



COUNCIL – 24TH JANUARY 2017

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

REPORT BY: INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To carry out a review of political balance across the authority and the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with statute.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report states that following the resignation of two members from the Labour group that the political balance has changed and there is a subsequent impact on the allocation of seats on Planning Committee.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to review the political balance of the authority and to comply with relevant legislation regarding the governance arrangements for Local Authorities in Wales.
- 3.2 The recommended course of action contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:

- *A more equal Wales*

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Following the resignation of Councillor Nigel Dix and Councillor Allan Rees from the Labour Party on 28th September and 29th September 2016 respectively, the two Members have now confirmed as having joined the Independent Group. This change has an effect on the political balance of the Authority and some effect on Committee seat allocations.
- 4.2 The legislation requires a council to review the political balance and apply the following principles to that review:-
- (a) Not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) That the majority of seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of people belonging to that group represents a majority of the council's membership;

- (c) Subject to those earlier rules the number of seats on the ordinary committees of the council allocated to each group bear the same proportion to the total of all seats allocated as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

4.3 The Council has always applied the legislation to mean that so far as is practicable the allocation of seats is the same as the overall percentage that a party has of the total seats of the authority. However it is impossible to obtain a perfect percentage balance on each and every committee and there are therefore two principles:-

- (i) The majority group must have the majority on any committee;
(ii) That the overall allocation of seats is as close as possible to the overall percentage that a party holds on the council.

4.4 The current membership of the current political groupings following these resignations and the respective percentage share of the seats is as follows:-

Group	Membership	Percentage
Labour	48	65.8%
Plaid Cymru	20	27.4%
Independents	5	6.8%

4.5 The political balance and the allocation of seats has now been reviewed in light of the current groupings and there is a requirement to make changes on those Committee with 20 Members. There is no change required for those Committee with less than 20 Members. Appendix 1 sets out the recommended allocation of seats for Committees of any size.

4.6 Members are now asked to approve the revised allocation of seats as follows:-

4.6.1 Planning Committee 20 Members to become 13 (Labour), 6 (Plaid), 1 (Independent).

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

5.1 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act in that the importance of ensuring that representation on committees reflect the political balance of the local authority thereby involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to review the political balance of the authority and apply that balance to the allocation of seats on committees.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications which have not been included in this report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no personnel implications which have not been included in this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 There are no consultations that have not been included in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the Council notes the changes in relation to the political grouping on the authority.

10.2 That Council notes and approves the changes to allocation of seats set out in the report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 In order to comply with statutory requirements to keep the political balance of the authority under review and to allocate seats on committees in accordance with that balance.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made under the Act and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson, Interim Head of Democratic Services
Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Helen Morgan, Senior Committee Services Officer

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Political Balance as at January 2017