

7. POLITICAL BALANCE: SECTION 15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989; THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COMMITTEES AND POLITICAL GROUPS) REGULATIONS 1990

REPORT OF: Monitoring Officer: Tom Clark
Email: tomc@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477459
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision No

Purpose Of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to set out the political balance of the Council, for the 2008/09 Council year.

Recommendations

2. That for the year 2008/09:
 - a. The Performance and Scrutiny Committee comprises 20 members consisting of 11 Conservatives and 9 Liberal Democrats.
 - b. The Area Planning Committees each comprise 12 members consisting of 19 Conservatives over the 3 Committees, 16 Liberal Democrats over the 3 Committees and Labour 1 seat over the 3 Committees, having regard to the desirability of having local members and members representing each ward within the planning area serving on the Sub-Committee.
 - c. The Better Environment Advisory Group, the Better Lives Advisory Group and the Better Services Group each comprise 10 members consisting of 6 Conservatives and 4 Liberal Democrats.
 - d. The Licensing Committee comprises 12 members consisting of 7 Conservatives and 5 Liberal Democrats.
 - e. The Standards Committee comprises 5 Council members consisting of 3 Conservatives (other than the Leader), 2 Liberal Democrats, 4 independent persons and 3 representatives of town/parish councils.
 - f. The District Planning Committee comprises 18 members drawn equally from the membership of the three Area Planning Committees consisting of 10 Conservative and 8 Liberal Democrats
 - g. The Audit Committee comprises 11 members consisting of 6 Conservatives and 4 Liberal Democrats and 1 Labour member.
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Background

1. Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1989 and the Regulations made thereunder, require the Council to review regularly the political composition of the Council and to determine the size and constitution of its Committees etc. to ensure that the political balance is reflected and maintained in those Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties by allocating seats on

each Committee to each group in direct proportion to each group's overall representation on the Council.

2. In accordance with legislation, the Council is required to consider the political balance of the Council and to determine the allocation of seats on Committees.

The Rules And Principles Of Political Balance

3. The political composition of the Council is:

Conservatives	30 seats (55.55%%)
Liberal Democrats	23 seats (42.59%)
Labour	1 seat (1.85%)

4. The principles of political balance require that:

1. not all seats on any committee or sub-committee are allocated to the same group.
2. the majority of seats on the committee/sub-committee is allocated to a particular group if that group has a majority of seats on the Council.
3. subject to 1 and 2 above that the number of seats allocated to any group on the total of all committees have the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council.
4. subject to 1, 2 and 3 above that the number of seats on each committee allocated to each group bears the same proportion to the proportion on the full Council.

The Effect of the Rules on the Composition of Committees

5. The following Committees and Advisory Groups are currently established:

3 Area Planning Committees, each having	12 members
Performance and Scrutiny Committee	20 members
Better Lives Advisory Group	10 members
Better Services Advisory Group	10 members
Better Environment Advisory Group	10 members
Licensing Committee	12 members
Standards Committee	5 members (plus four independent persons and three town/parish representatives)
District Planning Committee	18 members
Audit Committee	11 members

This report assumes that the Council will wish to establish these Committees for the year 2008/09. If there is to be any change in the number or size of any of the Committees then the allocation of seats will have to be recalculated.

6. Since May 2001, the membership of each of the Area Planning Committees has been 12 and the total allocation of seats to those committees was calculated as a whole and distributed on each committee to reflect the local

political situation. The same principles and allocation have been adopted for the current year.

