

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## Changes to governance arrangements

### Report summary:

This report is necessary to address changes to the political balance and committee seat allocations arising from the resignations of Susie Bond (Feniton) and Luke Jeffery (Honiton St Michaels) and the election of their replacements, Cllrs Bruce (Feniton) and Bonetta (Honiton St Michaels), at by-elections held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

It also advises of, and seeks Council approval to, changes in the Chairs of the Personnel Committee and Scrutiny Committee.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That Council agrees;

1. The revised political balance and number of committee seats for the political groups as set out in the table at paragraph 3 and committee seat allocations table at Appendix 1;
2. The change in membership of the committees as set out in paragraph 5 below;
3. The Chair of the Personnel Committee shall be the Chair of Council.
4. The Chair of Scrutiny Committee shall be Cllr Tom Wright.

### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council's governance arrangements are up to date and appropriate.

Officer: Henry Gordon Lennox, Monitoring Officer

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance

- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information** None.

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

## Report in full

### Introduction

1. At the Annual Council in May, the Council agreed the political balance on the basis of one vacancy following the resignation of Luke Jeffery (Honiton St Michaels). Since the Annual Meeting Susie Bond has also resigned. By-elections to fill the two vacancies were held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021, where Cllrs Bruce and Bonetta were elected to represent Feniton and Honiton St Michaels respectively.
2. Under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 it is necessary for the Council to review the political balance and committee allocations if there is a change in the political composition of the Council. As the Council has two newly elected councillors and is at its full complement of 60 members, it is necessary to review the political balance and committee allocations. There are two changes suggested to the Chairs of two of the committees.

### Political balance and committee seat allocations

3. Cllr Bruce has joined the Conservative Group and Cllr Bonetta has joined the Democratic Alliance Group. The revised political balance and committee seat numbers is detailed in the table below and it is the view of the Monitoring Officer that this meets the requirements as far as reasonably practicable;

Democratic Alliance Group	25 members	41.67%	47 seats
Conservative Group	22 members	36.67%	41 seats
The Independents	5 members	8.33%	9 seats
Independent Progressive Group	4 members	6.67%	8 seats
Cranbrook Voice	3 members	5%	6 seats

Independent (Independent)	1	1.66%	0 seats
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>111</b>

4. The revised Committee Seat Allocations table based on the above political balance and seat numbers is contained at Appendix 1. In summary, the Independent Group lose two seats on the Scrutiny Committee and one on the Strategic Planning Committee, the Democratic Alliance Group gain one seat each on Scrutiny and Strategic Planning while the Conservative Group gain a seat on Scrutiny.

Committee appointments

5. In order to reflect the committee seat allocations and also the wishes of the Groups, the following changes are proposed;
- a. The Independents lose both Cllrs Bailey and C Wright from Scrutiny and Cllr Pook from Strategic Planning. The Conservatives are nominating Cllr Bruce to sit on the Scrutiny Committee. The Democratic Alliance Group are nominating Cllrs Millar and Bonetta to take the seats on Scrutiny and Strategic Planning respectively.
  - b. In addition, Cllr Brown is stepping down from the Scrutiny Committee to be replaced by Cllr Tom Wright. Cllr Brown will replace Cllr Tom Wright on the Planning Committee. Cllr Parr will replace Cllr De Saram on Personnel Committee with Cllr De Saram being the substitute member.
  - c. In addition, and following the resignation of Susie Bond, The Independents are proposing Cllr Pook takes those seats on Overview and HRB committees and Cllr C Wright takes the seat on the Planning Committee.
  - d. The Independent Group are also switching the membership of the Personnel Committee so that Cllr Thomas sits on the committee with Cllr Jarvis being the substitute member.

Chair of Personnel Committee

6. Following discussions it is proposed that the Chair of Council should chair the Personnel Committee rather than the Portfolio Holder for Council & Corporate Coordination.

Chair of Scrutiny Committee

7. The Conservative Group, as the formal opposition, are entitled to nominate the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. With Cllr Brown stepping down from the Scrutiny Committee, the Conservative Group wish Cllr Tom Wright to be appointed as the new Chair.

**Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations of this report.

**Legal implications:**

The legal position in relation to committee allocations is as detailed in the report. It is permissible for the Council to agree to delegate decisions to the officers in the way indicated.