

17 MAY 2023

## APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	<b>No</b>
Council Plan reference	<b>Not in Council Plan</b>
Wards affected	<b>All wards</b>

### Executive summary

This report considers the appointments to the Council's Committees / Sub-Committees / Groups / Panels and Other Bodies and the appointment of substitutes for 2023/24. It also proposes some changes to the Council's scrutiny committee structure, which are based on a number of factors that are set out in more detail in section 2.7. These changes would not reduce the number of scrutiny meetings overall.

Proposals are presented at Annual Council (when committee appointments are made) in order to avoid significant changes to appointments a short way into the Council year. None of the affected Scrutiny Committees meet in June, which means that Council will be able to consider and agree the details that underpin these changes at June Council.

### 1. Decision/s to be made

#### 1.1 That the following be agreed:

- a) the allocation of Committee / Sub-Committee / Group / Panel seats to Political Groups as set out at Annex A; and
- b) appointments to Committees / Sub-Committees / Groups / Panels and Other Bodies as set out in Annex B (to follow).

#### 1.2 That authority be delegated to the Director – Law and Governance, (upon the written instruction of the appropriate Group Leader and in consultation with the Leaders of other Political Groups) to make amendments to membership of the Council's Committees / Sub-Committees / Groups / Panels and Other Bodies.

#### 1.3 That Regeneration & Renewal Scrutiny Committee be dissolved.

- 1.4 That the following committees be renamed as set out below and that revised Terms of Reference, alongside consequential amendments to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules be subsequently reviewed and approved by full Council in June:
- a) Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee - **Environment & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**;
  - b) Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee - **Housing, Planning and Placemaking Scrutiny Committee**; and
  - c) Scrutiny Management Committee - **Corporate Oversight & Scrutiny Management Committee**.
- 1.5 That Council notes that:
- a) neither Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee, Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee, or Scrutiny Management Committee were due to meet until July 2023; and
  - b) there is no existing procedural requirement that members of Scrutiny Management Committee comprise membership of other Scrutiny Chairs.
- 1.6 That a report be prepared for Council in January 2024 setting out the impact, effect and any subsequent recommendations with regard to the Council's revised scrutiny structure.
- 1.7 That the Council agree to appoint all members of the Council (with the exception of Cabinet members to the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees), as substitutes to all bodies listed above, noting the requirement for councillors to be trained before participating in meetings of the Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and Regulatory Committee.
- 1.8 That the Council agree the exemption of the Chief Officer Appointments Panel from the political balance provisions in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
- 1.9 That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive (in consultation with and in line with the wishes of) the Leaders of Political Groups, to appoint a panel of five members to the Appointments Panel for Directors as follows: one member per Political Group; one member of the Cabinet and the Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive.
2. Why is the decision needed?

### Political balance

- 2.1 In respect of the Council's standing Committees, Sub-Committees, Groups and Panels, the political balance and membership is required to be reviewed post May 2023 elections. Revised political balance (seats allocated to each political group) and membership, must therefore be agreed and this is set out in a separate report (item 9).

- 2.2 It is proposed that 126 committee seats are allocated across 12 committees, in line with the Council's revised political balance; 55 being allocated to the Labour Group, 38 to the Conservative Group and 33 to the Liberal Democrat Group.
- 2.3 It is also recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel be treated as not needing to comply with the Regulations and that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive (in consultation with and in line with the wishes of the Leaders of Political Groups), to appoint 5 members to Appointment Panels for Directors as follows:
- one member per Political Group;
  - one member of the Cabinet; and
  - the Chief Executive / Deputy Chief Executive.

### Substitutes

- 2.4 The Council is also recommended to appoint all members of the Council (with the exception of Cabinet members to the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees), as substitutes to all Standing Committees noting the requirement for councillors to be trained before participating in meetings of the Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and Regulatory Committee.
- 2.5 The formal appointment of substitutes by the Council does not override the requirement to comply with Council Procedure Rule 23 (Substitution on Committees, Sub-Committees and Overview and Scrutiny Committees), which requires written notice to be given by the appropriate Group Leader, Deputy Group Leader, the Chair or Group Spokesperson of the body concerned, to the Monitoring Officer, or his/her representative before the scheduled start time of the meeting to which the substitution is to apply.

