

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>THE ANNUAL COUNCIL</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>12 MAY 2011</b>
<b>TITLE OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL BALANCE</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To review the Council's Political Balance</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>To allocate seats on the Council's Committees</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Head of Democracy and Legal Department</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO LEADER</b>	<b>Councillor Stephen Churchman</b>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council must ensure that the constitution of its committees and sub-committees reflects the strength of various political groups on the Council.
- 1.2 The Council is required to do so at least annually as this needs to be done at the Annual Meeting of the Council.
- 1.3 Following the sudden death of Councillor John R. Jones at the end of March, there are 74 seats on the Council.
- 1.4 Confirmation was received on 14 April, 2011 that Councillor Alan Jones Evans has joined the Plaid Cymru Group from the Independent Group.
- 1.5 As a consequence the Council's political constitution is as follows:-

Plaid Cymru	37
Independent	16
Llais Gwynedd	13
Liberal Democrats	4
Labour	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

## **2. ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES**

- 2.1 To remind members, noted here are the four main rules included in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 regarding the allocation of seats:-
- 2.2 (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 all seats that members of that group has 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 that members of that group has on the Council.

- 2.3 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 above is adhered to.
- 2.4 At the Full Council meeting on 16 December 2010, a decision was made to collaborate with Isle of Anglesey Council to create a Joint Planning Policy Committee including seven members and a substitute member from both Councils based on political balance, which has increased the number of seats on the Council's committees.
- 2.5 Following the loss of one member of the Liberal Democrats Group, the Council needs to consider how it will deal with the allocation of seats on the Council's committees until a by-election has been held in June.
- 2.6 In addition the Council needs to consider the change in the balance between the political groups when allocating seats on the Council committees following one member changing political groups which has caused a slight increase in the number of seats held by Plaid Cymru.
- 2.7 In accordance with the procedure of this Council the Council Business Group met to discuss the matter in order to present a recommendation to the Full Council.
- 2.8 The Council Business Group met twice on 5 April, 2011 and 3 May, 2011.
- 2.9 There are two options available – namely to leave the committees as they are at present and allocate seats between 75 members and keep three vacant seats on the Children and Young People, Central Licensing and Pensions Committees until the Council meeting in July. (see **Appendix A**)
- 2.10 Another option would be to keep three seats vacant as noted in 2.9 and that the Independent Group gives two seats to the Plaid Cymru Group on the Pensions Committee and either the Audit, Planning or Licensing Committee.
- 2.11 The change to the political balance also means that the Plaid Cymru Group has an additional seat on the Joint Planning Committee at the expense of the Labour Group.
- 2.12 The opinion of the Council Business Group was to make the minimum changes possible until the by election in Arllechwedd Ward has been held and therefore decided to recommend to the Full Council the choice as noted in 2.9 above.

### **3. CHAIRPERSONSHIPS AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONSHIPS**

- 3.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Alternative Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2007, it is required to allocate the chairpersonships of committees in order to ensure, as far as practically possible, that the political balance of the authority is reflected in those chairpersonships.
- 3.2 The procedure in this Council is to also allocate the vice-chairpersonships according to political balance and for the Council's Business Group to discuss the arrangements

beforehand.

- 3.3 In accordance with rule 6.2 of the Local Authorities (Alternative Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2007, no member of the same political group as the chair of the Board can be the chair or vice-chair of the Principal Scrutiny Committee or chair of the Audit Committee.
- 3.4 Because of changes to the Liberal Democrats Group, the Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee is vacant and for convenience it is requested that the chair and vice chair of the committee be exchanged. (see **Appendix B.**)
- 3.5 In addition due to the change to the political balance there is a change to the chairpersonships and vice-chairpersonships with the number of chairpersonships held by the Plaid Cymru Group increasing by one while the number of chairpersonships held by the Independent Group decreases by the same amount.
- 3.6 At the Council's Business Group meetings held on 5 April, and 3 May it was agreed, in an attempt to cause the minimum changes possible, not to change the chairpersonships and vice-chairpersonships of the committees with the exception of the Environment Scrutiny Committee until the result of the by-election in Arllechwedd Ward is known and that the matter be referred to the Council in July.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Council is asked to:-
  - i. not to change the allocation of seats on the committees, leaving the committees as they are at present until the result of the by-election in the Arllechwedd Ward is known and keep the seats on the Children and Young People, Central Licensing and Pensions Committees vacant and to receive a report on the matter in the Full Council meeting in July;
  - ii. adopt the exchange of Chair and Vice-chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee;
  - iii. postpone the allocation of chairpersonships and vice-chairpersonships of the remainder of the committees until the meeting of the Full Council in July.

## APPENDIX A

### COUNCIL BOARD AND PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Liberal Democrats	Labour	Single
Council Board	7	4	2	1	1	
Principal Scrutiny Committee	7	3	3	1	1	

### OTHER SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Liberal Democrats	Labour	Single
Development	8	3	3	1		
Environment	7	3	3	1	1	
Children and Young People	7	3	3		1	1
Care	8	3	2	1	1	

### OTHER COMMITTEES

	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	Liberal Democrats	Labour	Single
Audit	7	4	3		1	
Human Resources	6	2	2	1		
Planning	7	4	2	1	1	
Central Licensing	5	3	2			1
Employment Appeals	3	1	1	1	1	
Pensions	2	2	1		1	1
Local Joint Committee	6	2	2		1	
Special Education Joint Committee	4	2	1			
Joint Planning Policy Committee	3	2	1	1	1	
Language	3	2	2			
SACRE	3	2	1	1		

**APPENDIX B**

	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chairperson</b>	<b>Vice-chairperson</b>
1	Council Board	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
2	Principal Scrutiny Committee	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	<b>Independent</b>
3	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Labour</b>
4	Environment Scrutiny Committee	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
5	Care Scrutiny Committee	<b>Llais Gwynedd</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
6	Development Scrutiny Committee	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
7	Audit	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Llais Gwynedd</b>
8	Planning	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Llais Gwynedd</b>
9	Central Licensing	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
10	Pensions	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
11	Human Resources	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
12	Employment Appeals	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Independent</b>
13	Arfon Area	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Independent</b>
14	Dwyfor Area	<b>Llais Gwynedd</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>
15	Meirionnydd Area	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>Llais Gwynedd</b>