

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council

Date of Meeting: 1 October 2020

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

Contact Officer: Geraint Owen, 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 political balance and in accordance with the wishes of the political groups.
- allocate the chairpersonships of scrutiny committees on the basis of political balance as follows:

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Communities Scrutiny Committee
Care Scrutiny Committee

Plaid Cymru
Independent Group
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 **18 July 2019** it was reported that the Council's political balance was as follows:

Plaid Cymru	41
Independent	22
Llais Gwynedd	6
United Independent Group for Gwynedd	3
Individual Member	3
Total	75

2.1.3 Since then, the changes have been as follows:

- Dylan Bullard, Pwllheli (North) Ward, has left the Independent Group.
- Councillor Peter Read (Abererch Ward) has left the Plaid Cymru Group.
- Under the leadership of Councillor Peter Read, the National Party Group has been formed. Dylan Bullard is also a member of this group.

2.1.4 Therefore, now, the Council political balance is as follows:

Plaid Cymru	40
Independent	21
Llais Gwynedd	6
United Independent Group for Gwynedd	3
Individual Member	3
The National Party	2
Total	75

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. The table also confirms the higher salaries that are to be paid.

2.3.2 The changes to the political balance are as follows:

- The National Party gains one seat on the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee at the expense of the Llais Gwynedd group.
- The National Party gains one seat on the Care Scrutiny Committee at the expense of an Independent Member.
- The National Party gains one seat on the Democratic Services Committee at the expense of the Independent Group.
- The National Party gains one seat on the Chief Officers' Appointment Committee at the expense of the Independent Group.
- The National Party gains one seat on the SACRE Committee at the expense of the Independent Group.

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	Plaid Cymru Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group
Care Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group

2.4.5 In accordance with section 83 of the Measure, the chairperson of the Audit and Governance Committee cannot be a member of a political group which is represented on the executive.

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).

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.

3. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

3.1 STATUTORY OFFICERS' OBSERVATIONS:

Monitoring Officer:

I am satisfied that the statutory conditions requiring a review of the political balance have effect. The recommendations in the report meet the requirements in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (and subordinate legislation) for calculating the political balance.

Statutory Finance Officer:

Nothing to add from a financial propriety perspective.

APPENDIX A - ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

A	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	The National Party	United Independent Group for Gwynedd	Individual Member	Total
Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	10	5	1 (down from 2)	1	1	0	18
Communities Scrutiny Committee	10	5	2		0	1	18
Care Scrutiny Committee	10	5	1	1	1	0 (down from 1)	18
Audit and Governance	10	5	1		1	1	18

B	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	The National Party	United Independent Group for Gwynedd	Individual Member	Total
Democratic Services	8	4 (down from 5)	1	1	1		15
Planning	8	4	1		1	1	15
Central Licensing	8	4	1		0	2	15
Language	8	5	1		1		15
Chief Officers Appointment	8	4 (down from 5)	2	1	0		15
Employment Appeals	4	2	1		0		7
Number of seats	84	43	12	4	6	5	154

C	Plaid Cymru	Independent	Llais Gwynedd	The National Party	United Independent Group for Gwynedd	Individual Member	Total
Pensions	4	2	0		0	1	7
Local Joint Consultative Committee	6	3	1		1		11
SACRE	4	2 (down from 3)	0	1	0		7
Joint Planning Policy Committee	5	2	1		0		8

Total seats	103	52	14	5	7	6	187
--------------------	------------	-----------	-----------	----------	----------	----------	------------

In accordance with the previous decision of the Council, the higher salaries are paid as follows:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- 8 other Cabinet members
- The Leader of the largest Opposition
- Committee Chairs
 - Scrutiny Committee (x3)
 - Audit and Governance Committee
 - Planning Committee
 - Licensing Committee (Central and General count as one Committee)
 - Pensions Committee