabinet, not the Council).

6.2 Cabinet were asked to agree that the Directors of the two companies that constitute the LATC would be ex-officio the officers holding the posts set out below (or any successor post performing the same function). The initial appointments were referred to full Council for endorsement. The Board of Directors is currently unchanged as follows:

- Head of Commercial Services
- Head of Commercial Law
- Head of Business Support
- Head of Selective Licensing and Regulation
- Strategic Finance Adviser for Neighbourhoods & Regeneration

7. SUBSTITUTION SCHEME

7.1. It is the Council's normal practice to appoint all councillors as supernumerary members of committees, so that any member can substitute for another who is unable to attend a meeting. Notifications

of a substitute must be in writing, but can be by fax or e-mail, by the relevant group whip or group leader, to the Chief Executive (in practice to Democratic Services). Substitutions must be for a whole meeting (and cannot be for only part of a meeting) and will apply for the specified meeting only, following which the original member will resume his/her membership of the committee.

7.2. Substitutions for councillors appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board are not governed by regulations; however, it is recommended that, given the appointment of Executive members, that only other members of the Executive be appointed as supernumerary members of the Board to be able to substitute.

7.3. Executive members cannot serve as substitutes for any Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1. Group Whips have been consulted for their nominations, which will be circulated with the Order Paper for the meeting.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1. Finance, Value for Money and Risk

Chairs and Vice-Chairs of certain Committees will be entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance as set out in the Members' Allowances Scheme.

9.2. Legal

The legal implications are contained in the body of this report. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 provide that the Council must have standing orders with regard to the appointment of specified senior officer posts (i.e. the posts in s.2 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989). The Council may delegate this authority to a committee.

9.3. Equalities and Diversity

The Council must appoint nominees of the relevant Party Groups to in respect of the seats allocated to that group.

9.4. Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder

None.

9.5. Council Infrastructure (e.g. human resources, accommodation or IT issues

None.

Appendices

Appendix A – List of committees and allocation of seats according to proportionality

Appendix B – Political Balance 'Ready Reckoner'

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None.