

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2012**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To undertake a review of the allocation of seats to political groups as a result of a change in the membership of two groups.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees & Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require the council to allocate seats on the various committees to political groups insofar as practical in the same proportion as those groups have to the total membership of the council.
- 2.02 Following the allocation determined at the annual meeting on the 15 May there has been a change in the numbers of two of the political groups which has led to a need to recalculate the previous calculations that were made.
- 2.03 At the time of the annual meeting Councillor Owen Thomas was a member of the Independent Alliance Group but following the annual meeting he left that group and joined the Conservative Group thereby altering the numbers in those two groups.
- 2.04 At the annual meeting the council decided that seven of the eight committee places allocated to the three non-aligned members should be filled by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson and that the place on the Planning Committee be allocated to Councillor Gareth Roberts. This meant that the third non-aligned member, Councillor Tim Newhouse had no committee places. These decisions do not comply with the requirements of the legislation where the seats to the non-aligned members should have been allocated as evenly as practical.

3.00 **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Section 15 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 prescribes the following principles to be followed in determining the allocation of seats:-

- a) That not all the seats on a committee are allocated to the same political group.
- b) Where there is a majority group on the council it is entitled to the majority of the seats on each committee.
- c) The total number of seats allocated to each political group should be (insofar as it is practicable) in the same proportion as that group's strength upon the full council.
- d) Each committee should (so far as it is practicable) have the same proportional division between political groups as is represented upon the full council.

3.02 In relation to the Audit and Democratic Services Committees the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 limits the number of cabinet members on those committees to a maximum of one and that one to not be the Council Leader. At its last meeting the Audit Committee was of the view there should be no cabinet members on it.

3.03 Attached as appendix 1 to this report is a table showing the political balance calculations. There have been no changes to the places allocated to the Labour, Liberal Democrat, New Independent and Independent groups. A place on the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been gained by the Conservative group at the expense of the non-aligned members. The Conservative group has gained an additional seat on both the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee at the expense of the Independent Alliance group.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 To agree the political balance calculations shown in appendix 1.

4.02 To determine which places should be filled by which of the three non-aligned members.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None as a result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None as a result of this report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None as a result of this report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 - political balance calculations

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

Contact Officer: Gareth Owens
Telephone: 01352 702304
Email: gareth.owens@flintshire.gov.uk