



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023 - 2024**

**COUNCIL**

**24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024**

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

**THE POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL 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 reduction in membership of the 'RCT Independent Group' and the resulting increase in membership of the 'Independent Group'.
- 1.2 Following the consequential change to the Council's political balance, 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 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 Note that further instruction in respect of any revisions to the allocation of Notices of Motion will be sought at the Council's Annual General Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**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 received notification of a change in the Council's political balance on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The RCT Independent Group, now comprises Cllr Mike Powell, Cllr Cathy Lises and Cllr David Evans. From above date forward the Independent Group comprises Cllr Will Jones, Cllr Wayne Owen and Cllr Paul Binning. This change in the political grouping arrangements of the Council necessitates 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 Consequential changes to committee representation, as a result of the new political grouping arrangements are summarised below:
- A change in representation upon the Council's Planning & Development Committee, with a reduction in Labour Group representation to 8, to enable representation by the two independent Groups.
  - A change in representation upon the Council's Scrutiny Committees, with a reduction in Plaid Cymru representation to 1, as a consequence of the formation of a new Independent Group (specific detail of these changes are set out in point 4 of the report).
  - The RCT Independent Group will continue to be represented on the Licensing Committee, with the Independent Group now being represented on the Constitution Committee.
- 3.5 The establishment of two 'smaller' groups with equal membership sizes has presented a challenge in 'balancing' the representation across the committees set out in table A. It has only been possible to achieve 'balance' by reducing representation of the Labour Group from 9 to 8 upon the Planning & Development Control Committee. Consistency has been adopted across the remaining committees listed in this section, to achieve the necessary balance of representation.
- 3.6 Appointments to 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 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

- 4.1 As previously referenced and in accordance with the revised political balance, Members will note that Labour Group representation upon the Planning & Development Committee, will be reduced to 8, to accommodate the RCT Independent and Independent Groups, who are both of equal size.

- 4.2 Consistency has been applied in respect of the committee listed in table A, limiting any further membership changes at this late stage in the 2023/24 Municipal year.
- 4.3 It is once again recommended by Head of Democratic Services, that the Conservative Group will continue to be represented on the RLDP Members Steering Group, recognising the importance of enabling all political groups to be represented in this forum.

### **SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS & ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

- 4.4 Members will also note the implications of the revised political balance on the Council's scrutiny committee membership (of Committees with a membership of 14 members as set out at table C at Appendix 1) whereby the Plaid Cymru Group lose one seat from each of the four scrutiny committees in favour of the Independent Group (aligning it with the allocation of the RCT Independent Group with the same number of members).
- 4.5 This revised arrangement will have no impact upon the allocation of Scrutiny chairs, with three roles allocated to the Labour Group and one to the Plaid Cymru (Education & Inclusion Scrutiny Committee). At the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Council will determine its chair and vice chair roles for the 2024/2025 municipal year.
- 4.6 Council is reminded that membership of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, should comprise representation from the Chairs and Vice-chairs of each scrutiny committee. The Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board, Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) must also form part of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee membership. Members are advised to note these points, when determining any revisions to political group representation.
- 4.7 Full Council has the opportunity to review the total membership size of each committee, at the Council's Annual General Meeting (AGM). In line with the resolution of Council, back in [October 2023](#), total membership of the Democratic Services Committees, is maintained as 21, to enable representation by all political groups.

### **5. ALLOCATION OF NOTICES OF MOTION**

- 5.1 At the Council meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023, and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.2(a), Council allocated the 20 Notices of Motion for Municipal Year 2023 - 2024 to reflect the creation of the new political group known as the 'Independent Group' as follows:

Labour - 12  
Plaid Cymru -4  
RCT Independent Group - 2  
Conservatives – 1  
Independent Group – 1

- 5.2 It is normally necessary when considering the political balance, for instruction to be sought from Members in respect of the allocation of motions for the remainder of a municipal year.
- 5.3 In light of the fact that there are no 'ordinary' meetings of Council remaining this municipal, it is recommended that the allocation is reviewed as part of the Council AGM, currently scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**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>
<b>Members</b>	75	59	8	3	2	3
<b>Political Balance</b>		78.67	10.67	4.00	2.67	4.00
<b>Committee</b>	<i>Available Seats</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Plaid Cymru</i>	<i>RCT Ind</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Planning & Development	11	8	1	1	0	1
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
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Available Seats</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	<b>RCT Ind</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Independent</b>
Overview & Scrutiny	14	11	1	1	0	1
Education & Inclusion	14	11	1	1	0	1
Climate Change, Frontline Services & Prosperity	14	11	1	1	0	1
Community Services	14	11	1	1	0	1
Democratic Services	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**

<b>CALCULATION FOR OTHER COMMITTEES</b>						
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>PLAID</b>	<b>RCT INDEPENDENT</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT</b>	<b>CONSERVATIVE</b>
	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	*	*	0
	9	7	1	*	*	0
	10	8	1	*	*	0
	11	9	1	*	*	0
	12	9	1	1	1	0
	13	10	1	1	1	0
<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEES</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
	15	12	2	*	*	0
	16	12	2	*	*	0
	17	13	2	1	1	0
	18	14	2	1	1	0
	19	15	2	1	1	0
	20	16	2	1	1	0
	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	0

\* 1 seat to be allocated between them

**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**

**24<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024**

**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**