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Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

Extraordinary Council Meeting

To all Members of Uttlesford District Council, you are hereby summoned to attend the extraordinary meeting of the District Council to be held as shown below to deal with the business set out in the agenda.

Date: Thursday, 31st October, 2019
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber - Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Kind regards

Dawn French
Chief Executive

Chair: Councillor R Freeman
Members: Councillors A Armstrong, H Asker, G Bagnall, S Barker, M Caton, A Coote, C Criscione, C Day, A Dean, G Driscoll, D Eke, J Evans, P Fairhurst, M Foley (Vice-Chair), A Gerard, N Gregory, N Hargreaves, V Isham, R Jones, A Khan, P Lavelle, G LeCount, P Lees, M Lemon, B Light, J Lodge, J Loughlin, S Luck, S Merifield, E Oliver, R Pavitt, L Pepper, N Reeve, G Sell, A Storah, M Sutton, M Tayler and J De Vries

AGENDA PART 1

Open to Public and Press

1 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

To receive any apologies and declarations of interest.

**2 Political Proportionality and Appointment to Committees
2019-20**

5 - 10

To consider political proportionality and appointments to the Council's revised committee membership for 2019-20 (appointment list to follow).

This extraordinary meeting of Council has been called to consider committee appointments in light of the revised political proportionality calculation since the formation of the Green Party Group.

MEETINGS AND THE PUBLIC

Members of the public are welcome to attend any of the Council's Cabinet or Committee meetings and listen to the debate. All agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed on the Council's website www.uttlesford.gov.uk. For background papers in relation to this meeting please contact committee@uttlesford.gov.uk or phone 01799 510433/369.

Members of the public and representatives of parish and town councils are permitted to speak or ask questions at any of these meetings. You will need to register with the Democratic Services Officer by midday two working days before the meeting.

The agenda is split into two parts. Most of the business is dealt with in Part I which is open to the public. Part II includes items which may be discussed in the absence of the press or public, as they deal with information which is personal or sensitive for some other reason. You will be asked to leave the meeting before Part II items are discussed.

Agenda and Minutes are available in alternative formats and/or languages. For more information please call 01799 510510.

Facilities for people with disabilities

The Council Offices has facilities for wheelchair users, including lifts and toilets. The Council Chamber has an induction loop so that those who have hearing difficulties can hear the debate.

If you are deaf or have impaired hearing and would like a signer available at a meeting, please contact committee@uttlesford.gov.uk or phone 01799 510430/433 as soon as possible prior to the meeting.

Fire/emergency evacuation procedure

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest designated fire exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by a designated officer. It is vital you follow their instructions.

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

Telephone: 01799 510433, 510369 or 510548

Email: Committee@uttlesford.gov.uk

General Enquiries

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Telephone: 01799 510510

Fax: 01799 510550

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Website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

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Committee: Council

Date:

Title: Political Balance

Thursday, 31
October 2019

Report Author Ben Ferguson, Acting Principal Democratic Services Officer

bferguson@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. Notice was given on 14 October by Cllrs Fairhurst, Gerard and Light of the formation of a new political group (the “Green Party Group”) on the Council. The formation of a new group triggers the need for the Council to review the allocation of seats on committees in accordance with the political balance rules. This report considers the political composition of the Council and recommends that seats on the main committees be allocated to the five political groups as detailed in the report.
2. Following the formation of the Green Party Group on 14 October 2019, the Council is comprised of 23 Residents for Uttlesford, 7 Liberal Democrats, 4 Conservatives, 3 Greens and 2 Uttlesford Independents.

Recommendations

3. That the Council reviews the allocation of seats on its committees and achieves political balance by allocating seats as detailed in the report.
4. That the Council decides how to allocate three seats between the Green group (2 seats) and the Independent Group (1 seat) on the Governance, Audit and Performance, Licensing and Scrutiny Committees respectively.
5. That the Council increases the size of the Standards Committee from eight to nine members.
6. That the Council makes appointments to committees in accordance with the nominations made by group leaders.

Financial Implications

7. None.

Background Papers

8. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None.

Impact

9.

Communication/Consultation	Group leaders have been invited to consider nominations to committees in advance of the meeting.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The political proportionality rules are prescribed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

10. The Local Government Housing Act 1989 requires local authorities to allocate the seats on their committees to political groups represented in accordance, so far as reasonably practicable, with the following four principles of proportionality:-

- a) that not all seats on the body concerned are allocated to the same political group;
- b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
- c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of an authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority;
- d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

11. Ahead of any decision by Council, it has been assumed the number of seats on ordinary committees of the Council (excluding Standards Committee) will be as follows:

Committee	Number of Seats
Governance, Audit and Performance	10
Licensing and Environmental Health	10
Planning	12
Scrutiny	10
Total	42

12. Based on the 42 seats, the number of seats available to each group is as follows:

Group	Percentage	Calculated Seats	Number of Seats
Residents for Uttlesford	58.97%	24.77	25
Liberal Democrats	17.95%	7.54	8
Conservative	10.26%	4.31	4
Green	7.69%	3.23	3
Uttlesford Independents	5.13%	2.15	2
Total	100%	42	42

Standards Committee

13. The Council's Constitution recognises that that the rules of political balance contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 apply but acknowledges that a politically balanced Standards Committee would be undesirable. It provides that subject to no member present voting against the proposal each political group on the Council would have at least one member on the Standards Committee. The aim is to achieve an even balance on the Committee.

Article 9 of the Constitution provides for three nominations for each political group, until the point when the Committee reaches a maximum of 9 members. As there are now 5 political groups it is proposed that the number of seats on Committee is increased to 9 and that membership should be allocated as follows:

Political Party	Number of Seats
Residents for Uttlesford	3
Liberal Democrats	2
Conservatives	2
Green	1
Uttlesford Independents	1
Total	9

Proposal for Allocation of Seats

14. The allocation of the 51 seats is largely straightforward and is shown below. However, there is a complication in that the Green group is entitled to a seat on two seats out of three committees – GAP, Licensing and Scrutiny. The Independent Group is entitled to one seat on these committees. For illustrative purposes, this shows the Independent Group seat allocated to the Scrutiny Committee and the Green Group seats allocated to GAP and Licensing. However, this is a choice for Council.

Committee	No. Seats Available	R4U	LD	CONS	GREEN	IND
Governance, Audit and Performance	10	6	2	1	1	0
Licensing and Environmental Health	10	6	2	1	1	0
Planning	12	7	2	1	1	1
Scrutiny	10	6	2	1	0	1
Standards	9	3	2	2	1	1
Total	51	28	10	6	4	3

Risk Analysis

15. There are no risks associated with this report.

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