

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 30 JULY 2014

REPORT BY HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES

REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND THE COUNCIL'S
DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

Purpose/Summary of Report

- **To review the Council's decision-making structure following the Bishop's Stortford Central Ward by-election.**

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION:</u> That:	
(A)	the allocation of seats be as set out in the report now submitted, and
(B)	the membership of Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees be agreed, with Members being appointed in accordance with the wishes of the political groups to whom the seats on these bodies have been allocated.

1.0 Background

1.1 Council, at its Annual meeting in May 2014, approved the decision-making arrangements for the discharge of functions for the 2014/15 Civic Year.

1.2 A subsequent Council by-election means that the Authority needs to review the allocation of seats on its committees.

2.0 Political Groups

2.1 Where Members of the Council are divided into political groups, the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 place a duty on the Council to review the allocation between those groups of seats on its Scrutiny Committees and Regulatory Committees

according to certain principles. The aim is to ensure that the political composition of the Committees, etc, reflects the composition of the Council. The rules of proportionality do not apply to the Executive.

- 2.2 There are three political groups constituted within East Herts Council. Those Members are entitled to a proportion of seats in relation to their relative percentage size. The proposed allocation is set out below. It reflects the outcome of a recent District Council by-election. The newly elected Member has joined the Conservative Group.

<u>Political Group</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>% of Council</u>	<u>Total seats</u>	<u>% as seats</u>
Conservative	45	90	68	68.4
Group of Independents	3	6	5	4.56
Liberal Democrats	2	4	3	3.04
Total	50	100	76	76

<u>Committees</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>GOI</u>	<u>Lib Dem</u>	<u>Total</u>
Community	10	9	0	1	10
Environment	10	9	1	0	10
Corporate Business	10	9	0	1	10
Development Management	12	11	0	1	12
Licensing	15	14	1	0	15
Human Resources	7	6	1	0	7
Audit	7	6	1	0	7
Standards	5	4	1	0	5
Total(s):	76	68	5	3	76

- 2.3 The recommendation at the head of this report identifies the need to allocate seats on the Council's Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees to

political groups as required by legislation.

- 2.4 Political groups nominate the Members of the Council whom they wish to see occupy those seats allocated to them. The nominees need not be a member of the political group which nominates them.
- 2.5 Council must appoint the nominees of the political groups to the seats allocated.
- 2.6 Members of the Executive may not be appointed to serve on Scrutiny Committees. Executive Members may, if the Council so wishes, be appointed to the Regulatory Committees, the Audit and Human Resources Committees and Standards Committee.
- 3.0 Conclusion
- 3.1 The recommendations at the head of this report (and the allocation of seats detailed above) reflect the outcome of the recent by-election for Bishop's Stortford Central Ward. The seat allocation is based on relative sizes of groups.
- 3.2 The Leader of the Conservative Group has advised that Councillor Cutting has been nominated to the vacant seat on Community Scrutiny Committee and as a substitute on Corporate Business Scrutiny Committee. If recommendation (A) is approved, then the previously vacant seat on Licensing Committee will be allocated to the Conservative Group. The Leader of the Conservative Group has nominated Councillor G Cutting to this seat.
- 4.0 Implications/Consultations
- 4.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

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