

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

Report to a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd

Date of Meeting: 4 May 2023

Title of Item: Annual Review of the Council's Political Balance

Contact Officer: Ian Jones, Head of Democratic Services
(Head of Corporate Support Department)

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

The Council is asked to:

- adopt the list of committees and sub-committees to be established for the municipal year, as noted in **Appendix A**, and adopt the seats allocation in the appendix.
- delegate the power to the Head of Democratic Services to make appointments to the committees on the basis of the political balance and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.
- allocate the chairpersonships of scrutiny committees on the basis of the political balance as follows:

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee	Plaid Cymru Group
Care Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group

2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 In accordance with statutory requirements, it is required to undertake an annual review of the Council balance, and this is completed at the annual meeting.

2.1.2 At the meeting of the full Council on **19th May, 2022** it was reported that the Council's political balance was as follows:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Number</u>
Plaid Cymru	44
Independent	23
Lib/Lab	2
Total	69

2.1.3 There have been no changes in the meantime.

2.2 ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

2.2.1 To remind members, the four main rules included in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in relation to the allocation of seats are noted here:-

(a) Every seat on a committee cannot be allocated to the same political group;

(b) The majority of seats on a committee must be allocated to a political group if the number of persons who are members of that group constitute a majority of the Council's members;

(c) Subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on ordinary committees allocated to each political group will be the same as the number of total seats the members of that group have on the Council;

(ch) Subject to paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) above, the number of seats on a committee allocated to each political group will be the same proportion of seats on the committee as the number of seats the members of that group have on the Council.

2.2.2 In order to ensure that these rules are adhered to, the Council has been dealing with committees in different blocks in the past. Also, this makes it easier to ensure that rule (c) in paragraph 2.2.1 above is adhered to.

2.3 CHANGES TO THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

2.3.1 The table in **Appendix A** confirms which committees are to be established for the municipal year.

2.3.2 There is one change this year. Following the decision by the Cabinet on 19/07/2022 there is no need to include the Joint Planning Policy Committee in the total number of seats to be allocated. This change has not affected the allocations of seats to the remainder of the seats on the Council's committees.

2.3.3 The Council is required to adopt the seating allocation in accordance with the political balance as noted in **Appendix A**.

2.4 CHAIRPERSONSHIPS AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONSHIPS

2.4.1 In order to respond to the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2011) in terms of allocation of chairpersonships and vice-chairpersonships the committees are divided into separate blocks.

2.4.2 In accordance with the requirements of sections 66-75 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 it is a requirement to allocate the chairpersonships of scrutiny committees in order to ensure, as far as possible, that political balance is reflected in those chairpersonships and that the groups that are not represented on the executive are given a fair proportion of the chairpersonships.

2.4.3 The only committees in which the chairs are to be allocated on the basis of political balance are the following Scrutiny Committees. The annual review confirms that the **Chairpersonship of two of the scrutiny committees are to be allocated to the**

Independent Group and one of the Chairpersonships to Plaid Cymru.

2.4.4 In accordance with the agreement of the Council Business Group, it is suggested that the Chairpersonships are allocated as follows:

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee	Plaid Cymru Group
Care Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group

2.4.5 There are no statutory or constitutional provisions to control the appointments to the vice-chairpersonships or to the chairpersonships of the remaining committees (other than a member of the executive cannot chair the Licensing Committee).

2.4.6 The committees themselves will elect their chairpersons in these cases subject to the procedural rules limiting the term of a Chairperson to two years.

3. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

3.1 As noted above, the Council's Business Group was consulted.

3.2 STATUTORY OFFICERS' OBSERVATIONS:

Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety

Statutory Finance Officer:

No comments to add from the perspective of financial propriety.

APPENDIX A - ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

A	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Lab/ liberal *	Total
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	12	6	0	18
Communities Scrutiny Committee	11	6	1	18
Care Scrutiny Committee	11	6	1	18
Audit and Governance	8	4	0	12

B	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Lab/ liberal	Total
Democratic Services	9	5	1	15
Planning	9	5	1	15
Central Licensing	10	5	0	15
Language	10	5	0	15
Chief Officers Appointment	10	5	0	15
Employment Appeals	5	2	0	7
Number of seats	95	49	4	148

C	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Lab/ liberal	Total
Pensions	4	2	1	7
Local Joint Consultative Committee	7	4	0	11
SACRE	4	3	0	7

Total seats	110	58	5	173
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* Lib/Lab Group