

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL



## Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council

**Date of Meeting:** 13 May 2021

**Title of Item:** Annual review of the Council's political balance

**Contact Officer:** Geraint Owen, Head of Democracy 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 as noted 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	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's balance, and this is completed at the annual meeting.

2.1.2 At the annual meeting of the full Council on **1 October 2020**, it was reported that the political constitution of the Council was as follows:-

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

2.1.3 Since then, the following changes:

- A by-election was held in Llanrug ward following the death of Councillor Charles Wyn Jones, Plaid Cymru group.
- Councillor Beca Brown, Plaid Cymru Group, has been elected to represent Llanrug ward.
- Plaid Cymru Group has decided to suspend one councillor from the group. For the purpose of this review, this Councillor will be considered as an individual member.
- The group known as “The National Party” have changed their name to “Propel” group

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

Plaid Cymru	39
Independent	21
Llais Gwynedd	6
United Independent Group for Gwynedd	3
Propel Group	2
Individual Member	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</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:-

- Every seat on a committee cannot be allocated to the same political group;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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:

- An Independent Member gains one seat on the Care Scrutiny Committee at the expense of the United Independent Group for Gwynedd.
- An Individual Member gains one seat on the Chief Officers Appointment Panel at the expense of Llais Gwynedd Group.
- An Individual Member gains one seat on the SACRE Committee at the expense of the Independent Group.

2.3.3 The Council is requested 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 To ensure continuity, the Council's Business Group recommends that the chairpersonships are allocated as follows, to enable the potential progression from Vice-chair to Chair.

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee	Independent Group
Communities Scrutiny Committee	Plaid Cymru 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 As previously noted, the Council's Business Group was consulted.

#### **3.2 STATUTORY OFFICERS' OBSERVATIONS:**

##### **Monitoring Officer:**

I have advised on the report, no observations to add in relation to propriety.

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

Nothing to add to the report 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	1	1	0	18
Communities Scrutiny Committee	10	5	2		0	1	18
Care Scrutiny Committee	10	5	1	1	0 (down from 1)	1 (up from 0)	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	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	1 (down from 2)	1	0	1 (up from 0)	15
Employment Appeals	4	2	1		0		7
<b>Number of seats</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>154</b>

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	1 (down from 2)	0	1	0	1 (up from 0)	7
Joint Planning Policy Committee	5	2	1		0		8

<b>Total seats</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>187</b>
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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