

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 24 th September 2024
Report Subject	Review of Political Balance
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is required under the Political Balance Rules contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 as amended to review the Council's political balance calculations following a number of changes to political group membership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That seats on committees be allocated in accordance with political balance as shown in appendix A.
2	That any changes to nominees be notified to the Democratic Services Manager as soon as possible before the next meeting of each committee.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CALCULATION OF POLITICAL BALANCE
1.01	The Council is required, as soon as practicable, after a change in the composition of political groups to recalculate political balance in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Since the last calculation there has been a by election and a number of councillors have moved political group.

1.02	<p>The basis of the statutory requirement is that Committee seats should be allocated to political groups (so far as is practicable) in the same proportion as those groups have to the total membership of the County Council.</p> <p>The allocation of seats on Committees to the political groups must recognise that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) There must be no Committees whereby only one group has all the seats; (ii) Where there is a majority group it is entitled to a majority upon every Committee. (This does not apply where the largest group does not have an overall majority); (iii) The total number of seats allocated to each political group should be (in so far as is practicable) in the same proportion as those groups' strengths upon the full Council; (iv) Each Committee should (so far as is practicable) have the same proportional division between political groups as is represented upon the full Council. <p>Thus if a group holds 25% of the total number of Councillors it should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 25% of the overall number of seats on the Council; and 2) 25% seats on each Committee. <p>These rules are applied in hierarchical order so it is more important to allocate the correct number of seats overall than it is to allocate the correct number of seats on a particular committee. This is important because groups will typically have an entitlement to seats on a committee that isn't a whole number. If every notional entitlement were to be rounded down the group would have too few seats, and conversely it would have too many if every entitlement were rounded up.</p> <p>Allocating seats on each committee is therefore a case of rounding off entitlement (up or down) to the fill all the seats on each committee without giving any group too many or too few seats. Especially with the OSC's it is often the case that a group will be rounded up on some and down on others. The choice of which ones get rounded up/down gives an element of flexibility.</p> <p>NB Under the legislation these rules do not apply to either the Cabinet or the Standards Committee.</p>
1.03	<p>In addition, at Flintshire we have 2 non-statutory conventions that we seek to apply when allocating seats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) we seek to allocate seats to those members who wish to serve on a specific committee. We therefore try to allocate seats, in so far as that is possible, to groups (or individual councillors) based on their expressed wishes; and <p>Whilst we allocate seats to all the groups on each of the "personnel" committees on a politically balanced basis, as these committees meet extremely rarely, we don't take those seats into account when assessing the overall allocation of seats on the principal committees.</p>

1.04	The political balance calculation is attached as Appendix A. This is one possible lawful allocation seats. Due to the choices made when rounding off entitlements on each committee, other possible lawful allocations may exist.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Group leaders and deputies were consulted on the political balance calculation by email.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Political Balance table September 2024.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.