7. Subject to the proposals in this report being adopted, the composition of Committees of the Council will be as follows :

Performance and Scrutiny 20 Members Committee

Conservatives	11
Liberal Democrats	9

Area Planning Committees

12 members on each committee

Conservatives	19 members over three committees
Liberal Democrats	16 members over three committees
Labour	1 member over three committees

Better Lives Advisory Group

10 members

Conservatives	6
Liberal Democrats	4

Better Services Advisory Group

10 members

Conservatives	6
Liberal Democrats	4

Better Environment Advisory Group

10 members

Conservatives	6
Liberal Democrats	4

Licensing Committee

12 members

Conservatives	7
Liberal Democrats	5

Standards Committee

5 members (plus four independent persons and three town/parish representatives)

Conservatives	3
Liberal Democrats	2

District Planning Committee

18 members (drawn equally from the membership of the three Area Planning Committees)

Conservatives	10
Liberal Democrats	8

Audit Committee

11 members

Conservatives	6
Liberal Democrats	4
Labour	1

Financial Implications

8. None

Other Material Implications

9. None.

Background Papers

None

9. REVISED PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2008/09

REPORT OF: HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SCRUTINY
Contact Officer: David Pollington – Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny
Email: davidp@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 47722
Wards: All
Affected:
Key Decision: No

Purpose Of Report

1. To approve a revised Programme of Meetings for 2008/09.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Revised Programme attached to this report as Appendix 1 be approved.
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Background

3. Each year the Council sets a Programme of Meetings and a Programme for 2008/09 was approved in December 2007. In April 2008, the Council, as part of the Planning Committee Review, decided to retain the three Area Planning Committees and to establish a District Planning Committee. The first two meetings of the District Planning Committee in June and July 2008 will be used for Member training purposes.

The Programme of Meetings has been amended to take account of this decision and also to add two Council meeting dates in January and March 2009.

The programme will be reviewed in the light of any decisions made regarding the timing of Cabinet at the meeting on 7th May.

Financial and Other Material Implications

This report has no financial or other material implications.

APPENDIX 1

2008/09 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Date	Meeting	Time
2008		
01-May	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
14 May	Annual Council	7:00PM
15 May	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
21-May	<i>Member Training</i>	6:30PM
22-May	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
29-May	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
04-Jun	<i>Masterplanning</i>	6:00PM
05-Jun	District Planning Committee (Training)	7:00PM
09-Jun	Cabinet	4:00PM
10-Jun	<i>Member Training</i>	6.30PM
11-Jun	Licensing Committee	7:00PM
12-Jun	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
18-Jun	Council	7:00PM
19-Jun	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
24-Jun	Audit Committee	7:00PM
25-Jun	Performance and Scrutiny Committee	7:00PM
26 Jun	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
01-Jul	Better Environment	7:00PM
03-Jul	Better Services	7:00PM
07-Jul	Cabinet	4:00PM
08-Jul	<i>Member Training</i>	6.30PM
09-Jul	Standards Committee	7:00PM
10-Jul	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
15 Jul	Licensing Sub-Committee 1	6:00PM
16 Jul	<i>Master Planning</i>	6:00PM
17 Jul	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
23-Jul	Council	7:00PM
24 Jul	North Area Planning	7:00pm
29 –Jul	Better Lives	7:00PM
31 Jul	District Planning Committee (Training)	7:00PM
07 Aug	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
14 Aug	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
20-Aug	Licensing Sub-Committee 3	2:00PM
21-Aug	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
01-Sep	Cabinet	4:00PM
02-Sep	Performance and Scrutiny Committee	7:00PM
03-Sep	<i>Member Training</i>	6:30PM
04 Sep	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
08-Sep	Planning and Housing Tour (North)	2:30PM
09-Sep	Planning and Housing Tour (South)	2:30PM

