

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 7 June 2016



Subject: Overview & Scrutiny Select Committees – Membership 2016/17

Officer contact for further information: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required

- (1) That the Committee make appointments to membership of the select committees for 2016/17, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny rules of the Council's Constitution; and**
- (2) That the Committee make appointments to the positions of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each select committee for 2016/17.**

Report

Introduction

1. (Director of Governance) As the Committee are aware, an Overview and Scrutiny framework based on a structure of four 'select committees', was established from the commencement of the last municipal year. Details of the select committee framework and the responsibilities of each select committee, which now reflect the management structure of the Council, are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny rules set out within Article 6 of the Council's Constitution require that the Committee determine the number of select committees and review whether they should continue in being, at its first meeting of each municipal year. Additionally, the membership of the select committees is to be appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting each year, as such appointments are reserved to the Committee and not made by the Council at its annual meeting.
3. For 2015/16, membership of each of the select committees comprised eleven members. However, the Overview and Scrutiny rules also provide that membership of the select committees must reflect pro rata requirements and the lowest number of members required to achieve cross-party representation, whilst also allowing for the inclusion of members who are not members of a political group or are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As a result of the change in the political make-up of the Council arising from the recent local elections, there are a number of options available to achieve the pro rata membership requirements of the Constitution, for the select committees for 2016/17.

Select Committee Membership – Pro Rata

4. If a strict pro rata calculation is applied to the select committees for 2016/17 to achieve a membership of eleven seats as for 2015/16, the allocation of seats on the basis of the current political make-up of the Council, would be as follows:

Conservative Group: 7
Green Party Group: 0
Liberal Democrat Group: 1
Loughton Residents Association Group: 2
UKIP Group: 0
Independent Members: 0

5. In this scenario, the eleventh seat on the select committees would be most logically allocated to the Loughton Residents Association Group (which would then have three seats), by virtue of that group achieving the 'smallest' rounding down as a result of the pro rata calculation applied to committees of eleven members.
6. However, it should be noted that this approach does not provide for select committee membership to include members of all political groups, or councillors that are not currently members of a political group.

Select Committee Membership – Constitutional Requirements

7. The lowest number of members necessary to reflect pro rata requirements in the membership of the select committees for 2016/17, whilst also achieving the cross-party requirements of the Overview and Scrutiny rules of the Constitution, is fifteen members. An increase in the number of members of each select committee to fifteen would result in the allocation of seats on the committees as follows:

Conservative Group: 9
Green Party Group: 1
Liberal Democrat Group: 1
Loughton Residents Association Group: 3
UKIP Group: 1
Independent Members: 0

8. This approach also does not provide for select committee membership to include councillors that are not currently members of a political group.

Select Committee Membership – Alternative Membership Arrangement

9. If membership of the select committees was to be extended to fifteen members for 2016/17 on a pro rata basis as above, such arrangement would provide for an additional seat on each committee to be allocated to both the Conservative and the Loughton Residents Association Groups (and the allocation of a single seat to each of the Green Party and UKIP Groups). In order to accommodate independent member representation on the committees for the next year, the Conservative and Loughton Residents Association Groups might wish to consider relinquishing one or more seats arising from the extension of membership, in order that a position on each select committee may be filled by an independent member.
10. This approach would achieve the cross-party membership requirements of the Overview and Scrutiny rules, whilst also allowing the inclusion of members that are not members of a political group. This would result in the allocation of seats on the committees as follows:

Conservative Group: 8 or 9
Green Party Group: 1
Liberal Democrat Group: 1
Loughton Residents Association Group: 2 or 3
UKIP Group: 1
Independent Members: 1 or 2

11. However, as the select committees are required to be appointed on a pro rata basis,

the implementation of this arrangement would require no member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to vote against it at the meeting.

12. The Committee is requested to consider the issues set out above and to make appointments to membership of the select committees for 2016/17, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny rules of the Council's Constitution. Nominations to the select committees that have been submitted by Group Leaders are set out in the schedule attached as Appendix 2.
13. Any further nominations will be reported at the meeting. Where the number of nominations exceeds the available places, the Committee will be required to vote on these appointments.

Select Committees - Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

14. Appointment to the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each of the select committees are also reserved to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These appointments are excluded from the calculation arising from the existing protocol on the allocation of Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions for other committees, sub-committees and panels.
15. The Committee is requested to make appointments to the position of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each select committee for 2016/17. Nominations for the respective Chairman and Vice-Chairman submitted by Group Leaders are also set out in Appendix 2 and any further nominations will be reported at the meeting. Where more than one nomination is received for each position, the Committee will be required to vote on these appointments.

Select Committees – Terms of Reference and Work Programme

16. The terms of reference and draft work programme for each select committee for 2016/17, will be presented to the next meeting for consideration.