



Forest of Dean  
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —

Council name	<b>Forest of Dean District Council</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 25 May 2023</b>
Report Number	<b>LD.712</b>
Subject	<b>ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OTHER COUNCIL BODIES</b>
Wards affected	ALL
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Summary/Purpose	This Report sets out those matters reserved to Council as its Annual Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To establish the allocation of seats to political groups based on proportionality and to agree arrangements for making the necessary adjustments to proportionality based appointments to individual committees.</li><li>• To make appointments to committees and other council bodies for the Civic Year 2023/24.</li><li>• To make appointments to the positions of Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees for the Civic Year 2023/24.</li></ul>
Annexes	Annex A- Details of the committees and other groups for which appointments are to be made. An updated Annex A setting out the nominations from the Group Leaders will be tabled at the meeting.
Recommendation	Full Council is recommended to:  <i>a) Agree that, in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council shall continue to apply the political balance provisions under the Act;</i>  <i>b) Appoint Councillors to serve on the Council's Committees and other groups as set out in Annex A for a term of office expiring at the next Annual Meeting of the Council;</i>

	<p><i>c) Appoint Chairs and Vice Chairs for the Council's Committees for the Civic Year, 2023/24 by asking members of each Committee to stand and elect their Chair and Vice Chair.</i></p> <p><i>NB: Please note that it is not necessary to appoint chairs or vice chairs to the permanent Working Groups.</i></p>
Corporate priorities	Appointments reflect all corporate priorities.
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

## **1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1. Under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council must review the representation of the different political groups on committees and other relevant Council bodies at the annual council meeting or as soon as practicable after that meeting. The statutory provisions have been added to by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 as amended in 1991.
- 1.2. The Constitution requires the annual meeting of Council to appoint councillors to serve on the Council's committees and other council bodies for the civic year 2023/24.
- 1.3. It is for each committee to elect its Chairs and Vice-Chairs. However it is the custom and practice of the Council for this to be done at the annual meeting by inviting the newly elected committee to stand and call for nominations so that a vote can be taken. Election for the other council groups can take place at their first meeting.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The legislation requires the Council to allocate committee seats to political groups in proportion, as far as is reasonably practicable to the size of those groups on the Council and that the Council review that allocation each year at the annual meeting. The requirement is for representation to be proportional on each committee and across the relevant committees taken as a whole, subject to Section 15 (5) (b) of the 1989 Act which provides that where the majority of seats on the Council are held by one political group, that group shall have a majority on all bodies to which appointments are made.
- 2.2. Membership of political groups of the Council will be reported to the annual meeting elsewhere on the agenda. This will then inform the proportionality calculation for each committee.
- 2.3. Under the Council's political groups scheme, if the Council is unable to make appointments or matters change during the year the Head of Paid Service is authorised to consult with the group leaders and following that consultation to adjust the number and allocation of seats to each group to give effect to the rules on proportionality and to make appointments as necessary, in accordance with the nominations of the group leaders.
- 2.4. It is open to the Council or a committee or other relevant council body carrying out a review, to adopt some other arrangement and allocate seats on a different basis other than that prescribed by the legislation. Notice of such a proposal must be given in the council summons, and a decision would have to be made without any member voting against the arrangement. This is known as a nem-con vote by the Council. Abstentions from voting do not invalidate the nem-con vote. Notice has been given on the agenda so that Council is not denied that opportunity.
- 2.5. Committee membership is for one year with the appointments made at the annual meeting.
- 2.6. Members who serve on the Cabinet cannot serve on the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Scrutiny Panel. It is also good practice that Cabinet Members do not serve on the Audit, Planning or Licensing Committees and has been custom and practice at this authority in the past.
- 2.7. Under the Constitution, Members cannot serve on the Planning or Licensing Committee unless they have received training. Training Sessions have been prepared as part of the Member induction programme.
- 2.8. Council Appointments to Outside Bodies are dealt with in a separate report on the agenda.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. Budgets are in place to support the administration of the Council during the civic year.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There is a risk that if appointments are not made this could result in a delay in decision making for the Council.

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**6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. An effective committee structure and decision making process is central to the success of the council's improvement programme. There is a risk that if appointments are not made this could result in a delay in decision making for the Council.

**7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1. None

**8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None

**9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1. None identified

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1. None identified