



COUNCIL: 19 July 2017

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**Report of: Borough Solicitor**

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**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE 2017/18**

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Borough wide interest

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To review the allocation of seats on Committees to Political Groups, as a result of the by-elections held on 8 and 29 June 2017 and the establishment of the Our West Lancashire (OWL) Group.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That, for the period ending with the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or such lesser period should the political balance or allocation to political groups change during the year requiring a review under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the allocation of seats to the political groups be as agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 17 May 2017, subject to:

- (i) Standards Committee – replace 1 Conservative Member with 1 OWL
- (ii) Audit & Governance Committee – replace 1 Labour Member with 1 OWL
- (iii) Licensing & Gambling Committee – reduce 1 Labour Member and increase 1 Conservative Member

2.2 That the Leaders of each Political Group advise the Borough Solicitor in relation to the names of the Councillors in respect of 2.1 above and Section 4.1A of the Council's Constitution be updated accordingly.

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## **3.0 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES etc**

3.1 At its Annual Meeting, the Council is under an obligation, under Section 15(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, to review the representation of the Political Groups on Committees and Sub-Committees. Under the Act, the numbers of seats on ordinary Committees have to be aggregated and allocated to the proportion that each political group bears to the total members of the Council, in so far as reasonably practicable. This was undertaken at the Annual meeting in May 2017 when the membership of the Council was then 52 plus 2 vacancies. The Labour Group had 31 members – 57.41% of the total membership, the

Conservative Group had 20 members – 37.04% of the total membership and ‘Our West Lancashire’ had 1 member (1.85%), which did not at that time constitute a Political Group.

- 3.2 Of the seats available in Committees, these were allocated to the Labour Group and the Conservative Group, in line with the above. The allocation of remaining seats not allocated to any Political Group (two) were allocated to the Member who did not belong to a Political Group at the Council's discretion and in accordance with the regulations.
- 3.3 On 30 June 2017, the Chief Executive received notification to establish a group 'Our West Lancashire' and subsequently a review of the representation of different political groups on Committees has taken place. The Labour Group continues to have 31 Members – 57.41% of the total membership, the Conservative Group has 21 members – 38.89% of the total membership and Our West Lancashire has 2 members – 3.70%.
- 3.4 Of the 111 seats available on the Committees, the Labour Group are entitled to 64 seats, the Conservative Group are entitled to 43 seats and Our West Lancashire are entitled to 4 seats. The effect of the calculation is that from those seats that were allocated at the Annual meeting, including those under the Council's discretion, the Labour Group must reduce its total number overall by 2 committee seats; the Conservative Group remain the same number of seats overall; and Our West Lancashire gain 2 seats overall. Based on the calculations, proposals for the change in allocation of seats are listed in paragraph 2.1.
- 3.5 There is no legal requirement under the 1989 Act to aggregate the number of seats on ordinary sub-committees. The Act simply requires the seats on such sub-committees to be allocated to the political groups in the same proportion as each group bears to the whole Council. Political balance rules do not apply to Working Groups or Commissions.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 4.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The entitlement to seats under the Council's Political Management Structure is set out in Section 4.1A of the Council's Constitution.

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#### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

None.