



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023 - 2024

COUNCIL

25TH OCTOBER 2023

JOINT REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

THE POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL, APPOINTMENT OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR AND ALLOCATION OF NOTICES OF MOTION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the outcome of the review of the Political Balance of the Council following the formation of a new political group known as the 'Independent Group', and the consequential effect upon committee membership.
- 1.2 In doing so, Council is provided with the opportunity to review the allocation of Notices of Motion.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the scheme for the allocation of seats to the different political groups and bodies to which Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 applies, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, be adopted;
- 2.2 That the Service Director – Democratic Services & Communication be authorised to make appointments to politically balanced bodies upon receipt by him of notification of the wishes of the political groups subject to any subsequent requests for amendment of membership of Committees being referred to Council;
- 2.3 To seek Council's instruction in respect of the recommendation of the Statutory 'Head of Democratic Services' to amend the representation of members upon the Council's Democratic Services Committee (as set out in table B);

- 2.5 To seek Council's instruction as to whether the allocation of Notices of Motion for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023 – 2024 is to be amended.

3. POLITICAL BALANCE

- 3.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 makes provisions for securing the political balance on certain relevant authorities, committees and bodies.
- 3.2 I have received notification of the formation of a new political group known as the 'Independent Group', consisting of two Members previously allocated to the RCT Independent Group, namely Councillors Will Jones (Group Leader) and Wayne Owen (Group Deputy Leader), which necessitated a review of the political balance of the Council.
- 3.3 Following the review I would inform Members that the appointment of the available seats is as set out in Tables A, B and C of Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.4 Amendments arising from this change of the political balance include the requirement for Council to determine how to proceed with representation upon the Democratic Service in line with the committee membership size determined by full Council in May 2022 (17 members) and reaffirmed by Council at its AGM in May 2023. Members are referred to section 4 of this report in respect of this matter.
- 3.5 Other specific changes include a change in representation upon the Council Pensions Committee to include 4 Labour and 1 Conservative member.
- 3.6 There is also a consequential revision to the membership of the Constitution Committee to include 6 Labour, 1 Plaid Cymru and 1 Independent Group.
- 3.7 Finally, membership of the Licensing Committee would also be revised to include 9 Labour, 1 Plaid Cymru and 1 RCT Independent Group members.
- 3.8 Appointments to the Committees will be made following notification given to me by each political group as to their nominations for appointments to the respective Committees. It has been previous practice for power to be delegated to the Proper Officer (The Head of Democratic Services) to accept and make the appointments notified to me by the political groups. However, in the case of subsequent requests for amendments to the membership of Committees they should be the subject of a report to full Council.

4. REPRESENTATION UPON THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

- 4.1 At its Annual General meeting in May 2022, Council recognised the importance of enabling all political groups to be represented upon the Democratic Services Committee.
- 4.2 Members noted the statutory role of the committee in ensuring all non-executive members are effectively supported to fulfil their role and for these reasons supported the importance of cross-party representative in respect of the areas which rest with this committee.
- 4.3 Members will note that, in accordance with the revised political balance, should the number of available seats remain at 17 for the Democratic Services Committee, the Conservative Group and the newly formed Independent Group would have one seat allocated between them. In this circumstance it was be matter for Council to determine, by a majority vote, which of these two groups would be allocated that role.
- 4.4 To enable all political groups to play a role in determining matters relating to resources and support for non-executive members, **as the Statutory Head of Democratic Services, I am recommending that the representation upon this committee be extended to 21**, which will enable all political groups to be represented with both the Conservative Group and Independent Group having one seat each on this committee (as set out in Table C). ultimately, it is however the duty of Council to determine the representation on its Democratic Services Committee,
- 4.5 I would also inform Members that the formation of a new political group **could** have a consequential effect on the appointment of the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee. As Councillor Will Jones (formerly a member of the RCT Independent Group) was appointed as Chair of the Committee at the AGM on the 10th May 2023. It is dependent on members determination on the above proposal (as recommended at 4.4), in respect of the Committees numbers or which group should be represented based upon the current committee size, whether or not there would be a requirement for Council to appoint a new Chair of the Democratic Services Committee.
- 4.6 Members are advised that the Democratic Services Committee Chair must be appointed from a political group which does not form part of the Council's Executive arrangements.

5. ALLOCATION OF NOTICES OF MOTION

- 5.1 At the Council's AGM on the 10th May 2023, and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.2(a), Council allocated the 20 Notices of Motion for Municipal Year 2023 - 2024

- 5.2 In light of the change to political balance Members' instructions are now sought as to whether the allocation of Notices of Motion for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023 – 2024 is to be amended to include the new political group.

APPENDIX 1**POLITICAL BALANCE 2023/24****TABLE A**

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Plaid Cymru</i>	<i>RCT Ind</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Members	75	59	8	4	2	2
Political Balance		78.67	10.67	5.33	2.67	2.67
Committee	<i>Available Seats</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Plaid Cymru</i>	<i>RCT Ind</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Independents</i>
Planning & Development	11	9	1	1	0	0
Licensing	11	9	1	1	0	0
Constitution	8	6	1	0	0	1
Appointments	5	4	1	0	0	0
Pensions	5	4	0	0	1	0
Appeals	5	4	1	0	0	0
Total Seats	45	36	5	2	1	1

TABLE B**INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEES SUBJECT TO POLITICAL BALANCE**

Committee	Available Seats	Labour	Plaid Cymru	RCT Ind	Conservative	Independent
Overview & Scrutiny	14	11	2	1	0	0
Education & Inclusion	14	11	2	1	0	0
Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity	14	11	2	1	0	0
Community Services	14	11	2	1	0	0
Democratic Services	PROPOSED AT 21	16	2	1	1	1
Governance & Audit Committee	6	5	1	0	0	0

TABLE C

TABLE TO CALCULATE POLITICAL BALANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEES

Total Seats	Labour	Plaid	RCT Ind	Conservative	Independent
3	3	0	0	0	0
4	3	1	0	0	0
5	4	1	0	0	0
6	5	1	0	0	0
7	6	1	0	0	0
8	6	1	1	0	0
9	7	1	1	0	0
10	8	1	1	0	0
11	9	1	1	0	0
12	10	1	1	0	0
13	10	2	1	0	0
14	11	2	1	0	0
15	12	2	1	0	0
16	13	2	1	0	0
17	13	2	1	*	*
18	14	2	1	*	*
19	15	2	1	*	*
20	16	2	1	*	*
21	16	2	1	1	1
22	17	2	1	1	1
23	18	2	1	1	1
24	19	2	1	1	1
25	20	3	1	*	*

* 1 seat to be allocated between the two Groups

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

COUNCIL

25th OCTOBER 2023

JOINT REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION AND DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

REPORT

The Political Balance of the Council, Appointment of Democratic Services Committee Chair and Allocation of Notices of Motion

Freestanding matter