

SUBJECT:	OPPOSITION ARRANGEMENTS
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	CAROLYN WHEATER, CITY SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To make the necessary changes to the Council's constitution to address the situation where the opposition parties are of equal numbers, and to note the present situation for the years 2025/26.

2. Background

- 2.1 The local elections in May 2024, resulted in equal number of councillors for the two opposition parties. The Council's current constitution does not address this situation, such as which of the opposition parties would be the main opposition party, or whether this position would be shared.

3. Amendment to the Constitution

- 3.1 The proposal to address the above situation, is to add the following wording into the Council's constitution:

"Where there are two or more opposition groups with an equal number of members in each, the designated group leaders of those groups shall be regarded as jointly being appointed to the office of Leader to the opposition, unless those opposition groups have agreed between themselves, who will take the lead as the official opposition group. Such agreement to be formally drawn up and signed by the relevant opposition groups and noted by Full Council."

3.2 Current Proposal

Attached to this report, is a redacted version of the agreement between the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives, to reflect the position for the years 2025/26.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

There are no direct E and D implications arising as a result of this report.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Council is asked to approve the amendments to the Constitution to reflect the position of shared opposition groups and to note the proposal for 2025/26.

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	One
List of Background Papers:	None

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