

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

1. **POLITICAL BALANCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS 2006/2007**

Report of the Clerk.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the Authority determine:-

- (a) the political balance and membership of committees and panels for 2006/2007;
- (b) whether or not persons who are not elected Members should be appointed to serve on any of the committees and panels of the Authority and whether those persons should be treated as voting or non-voting Members;
- (c) the appointment to the roles of:-
  - Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees;
  - Lead Members for Performance Management and Equality and Diversity and Principal Member for the Joint Consultative Panel (and their nominated deputies).

2. **PURPOSE**

To approve the political balance and membership of committees and panels for 2006/2007.

3. **REPORT DETAILS**

3.1 **Political Balance on Committees**

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that where a Joint Authority is divided into different political groups, it shall review the representation of those groups.

It also has a duty following such a review, to determine the

allocation of committee seats to the different political groups into which the Members of the Authority are divided. Regulations provide for a political group to comprise 2 or more Members.

Based on the information available to me, the current political balance of the Authority is:-

Conservative	13
Labour	11
Liberal Democrat	3

The attached appendix sets out a template showing the political balance on committees for 2006/2007.

#### 4. **Committee Structure, Constitution and Political Balance**

4.1 The Authority is required to decide the constitution of its committees for 2006/2007 and then decide the political balance on each committee using the following formula:-

- (a) Decide the total number of seats on the ordinary committees (disregarding any co-opted Members/advisors);
- (b) Decide the number of Members for each minority political group;
- (c) Decide the proportion of the Membership of those groups to the Membership of the Authority as a whole;
- (d) Apply the proportions to the number of seats in (a).

4.2 For the purpose of this exercise, the Joint Consultative Panel, the Policy Planning Forum and the Standards Committee are not included as the proportionality requirements do not apply to these bodies (see paragraphs 5,6 and 7 below).

4.3 It is proposed that the number of committee seats in 2006/07 be set at 22, and the proposed allocation of seats to political parties based on this number of seats is set out in the Appendix to this report. The number of seats and allocation of seats is the same as in 2005/06.

#### 5. **Joint Consultative Panel**

Because the Joint Consultative Panel (JCP) will comprise employees of the Authority it is not regarded as an ordinary committee for the purposes of Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1989 and the rules regarding proportionality do not therefore

apply. [Representative body membership on JCP – recommendation b above – any decision required?]

6. **Standards Committee**

- 6.1 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Authority has established a Standards Committee. The proportionality requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 do not apply to the Standards Committee.
- 6.2 It is recommended that as in 2005/06 the Standards Committee membership comprise 2 independent persons and 3 elected members (one from each political group). Mr Martin Chambers [Chair] and Mr Colin Topliss were appointed as independent members in 2004/05 until the annual meeting in 2007 following invitations for expressions of interest in the local press.

7. **Policy Planning Forum**

- 7.1 The Policy Planning Forum acts in an advisory capacity only. It is not an ordinary committee for the purposes of Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1989. All Members of the Authority will continue to comprise the Policy Planning Forum.

8. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 The Lead Member for Equality and Diversity will continue to be a member of the Executive Committee to ensure that equality and diversity issues are properly considered in the mainstream decision-making processes of the Authority.
- 8.2 In preparing this report, a brief Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken which did not raise issues that required a full Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The recommendations are legal requirements non-compliance with which would instigate the Monitoring Officer procedure and would render the Authority's decision vulnerable to judicial review.

10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Provision is made in the Authority's budget for the payment of Members' allowances.

SUSAN PHELPS  
CLERK

**Source Documents** None

## Appendix

### West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

#### Political Balance of Committees for 2006/2007

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal Democrat</u>	<u>Total</u>
Appointments	4	4	1	9
Appeals	2	3	1	6
Executive	3	3	1	7
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Total	9	10	3	22
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Joint Consultative Panel	2	3	1	6
Policy Planning Forum	11	13	3	27
Standards	1	1	1	3 + 2 independent members