

Meeting of the Full Council
Meeting to be held on Thursday, 13 October 2022

Report submitted by: Director of Corporate Services

Part A

Electoral Division affected:
None;

Corporate Priorities:
N/A;

Report of the Political Governance Working Group

Contact for further information:
Josh Mynott, Tel: (01772) 534580, Democratic and Member Services Manager,
josh.mynott@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

Full Council is asked to consider the recommendations of the Political Governance Working Group in relation to:

- (i) The approval of seating arrangements at Full Council.
- (ii) Publishing councillor attendance statistics online.

Recommendation

That Full Council approves that:

- (i) The constitution be amended to reflect the changes proposed to the approval of seating arrangements at Full Council as set out in the report.
- (ii) The principle that councillor attendance statistics be published online be approved, and that the Political Governance Working Group be asked to agree the detail of the proposal for formal approval by the Monitoring Officer.

Detail

The Political Governance Working Group met on 29 September 2022. Amongst the issues considered were changes to how seating arrangements at Full Council are approved and the publication of attendance statistics of councillors on the internet.

Seating Arrangements at Full Council

At present, Standing Order B6 in the constitution states that, for Full Council:

"Each seat in the Council Chamber shall be numbered and allocated to Councillors upon the instruction of the Chairman of the Council".

In effect, this means that the seating arrangements and any changes must be approved by the Chairman.

It is important that the seating arrangement is managed and that councillors sit in the seats allocated to them both for voting and for the purposes of the audio-visual equipment as microphones and camera positions are pre-programmed. It is proposed, however, that rather than be a matter requiring the Chairman's approval, it is something each group can determine, with the requirement simply being that the Chairman is notified in advance. To ensure that this is managed smoothly and allow the necessary administration to take place, it is proposed that such changes must be notified to Democratic Services at least 48 hours before a Full Council meeting at which the changes will apply. If changes are required beyond that time, the consent of the Chairman would still be needed.

It is proposed that the wording of the constitution be changed to:

"Each seat in the Council Chamber shall be numbered and allocated to Councillors in accordance with:

- i. An overall allocation to each political group represented on the council (and to any individual councillors who are not members of a group) agreed by the Monitoring Officer.
- ii. The wishes of the Political Groups within those allocations. Political Groups must inform the Chairman of the Council of the allocation of seats, and any changes to those allocations, at least 48 hours before a meeting of the Full Council.

Any changes made less than 48 hours before a meeting may only be requested in exceptional circumstances and must be agreed by the Chairman".

Publication of Attendance Statistics

A number of other councils across Lancashire and elsewhere publish the attendance statistics for each councillor, accessible via their individual profile pages. Examples include Chorley, Preston City and Burnley Borough Councils.

The Political Governance Working Group supported the proposal in principle that individual attendance statistics should be published in the same way for county councillors.

In supporting the proposal, the Political Governance Working Group highlighted a number of issues requiring further clarification, including:

- Which meetings would be included.



- How the system might reflect when a councillor had been replaced or substituted.
- Whether there were options available for further clarification of an absence (such as "Absent on official council business").
- Whether some further information could be included to clarify that attending meetings was merely one aspect of the work undertaken by councillors.

It was proposed that Full Council be asked to approve the proposal in principle and ask the Political Governance Working Group to consider and finalise the details of the arrangements, for formal approval by the Monitoring Officer.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

There are no significant legal or financial implications.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

| Paper | Date | Contact/Tel |
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

