



Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Council - 7 September 2023

Membership of the Governance & Audit Committee

Purpose:	To consider reducing the membership of the Governance & Audit Committee to 12 members (8 Councillors & 4 Statutory Co-opted (Lay Members)).
Policy Framework:	None.
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The reduction in the membership of the Governance & Audit Committee to 12 Members (8 Councillors and 4 Lay Members) be approved. 2) The Labour Group & the Uplands Group identify one Councillor each who will be removed from the Committee.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Part 6, Section 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 (10 Cllrs & 5 Lay Members). However, on 30 June 2023, Phil Sharman one of the 5 Lay Members resigned leaving a Lay Member vacancy.

2. Reducing the Size of the Governance & Audit Committee Meeting

2.1 A Committee size of 15 has been seen by some as too big. Across Wales, most Councils have opted for a Governance & Audit Committee size of 9 or 12 Members.

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 in the table sets out the current breakdown.

3.2 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	5	10	6	2	1	1
12	4	8	5	2	1	0
9	3	6	4	1	1	0

4. Membership of the Governance & Audit Committee

4.1 Should Council resolve to reduce the size of the Committee to 12 then:

- i) Lay Members. No change as they are already at 4 Members.
- ii) Councillors. Two Councillors will be removed from the Committee. The Labour Group & the Uplands Group will need to identify which of their Councillors will be removed from the Committee.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 A reduction in the number of Lay Members on the Committee will see a saving within existing budget.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 All legal implications are set out within the report.

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.