



COUNCIL – 27TH SEPTEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND POLITICAL BALANCE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Council approval to agree that all 60 non-executive members shall have the right of membership of joint meetings of scrutiny committee.
- 1.2 To ask Council to note the outcome of the review of the political balance as a result of a by-election and a reduction in the number of members within the Independent Group.

2. SUMMARY

Membership of Joint Scrutiny

- 2.1 The changes to the scrutiny committee structure, as agreed at the annual meeting of Council on 11th May 2023, set out that there would be three scrutiny committees and agreed to continue with joint meetings of the scrutiny committees on an ad hoc basis to consider cross-cutting issues. This report clarifies that the intention is that all 60 non-executive members will have the right to sit on and vote in meetings of the joint scrutiny committee. The joint scrutiny committee will be chaired by one of the three scrutiny committee chairs to be determined by the subject matter.

To note the review of the political balance of the Council

- 2.2 To ask council to note the review of the political balance as a result of recent changes to the membership of the Independent Group.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That all 60 non-executive members will be members of the joint scrutiny committee.
- 3.2 That co-opted members to be invited to a meeting of the joint scrutiny committee if the subject matter is relevant to them.

- 3.3 That the Chair of each joint scrutiny committee meeting will be one of the three scrutiny committee chairs and will be determined by the subject matter.
- 3.4 The Council's Monitoring Officer is given approval to amend the Council Constitution to reflect these changes if agreed.
- 3.5 To note the review of the political balance for the authority as set out in Appendix 1 and that there is no change to the allocation of seats.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that the scrutiny structure is clearly set out and the council constitution is amended.
- 4.2 To comply with the requirements of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

5. THE REPORT

Membership on Joint Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 The new scrutiny committee structure agreed by the annual meeting of Council on the 11th May 2023 is 3 scrutiny committees plus joint meetings of scrutiny to meet to consider cross cutting matters such as finance, performance, transformation or other significant issues. The joint scrutiny committee will be made up of all 60 non-executive members and co-opted members (if subject matter is relevant to them) and will be chaired by one of the three chairs of scrutiny and determined by the matter to be debated.
- 5.2 Council is therefore asked to agree to this additional change to the scrutiny structure which are summarised below and note the membership:

Scrutiny Committee	Responsibilities	Membership
Corporate and Regeneration	Corporate Services	18
Education and Social Services	Education and Social Services	18 plus co-opted members
Housing and Environment	Housing and Communities (excluding Regeneration)	18
Joint	Cross Cutting Matters – Finance; Performance, Transformation, and other Significant Matters	All non-executive Members and co-opted members (if subject is relevant)

Review of the Political Balance

- 5.3 Since the political balance of the Council was reviewed at the annual meeting, there has been a by-election with the seat being held by Labour and an Independent

Member has given notice that he is no longer a member of the Independent Group, which has reduced in membership from six to five councillors.

5.4 As such a review of the political balance has been undertaken and is outlined in Appendix 1. Council will note that there are no changes to the membership of the committees which were agreed at the annual meeting.

5.5 **Conclusion**

If the recommendations contained within the report are accepted, this will allow all 60 non-executive members to be members of the joint scrutiny committee. Council is asked to note that there are no changes to the political balance.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no assumptions necessary.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Due to the nature of this report, there is no requirement for an IIA to be undertaken.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 Any consultation response received has been included in this report.

11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

11.2 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

11.3 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and regulations made under the Act.

Author: Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services

Steve Harris, Head of Corporate Finance. Section 151 officer
Councillor S. Morgan, Leader of Council
Councillor L Whittle, Group Leader Plaid Cymru
Councillor N. Dix, Group Leader Independents
Councillor N. George, Cabinet Member Corporate, Property and
Highways

Appendix 1 Review of Political Balance

Background Papers:

Council 11th May 2023 Agenda item 13 Refinements to Council Constitution