



Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Council – 7 October 2021

Lay Members on the Governance & Audit Committee

Purpose:	To comply with Part 6 Chapter 2 “Governance & Audit Committees: Membership and Proceedings” of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 by ensuring that the membership of the Governance & Audit Committee shall consist of one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) Lay Members.
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Governance & Audit Committee recommendation that the Committee comprise of 15 Members (10 Councillors and 5 Lay Members) be approved. 2) The process of recruiting the additional Lay Members commence in line with Council procedures.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Part 6 S 116 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides that the membership of the Governance & Audit Committee shall consist of one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) Lay Members from May 2022. It also provides that the Committee Chair must be a lay person.
- 1.2 The Governance & Audit Committee currently comprises 15 Members (13 Cllrs & 2 Lay Members). The Governance & Audit Committee

considered the legislative requirement that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Committee would be Lay Members at its meeting on 14 September 2021.

- 1.3 The Committee recommended to Council that the Governance & Audit Committee comprise 15 Member (10 Councillors and 5 Lay Members). The Committee also agreed however, that Council should be made aware that one Councillor favoured a Committee Size of 12 and that the Lay Chair of the Committee and the additional Lay Member both supported a Committee Size of 9 in line with the Audit Wales recommendations and comments / discussions made at a recent All Wales Governance & Audit Committee Chairs meeting.

2 Welsh Chief Auditors Group (Further Information Since the Governance & Audit Committee Meeting)

- 2.1 Not surprisingly, other Councils are also in the process of considering the membership size of their Governance & Audit Committees. The Chief Auditor has attended meetings where the vast majority of Authorities have indicated that they are moving to a Committee size of 9 and at most 12.

- 2.2 The arguments for a smaller Committee are in line with:

- i) The recommendation of Audit Wales.
- ii) Value for money when considering costs and economy. The costs of each additional Lay Members will include Attendance Costs, Travel Costs, ICT Allowance etc.
- iii) Effective and efficient Committee discussions allowing all participants to hear and be heard.

3 Political Representation & Committee Size Impact on the Governance & Audit Committee

- 3.1 The table sets out the Political & Lay Member representation on the Committee based on differing Committee sizes. The top line sets out the current membership, prior to the $\frac{1}{3}$ Lay Members being introduced in May 2022.

- 3.2 Note that the "Breakdown by Political Group" column could change at any time, should a Councillor change Political Group Membership or following a Local Government Election.

Cttee Size	(1/3) Lay Members	No. Cllrs	Breakdown By Political Group			
			Labour	Lib Dem / Ind	Con	Uplands
15	2	13	9	2	2	0
15	5	10	7	2	1	0
14	5	9	6	2	1	0
13	5	8	5	2	1	0
12	4	8	5	2	1	0
11	4	7	5	1	1	0
10	4	6	4	1	1	0
9	3	6	4	1	1	0

Note: When the Committee size is not divisible by one third to allow a whole number result (14, 13, 11 & 10) the figures have been rounded up as legislation states that the Lay Membership must be one third. It is therefore logical, that the Committee size should be divisible by 3 (9, 12 or 15).

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Following Council determining the size of the Committee the additional lay members will need to be recruited in line with council procedures.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The additional cost of a Lay Member or Lay Members will be met within existing budget.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Failure to comply with this legislation would put the Council in breach of legislation. The Governance & Audit Committee cannot legally meet post May 2022 unless 1/3 of its membership are Lay Members.

7. Integrated Assessment Implications

- 7.1 As this report relates to a statutory requirement relating to the composition of the Governance and Audit Committee there are no integrated assessment implications.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices: None.