

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 17 OCTOBER 2018

REPORT BY HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

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- **Following the Watton-at-Stone by-election, Council is required to review the allocation of seats on committees.**

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS:</u> That:	
(A)	the allocation of seats on committees, as now detailed, be approved; and
(B)	the wishes of the political group in respect of the appointment to the vacant seat on Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

1.0 Background

1.1 Following the Watton-at-Stone by-election, at which Sophie Bell (Liberal Democrat) was elected, Council is required to review the allocation of seats on committees.

1.2 In May 2018, Council had approved the current allocation of seats on the following basis:

Conservative Group	69
Vacancy	1

1.3 The vacant seat was left on Overview and Scrutiny Committee, pending the outcome of the by-election.

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, Regulatory Committees and Joint 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 These rules specifically refer to proportionality between political groups. Therefore, a sole Member has no entitlement to any seats under the rules of proportionality.

2.3 In East Herts, one political group has been constituted as follows:

Conservatives	45
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This group is entitled to a proportion of seats in relation to their relative percentage size. It is for Council to appoint Members to the seats in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom they have been allocated.

2.4 There are also four sole independent Members and now one Liberal Democrat Member. As stated above, sole Members not in a group have no entitlement to any seats. However, Council may allocate seats to individual Members if it so wishes.

2.5 Council is invited to allocate the vacant seat to the Conservative Group. The Leader of the Conservative Group has indicated the Group's wish that Councillor M McMullen is appointed to fill the vacancy on Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 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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