09-Sep	Audit Committee	7:00PM
10-Sep	Better Lives Advisory Group	7:00PM
11 Sep	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
17-Sep	Better Services	7:00PM
18 Sep	District Planning Committee	7:00PM
24-Sep	Council	7:00PM
25-Sep	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
30-Sep	Better Environment Advisory Group	7:00PM
01-Oct	Standards Committee	7:00PM
02 Oct	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
06-Oct	Cabinet	4:00PM
07-Oct	<i>Master Planning</i>	6:00PM
08-Oct	Better Services	7:00PM
09-Oct	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
15-Oct	Council	7:00PM
16 Oct	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
30 Oct	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
03-Nov	Cabinet	4:00PM
04-Nov	<i>Member Training</i>	6.30PM
06-Nov	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
12-Nov	Council	7:00PM
13 Nov	North Area Planning Committee	7:00pm
14-Nov	Licensing Sub-Committee 2	2:00PM
18-Nov	Performance and Scrutiny Committee	7:00PM
20-Nov	Special Better Environment Advisory Group	7:00PM
25-Nov	better lives Advisory Group	7:00PM
27-Nov	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
01-Dec	Cabinet	4:00PM
02-Dec	Audit Committee	7:00PM
03-Dec	Licensing Committee	7:00PM
04-Dec	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
10-Dec	Council	7:00PM
11 Dec	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
16-Dec	Licensing Sub Committee 3	2:00PM
17-Dec	Better Services Advisory Group	7:00PM
18 Dec	District Planning Committee	7.00PM
2009		
07-Jan	Performance and Scrutiny	7:00PM
08-Jan	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
12-Jan	Cabinet	4:00PM
13-Jan	Better Environment Advisory Group	7.00PM
15-Jan	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
20-Jan	Standards Committee	7:00PM
21-Jan	Licensing Sub-Committee 3	2:00PM
21 Jan	Council	7:00PM
22 Jan	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
27Jan	<i>Member Training</i>	6:30PM

28-Jan	Better Lives Advisory Group	7:00PM
29 Jan	District Planning Committee	7:00PM
02-Feb	Cabinet	4:00PM
03-Feb	Better Services Advisory Group	7:00PM
05 –Feb	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
11-Feb	Performance and Scrutiny Committee	7:00PM
12-Feb	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
18-Feb	<i>Master Planning</i>	6.00PM
19 Feb	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
25-Feb	Council – budget	7:00PM
02-Mar	Cabinet	4:00PM
05-Mar	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
10-Mar	Audit Committee	7:00PM
11-Mar	<i>Member Training</i>	6:00PM
11 Mar	Council	7:00PM
12-Mar	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
17-Mar	Licensing Committee	7:00PM
18-Mar	Better Environment Advisory Group	7:00PM
19 Mar	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
24 Mar	Licensing Sub-Committee 4	6:00PM
01-Apr	Standards Committee	7:00PM
02-Apr	Central Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
6 Apr	Cabinet	4:00PM
07-Apr	<i>Master Planning</i>	6:00PM
09-Apr	South Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
15-Apr	Council	7:00PM
16 Apr	North Area Planning Committee	7:00PM
13-May	Annual Council	7:00PM

10. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBER ALLOWANCES – ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

REPORT OF: HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND SCRUTINY
Contact Officer: David Pollington – Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny
Email: davidp@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 47722
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision No

Purpose Of Report

1. To request Council to consider whether to amend the rate of allowances paid to the Independent Remuneration Panel on Member Allowances, and to establish whether regular review or update of the allowance is required.

Recommendation

2. **Council is recommended to agree that:**
 - (i) **The payment to the Independent Remuneration Panel on Member Allowances of the sum of £75 to each Panel Member per meeting be discontinued;**
 - (ii) **A flat rate annual allowance of £500 be paid to each Panel Member;**
 - (iii) **The flat rate allowance set out in (ii) above be increased annually in line with the NJC annual pay settlement for officers, until such time as a further review is carried out;**
 - (iv) **A further review of the allowances paid to the Independent Remuneration Panel on Member Allowances will be carried out when requested by the Panel, the Council or on the advice of officers; and**
 - (v) **An additional allowance be paid to the Chairman of the Panel equivalent to 10% of the annual allowance paid to a Panel Member.**
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Background

3. The Independent Remuneration Panel on Member Allowances was established in 2001, following the Local Government Act 2000. When the Panel was appointed, a rate of allowances paid to the Panel was set at £75 per meeting. This has not been increased since that time.
4. Members are therefore asked to consider whether this sum should now be revised and if the payment on the basis of attendance at meetings should be continued or if a different basis of allowance should be considered.

