

**CHANGES TO THE POLITICAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

COUNCIL

Date: 24 May 2017

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**Changes to the political management system**

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

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**1. Purpose of report**

To seek agreement to changes to the Political Management arrangements and the decision making process to reflect the change in political administration.

**2. Recommendations**

**Council is recommended:**

- (i) To agree the reduction of central committees by 8 and their work be re-allocated within the proposed structure (Proposed Committee Structure is appended to this report);**
- (ii) To agree the amended Timetable of Meetings appended to this report, and to delegate authority to the Democratic Services Manager to make any further minor arrangements;**
- (iii) To agree the establishment of 5 Local Area Councils, namely: North Northumberland, Tynedale, Castle Morpeth, Ashington & Blyth and Cramlington & Bedlington as detailed in para 4.1 of this report.**
- (iv) To agree that the duties of the existing seven Overview and Scrutiny Committees be re-allocated to four, namely Family and Children's Services; Health and Well Being; Corporate Services and Economic Growth; and Communities and Place, with the terms of reference as detailed in Appendix Two to the Council Agenda.**
- (v) To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary changes to the Constitution arising from the proposals contained within this agenda;**

- (vi) **To note that a report will be sought from the Independent Remuneration Panel to assess the Special Responsibility Allowances payable in respect of any changes to the responsibilities. However, it is anticipated that the new proposals will save around £62k in allowances compared with the present system.**

### **3. Key issues**

The Annual Meeting of the Council provides the opportunity agree the political management system for the municipal year and appoint those committees necessary to deliver Council priorities.

A number of suggested changes to the political management system are detailed in this report which reflect those priorities and help clarify the decision making process following a new Administration.

### **4. Changes to current decision making process**

#### **4.1 Local Area Councils**

It is proposed that 5 'Local Area Councils' be established: North Northumberland, Tynedale, Castle Morpeth, Ashington & Blyth and Cramlington & Bedlington to replace the current four Area Committees and have added responsibilities. These are committees of the Council and will meet bi-monthly in the evening (6:00 p.m.), with the scope to meet more frequently if required to allow for the timely consideration of planning applications. The full Terms of Reference are as stated in Appendix Two and include responsibility for considering and recommending adjustments to budget priorities in relation to Local Transport Plan issues within their area, and to make decisions in relation to devolved capital highway maintenance allocations, to make and consider local planning applications as per the planning delegation scheme and locally relevant petitions. A list of the Electoral Divisions within each area is contained within Appendix Two to the Council agenda. A map showing the boundaries is also provided.

#### **4.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

It is proposed to re-allocate the duties of the current 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees to 4, namely: Family and Children's Services; Health and Well Being; Corporate Services and Economic Growth; and Communities and Place. The Terms of Reference are detailed in Appendix Two to the Council Agenda. Pre-scrutiny will continue to be operated and meetings will be held bi-monthly.

### 4.3 Liaison Groups

The Town and Parish Council and Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison Groups, and the Armed Forces Forum, will report to Cabinet.

### 4.4 Group Leader Meetings

Regular meetings of the Group leaders will take place.

## 5. Special Responsibility Allowance

A report will be sought from the Independent Remuneration Panel to assess the Special Responsibility Allowances payable in respect of any changes to the responsibilities. However, it is anticipated that the new proposals will save around £62k in allowances compared with the present system.

## 6. Implications

<b>Policy</b>	An efficient and effective political management system and decision making process are central to the delivery of the Council's priorities.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The financial implications will be reflected as part of any necessary changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme.
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
<b>Risk</b>	Risk management will be integrated with other elements of the

<b>Assessment</b>	business planning processes
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Staff, residents and partners will be clearer about the Council's priorities and have a better understanding of the rationale behind decision making. Staff will be able to make a clear link between the Council's priorities and their own service area and roles.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	All

### **Report sign off**

	initials
Finance Officer	AE
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Deputy Chief Executive	DL
Portfolio Holder(s)	

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