### Other bodies

- 2.6 The Council is required to make a number of appointments as follows:

(a) Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

The Council is asked to appoint five councillors as the Council's representatives to the Fire Authority, in accordance with the Buckinghamshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order.

(b) Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

The Council is asked to appoint two representative (one allocated and one co-opted) to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

(c) Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To consider appointing three representative and three deputy representatives (one of each from each of the largest political groups on the Council) to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## Scrutiny arrangements

- 2.7 Based on the views of scrutiny officers and feedback from a range of sources, it is proposed to amend the Council's scrutiny committee structure. In particular, it is intended that the principle of fewer committees to manage will:
- a) mean there are fewer appointments for political groups to manage and make effective appointments to, based on Councillors' interest and expertise;
  - b) provide an opportunity for more detailed scrutiny of topics in ordinary meetings; and
  - c) free up scrutiny resources to better support committees, chairs and service-based officers with research and reports.
- 2.8 Whilst the detailed arrangements and Terms of Reference will subsequently be approved at June Council, the changes are summarised below.
- 2.9 Scrutiny Management Committee will be renamed Corporate & Scrutiny Oversight Committee and will have a reduced role approving the work programmes of other scrutiny committees – something that is practically difficult given the way that work programmes are prepared. Instead, it will focus on overall delivery of the Council plan and corporate performance, significant projects and partnerships (including a statutory community safety meeting), referring matters to other scrutiny committees as appropriate. The Chair will retain constitutional roles in respect of waiving call-in, general exceptions and special urgency. There will be no explicit expectation that other scrutiny chairs sit on this committee, but they may be asked to provide written updates.
- 2.10 Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee will be renamed Environment & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, and will scrutinise highways, landscaping, transport, climate change, and waste. This will allow for more targeted oversight of a number of significant Council contracts and refocus scrutiny of the Council's sustainability objectives.
- 2.11 Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee will be renamed Housing, Planning and Placemaking Scrutiny Committee, which will include regeneration and avoid overlap on strategic and operational housing matters over a number of committees (as previously). It will also have an important role scrutinising the development of the Council's next local plan.
- 2.12 Regeneration and Renewal Committee will be dissolved, based on a reduction in the number of scrutiny topics planned for 2023/24.
- 2.13 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules will be reviewed to reflect structural changes and will also incorporate that all Committees will meet a minimum of 4 times per year, with an additional meeting being made available at the discretion of Chairs and Vice Chairs, without the need for any further approval. There will be a broad expectation that where utilised the extra meeting will undertake more detailed scrutiny of a single topic. Corporate & Scrutiny Oversight Committee will continue to meet five times annually.

2.14 Changes to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules will be presented to June Council.

3. Implications of the decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	
Communication		Procurement	
Energy Efficiency		Workforce	

a) Financial

The proposed changes to scrutiny arrangements achieve a modest saving in respect of a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for a scrutiny chair.

b) Legal

In respect of recommendation 1.8 (composition of Chief officer Appointments Panel), a unanimous resolution of Council is required to appoint outside of the usual political balance requirements.

4. Alternatives

4.1 The Council could choose to:

- a) Make no changes to scrutiny arrangements – this would mean that appointments would need to be agreed to Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee.
- b) Amend the total number and allocation of places on standing committees – but would still need to achieve the legally required political balance.

5. Timetable for implementation

- 5.1 If agreed, the committee seats, allocations and scrutiny changes would be effective immediately.
- 5.2 A further report will be presented to Council in June which will set out the revised Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Term of Reference for affected scrutiny committees.

List of annexes

- Annex A Number of, and allocation of seats to Committees, Sub-Committees, Groups and Panels.
- Annex B Appointment to Committees, Sub-Committees, Groups, Panels and Other Bodies (to follow)