

# CYNGOR GWYNEDD

## Report to a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd

**Date of Meeting:** 1 May 2025

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

**Contact Officer:** Ian Jones,  
Head of Democratic Services

### 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 allocation of seats and senior salaries as noted 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	Plaid Cymru Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee	Plaid Cymru Group
Care Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group
- adopt the allocation of seats for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the term of this Council unless there is a substantial change to the political balance – there is 1 seat for Plaid Cymru Group and 1 seat for the 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 **9th May, 2024** it was reported that the Council's political balance was as follows:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Number</u>
Plaid Cymru	46
Independent	21
Labour Democrats	2

**Total**

**69**

2.1.3 Since then, the following changes have happened:

- Councillor Gwilym Evans, Plaid Cymru Group was elected to Ward Llanberis in October 2024 following Councillor Kim Jones, Plaid Cymru Group stepping down. There was no change to the political balance.
- Councillor Linda Ann Jones, Ward Teigl, Plaid Cymru Group, stood down from her role as Councillor in February 2025.
- A by-election was held in Ward Teigl on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- Councillor Geraint Parry was elected to Ward Teigl, who has joined the Plaid Cymru group.

2.1.4 Therefore, the Council's political balance is as follows:

Group	Number
Plaid Cymru	46
Independent	21
Labour Democrats	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

## **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.

2.2.3 In simple terms, a standard formula of "number of Group Members/ number of Council Members x number of committee seats" is used as a starting point, with adjustments to full seats being made per committee and per block of committees to identify the best fit for the political balance across all committees.

## 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. There are no changes to the allocation of seats on committees since the allocation adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2024.
- 2.3.2 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 In simple terms, regulations mean that the formula used for calculating the allocation for the Scrutiny chairs is slightly different. The formula (number of Group Members/ Number of council Members x number of Chairs" is the starting point. However, the regulations state that the number must be 'rounded down' for the executive Group. However, in the current case, as Plaid Cymru Group have 46 members, it means that they have 2 Chairs ( $46/69 \times 3 = 2$ ).
- 2.4.4 The only committees in which the chairs are to be allocated on the basis of political balance are the Scrutiny Committees. The annual review confirms that **the Chairpersonship of two of the scrutiny committees are to be allocated to the Plaid Cymru Group and one of the Chairpersonships to be allocated to the Independent Group.**
- 2.4.5 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	Plaid Cymru Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee	Plaid Cymru Groups
Care Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group

- 2.4.6 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 or the Democratic Services Committee.
  - Chairpersonship of the Governance and Audit Committee must go to a Lay Member.
- 2.4.7 The committees themselves will elect their chairpersons in these cases subject to the procedural rules limiting the term of a Chairperson to two years.

## 2.5 NORTH WALES JOINT CORPORATE COMMITTEE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.5.1 The Full Council on 6th March decided to establish a North Wales Joint Corporate Committee Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We are awaiting the final decision of one Council, however to facilitate the Process for the future it is sensible to adopt the seat allocation as part of the annual report.
- 2.5.2 The regulations note "*All appointing Authorities must ensure, to the degree that is practical, that Members of the joint overview and scrutiny committee ..... reflects the balance of the political groups for the time being from the Members of the appointing authority*"
- 2.5.3 Two seats are available for Gwynedd. Once again, the same formula is used as the standard formula to allocate to committee seats, being "number of Group Members/ total number of Members x number of seats on the committee", rounding to the nearest full number. Following the above formula one seat on the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will go to Plaid Cymru Group and one seat will go to the Independent Group. The appointments to the seats will be for the duration of the Council Term, unless there is a significant change to the political balance or lack of commitment from the scrutiny members.

## 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:**

I have advised on this matter, and I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendation.

#### **Statutory Finance Officer:**

*Nothing 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	12	5	1	18
Care Scrutiny Committee	12	5	1	18
Governance and Audit	8	4	0	12

B	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Lab/ liberal	Total
Democratic Services	10	4	1	15
Planning	10	4	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
<b>Number of seats</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>148</b>

C	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Lab/ liberal	Total
Pensions	4	2	1	7
Local Joint Consultative Committee	7	4	0	11
SACRE	5	2	0	7

<b>Total seats</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>173</b>
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### Senior Salaries

In accordance with a previous Council decision, senior salaries will be paid as follows:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- 8 Members of the Cabinet
- Leader of the main opposition group
- Committee Chairs
  - Scrutiny Committees (x3)
  - Planning Committee
  - Licensing Committee (Central and General to be included as one Committee)
  - Pensions Committee
- Civic Head (Chair of the Council)
- Deputy Civic Head (Vice-chair of the Council)