

SUBJECT:	<i>Proposed reduction to the number of Members on the Licensing and Planning Committees</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Chief Executive, Bob Smith</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Joanna Swift, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
REPORT AUTHOR	Mat Bloxham, Democratic & Electoral Services Manager
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>Not ward specific</i>

1. Purpose of Report

The Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee is asked to consider a proposal to reduce 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 5 Members (reduced from 6).**

2. Reasons for Recommendations

The Council has 28 members in total and 12 members are currently appointed to the Licensing and Planning Committees. The current terms of reference for the Licensing and Planning Committees are attached as an appendix. Members are asked to review this arrangement and consider a proposal to reduce the number of members on each of those Committees.

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. Members are therefore asked to consider whether this number of Committee members is appropriate in light of the total number of members on the Council.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the number of members on the Planning Committee be reduced from 12 to 10 members.
- 3.3 A quorum is the minimum number of members whose presence is necessary at a meeting for the valid transaction of business. The current quorum for Planning Committee is 6 members (i.e half the number of Committee members).

- 3.4 Members are asked to consider the quorum of the Planning Committee alongside any proposed change to the number of members appointed to the Committee. It is therefore proposed that the quorum for Planning Committee be reduced from 6 to 5 members so that it is reduced by the same proportion as that of the number of members on the Committee. Members should consider the 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.

Licensing Committee

- 3.5 12 members are currently appointed to the Licensing Committee. Similarly to Planning Committee this means that almost half of the Council's members are on this Committee. Members are asked to consider if this number of Committee members is appropriate in light of the total number of members on the Council.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the number of members on the Licensing Committee be reduced from 12 to 10 members.
- 3.7 The current quorum for Licensing Committee is 3 members (i.e quarter of the number of members on the Committee). Members are asked to consider the quorum of the Licensing Committee alongside any proposed change to the number of members appointed to the Committee. It is proposed that the quorum for Licensing Committee remain at 3 members as it is considered that a reduction to 2 members could be perceived as being too low when licensing matters, detailed in Appendix 1, are being considered.
- 3.8 Licensing Sub Committee meetings consist of 3 Members plus a reserve. Members of the Licensing Sub Committee are appointed from the membership of the Licensing Committee. A reduction in the number of Members on the Licensing Committee would reduce the pool of Members that could be appointed to a Licensing Sub Committee. There was however only 1 Licensing Sub Committee meeting held in 2016/17 and 2 meetings held during 2017/18.

Temporary changes & substitutes

- 3.9 The Council's Constitution has recently been reviewed by this Committee and its recommendations will be considered by Full Council on 27 February 2018. One of the proposed changes to the Constitution that will be considered at that meeting is that temporary changes may be made in relation to appointments to 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 must have undertaken the required training relevant to Licensing Committee prior to taking part in that meeting. This would also apply to members appointed temporarily to the Committee.
- 3.10 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. This is detailed in Appendix 1. 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.

- 3.11 Any reduction in the number of members on the Planning and Licensing Committees would potentially require the use of temporary appointments and increased use of substitute members to ensure a sufficient number of members are present at those meetings.

4. Consultation

The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's views on the proposed changes to the number of members on the Licensing and Planning Committees. The decision to agree those changes by amending the Council's Constitution must be made by Full Council.

5. Options (if any)

The Committee may choose to agree to recommend to Full Council that:

- a) The recommendations as detailed in this report be agreed;*
- b) That the recommendation be amended (e.g. a different number of members are represented on the Licensing / Planning Committee) and that alternative recommendations be agreed; or,*
- c) That there be no change to the number of members represented on the Licensing and Planning Committee.*

6. Corporate Implications

Reports must include specific comments addressing the following implications;

7.1 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.

7.2 Legal

Changes to the Council's Constitution can only be made by Full Council. A report will therefore be considered by Full Council setting out the recommendations of this Committee.

7. 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).

8. Next Step

Subject to the Committee's comments and recommendations a report will be considered by the Full Council meeting on 16 May 2018.

Background Papers:	None
---------------------------	------