

SUBJECT:	Membership of Licensing and Planning Committees
REPORT OF:	Chief Executive, Bob Smith
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Joanna Swift, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
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WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Not ward specific</i>

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a recommendation from Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee regarding a reduction in the number of Members on the Licensing and Planning Committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS to Full Council:

1. **That the Council's Constitution be amended to reflect the following changes:**
 - i) **That the Licensing Committee comprises of 10 Members (reduced from 12) and the quorum for a meeting be 3 Members (remains the same).**
 - ii) **That the Planning Committee comprises of 10 Members (reduced from 12) and the quorum for a meeting be 6 Members (remains the same).**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

The current appointment of 12 members to each of the Licensing and Planning Committees represents almost half of the 28 members of the Council. In view of the reduced workload of the Licensing Committee in recent years, the proposal to reduce membership of that committee to 10, whilst maintaining a quorum of 3 was considered appropriate and it was noted this reduction was supported by the Chairman of the Committee. The case for reducing the membership of Planning Committee to more appropriately reflect the overall size of the Council was noted but it was considered that the current quorum of 6 members should be maintained to avoid a negative effect on public perception of committee meetings, especially when declarations of interest were received from members.

3. Content of Report

Planning Committee

- 3.1 12 members are currently appointed to the Planning Committee. The total number of members on the Council is 28. This means that almost half of the Council's members are on this Committee. It is proposed that the number of members on the Planning Committee be reduced from 12 to 10 members to more appropriately reflect the overall size of the Council.
- 3.2 The current quorum for Planning Committee is 6 members (i.e. half the number of Committee members). A reduction in membership would normally also be reflected in the number of members required for a quorum. On the basis of a 10 –member committee the quorum would reduce to 5. However, the adverse perception from a member of the public, applicant or

objectors point of view if only 5 members were present at a meeting where planning matters affecting them were being determined needs to be considered. Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee therefore recommend that a quorum of 6 be maintained.

Licensing Committee

- 3.3 12 members are currently appointed to the Licensing Committee and again this means that almost half of the Council's members are on this Committee. It is proposed that the number of members on the Licensing Committee be reduced from 12 to 10 members to more appropriately reflect the overall size of the Council.
- 3.4 The current quorum for Licensing Committee is 3 members (i.e quarter of the number of members on the Committee. It is proposed that the quorum for Licensing Committee remain at 3 members as a reduction to 2 members could be perceived as being too low by applicant and objectors when licensing matters are being considered.

Temporary changes and substitutes

- 3.5 A revised Constitution was adopted at Full Council on 27 February 2018 and now includes provisions for making temporary changes to the membership of Committees. This would allow another Council member to be appointed temporarily to the Licensing Committee when an ordinary member of the Committee will be absent for the whole of that meeting. The Council's Constitution does require that a member of Licencing Committee must have undertaken the required training relevant to licensing functions prior to taking part in that meeting. This would also apply to members appointed temporarily to the Committee.
- 3.6 The Planning Committee Terms of Reference already includes provision for substitute members, so that another member of the Council may attend the meeting in the absence of a Planning Committee member for the whole of a meeting. There is a requirement in the Constitution that a substitute member must have undertaken the required member training for Planning Committee prior to taking part in that meeting.

4. Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial

As there are no material financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report the proposed changes can be met within existing budgets. There may however be a reduction in the number of mileage claims from members for attending Licensing and Planning Committee meetings as there will be fewer members attending those meetings.

4.2 Legal

Changes to the Council's Constitution can only be made by Full Council.

5. Links to Council Policy Objectives

The recommendations in this report aim to support the delivery of the Council's Objective 1 (Efficient and effective customer focused services).

6. Next Steps

If agreed by Full Council the necessary changes will be made to the Council's Constitution and appointments to Planning and Licensing Committee made in accordance with the reduced membership numbers.

Background Papers:	None other than referred to in this report
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