

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

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:

Following Cllrs Bonetta and Millar leaving the Democratic Alliance Group and forming the Labour Group it is necessary to address changes to the political balance, committee seat allocations and committee appointments arising from the creation of a Labour Group for the purposes of the Council's administration. The report deals with changes arising as a consequence.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

#### That Council;

1. **Agree 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. **Agree the change in membership of the committees as set out in paragraph 5 below;**
3. **Agree that Cllr Woodward be appointed to the vacant Scrutiny Committee seat; and recommend that Senior Officers approve what is agreed.**

### 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

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## Report in full

### Introduction

1. 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.
2. With Cllrs Bonetta and Millar leaving the Democratic Alliance Group and forming a Labour Group, it is therefore necessary to review the political balance, committee allocations and committee appointments.

### Political balance and committee seat allocations

3. 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	23 members	38%	43 seats
Conservative Group	22 members	37%	41 seats
The Independents	5 members	8%	9 seats
Independent Progressive Group	4 members	7%	8 seats
Cranbrook Voice	3 members	5%	6 seats
Labour Group	2 members	3%	4 seats
Independent (Independent)	1	2%	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 Democratic Alliance Group loses seats on Scrutiny, Overview, Strategic Planning and Licensing & Enforcement Committees. The

Conservative Group loses a seat on the Scrutiny Committee and gains a seat on Strategic Planning Committee. The Independents lose a seat on the Planning Committee and gain a seat on the Scrutiny Committee. The Labour Group is allocated seats on the Scrutiny, Overview, Planning and Licensing and Enforcement Committees.

#### Committee appointments

5. Cllrs Bonetta and Millar no longer hold seats allocated to the Democratic Alliance Group. So in order to give effect to the revised committee seat allocations and also the wishes of the Groups, the following changes are proposed;
  - a. The Labour Group are appointing Cllr Bonetta to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cllr Millar to the Planning and Licensing & Enforcement Committees
  - b. The Democratic Alliance Group are nominating Cllr Colman to the Overview Committee and removing Cllr Colman from the Planning Committee.
  - c. The Conservative Group are nominating Cllr Lawrence to sit on the Strategic Planning Committee and removing Cllr Pepper from the Scrutiny Committee.
6. The Independent Group do not wish to put anyone forward to take their allocated seat on the Scrutiny committee. In accordance with Regulation 15 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 where a political group does not wish to fill a seat allocated to it, then it is for the authority to make such appointment as it sees fit. Having asked the Groups for nominations, the only Group nominating a councillor for appointment is the Democratic Alliance Group who have put forward Cllr Woodward. Council is therefore asked to agree to Cllr Woodward taking the vacant Scrutiny seat.

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#### **Financial implications:**

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

#### **Legal implications:**

The legal position in relation to the political balance and committee allocations is as detailed in the report.