Allowances Paid to the Panel – Issues for Consideration

5. As stated above, the current basis for payment to the Panel is on the basis of the number of meetings attended. Research of the payments made in other authorities in the South East has shown that whilst it is not unique, payment on this basis is unusual. It is certainly out of step with the thinking on Member allowances, where payment on the basis of attendance at meetings has been discontinued.
6. The payment was set at the rate of £75 per meeting when the Panel was first appointed and has not been increased since that time. Had the payment been

increased in line with the annual pay settlement for council staff since that time, it would now be £87.50 per meeting.

7. Some authorities pay no allowances at all to their Independent Panel. However this is unusual and the great majority make some payment. Other than payment by way of meetings attended, as at Mid Sussex, the two main methods adopted are a daily or hourly rate, or a flat rate allowance, paid on a similar basis to the Basic Allowance for Members.
8. The daily or hourly rate allowance would be paid based on the work carried out in any one year and would vary depending on workload. It would require the Panel Members to submit claims to be processed and would be the more complicated of the alternative methods for payment of allowances.
9. The flat rate allowance is the most straightforward option. A sum for each year is payable and this does not vary on the basis of the workload of the Panel. No claims would be required and it assists with budgeting on allowances, as variation will not be an issue.
10. The current basis of payment by the meeting allows the amount paid to vary on the basis of the number of meetings that are required. However, the number of meetings held does not necessarily reflect the amount of work carried out. Much of the work of the Panel can be carried out remotely, using electronic communication. To fix payment solely to the number of meetings attended may no longer be appropriate.
11. Looking at the number of meetings held by the Panel for the past four years indicates the following:

Year	Number of Meetings	Payment to each Panel Member	Total
2004	10	£750	£2,250
2005	6	£450	£1,350
2006	4	£300	£900
2007	6	£450	£1,350

This shows that there has been a quite large variation in the amounts paid to the Panel, depending on the number of meetings held. It is not clear however that there was a significant variation in the amount of work the Panel carried out.

12. On average, the number of meetings required has been in the region of six per year, which under the current arrangements gives a payment of £450 per Panel Member, per year. If that amount were to be enhanced to take account of the pay settlements, this would give an annual amount of £525. Council is invited to consider whether it would now be appropriate to move to a fixed basic allowance each year rather than basing the allowance on the number of meetings attended. The Panel has been consulted on the level of the allowance and mindful of the budgetary constraints they have suggested that an appropriate level would be £500 for 2008/09. This amount would be in line with that amount paid by other similar sized authorities in the area which pay a fixed sum and it is recommended that this be the level of allowance set.
13. Council is also invited to consider whether it would be appropriate to adopt a mechanism for reviewing the amount paid to the Panel annually. The most straightforward method would be to agree that the allowance will be increased

annually in line with the NJC pay settlement for staff, until such time as Council carries out a further review. Alternatively, Council could review the amount to be paid at each Annual Council, or leave the matter as at present with no provision for regular reviews. Given the role of the Panel in annually reviewing allowances for Members, it is considered that it would be reasonable to have a provision for regular review in line with the NJC pay settlement. The allowance could be subject to a further full review at some future time at the request of either the Panel or the Council, or on the advice of officers.

14. At present there is no provision for any additional payment to be made to the Chairman of the Panel. Given the role that the Chairman needs to take on leading the review and presenting the report to Council it is suggested that an enhancement for this role should be considered. It is suggested that if the Council did wish to recognise the Chairman's role in this way an enhancement of 10% might be considered to be appropriate.

Financial and Other Material Implications

15. There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

None.