
Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	23 September 2021
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal Services	Report No:	CM/LS/085/21
Contact Officer:	Anne Sinclair	Contact No:	01475 712139
Subject:	Scheme of Administration – Political Balance		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the necessary requirements to ensure political balance on Committees, Sub-Committees, Boards and Outside Bodies (where appropriate) following the resignation from the SNP group of Councillor Jim McEleny who has joined the Alba party.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Councillor Jim McEleny intimated on 10 September 2021 his resignation from the SNP Group and his intention to represent the Alba party in Ward 3.
- 2.2 This resignation means that the political balance on Committees, Sub-Committees, Boards and Outside Bodies (where appropriate) requires to be reviewed in order to comply with the Council's Scheme of Administration.
- 2.3 Para 54 of the Scheme of Administration requires the Council to ensure that, in so far as is practicable, the appointments to the Committees, Sub-Committees, and Outside Bodies (where more than two representatives of the Council are required) reflect the balance of representatives on the Council.
- 2.4 The previous political balance of the Council was as follows:

8 Labour

6 SNP

4 Independent Coalition

2 Conservative

1 Liberal Democrat

1 Alba

The present political balance of the Council, taking into account the resignation of Councillor McEleny, is as follows:

8 Labour

5 SNP

4 Independent Coalition

2 Conservative

1 Liberal Democrat

2 Alba

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Considers the terms of this report;
- (b) Approves the re-balancing of Committees as detailed in Appendix 1; and
- (c) After considering the option in Sections 5.1 - 5.6, 5.11 and 6.4 makes the appropriate adjustments to the membership of its Committees, Sub-Committees, Boards and Outside Bodies.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Paragraph 54 of the Scheme of Administration requires the Council to ensure that, in so far as is practicable, the appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees and Outside Bodies (where more than two representatives of the Council are required) reflect the balance of representation on the Council.

4.2 The resignation of Councillor Jim McEleny from the SNP Group in order to join the Alba party means that the political balance on Committees, Sub-Committees, Boards and Outside Bodies (where appropriate) requires to be reviewed.

4.3 The previous political balance meant the representation on all of the Council's standing Committees and Boards of 11 Members was as follows:

Labour – 4 Members

SNP – 3 Members

Independent – 2 Members

Conservative – 1 Member

Liberal Democrat – 0.5 Member

Alba – 0.5 Member

4.4 The alteration in political balance means that membership of the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees, Boards and Outside Bodies (with more than two Council representatives) needs to change where appropriate to reflect the position.

4.5 The present political balance for the Standing Committees and Boards comprising of 11 Members requires to be altered as is shown in **Appendix 1** and as set out as follows:

Labour – 4 Members

SNP – 2.5 Members

Independent – 2 Members

Conservative – 1 Member

Liberal Democrat – 0.5 Member

Alba – 1 Member

This new political balance means that:

- (a) The Labour, Independent, Conservative and Liberal Democrat balances are unaffected;
- (b) The SNP representation is reduced by 0.5 Member in each of the eight main Committees and Boards;
- (c) The Alba party is entitled to 1 appointment to each of the eight main Committees and Boards.

4.6 For Members' ease of reference, **Appendix 1** sets out the existing (and proposed) political balance on the main Committees and Boards and **Appendix 2** details the existing party-by-party representation on these.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

5.1 There are eight main thematic Committees/Boards as listed in section 5.6. Members previously agreed following the resignation of Councillor Chris McEleny from the SNP Group

on 26 March 2021 that the requirement of the Council's Standing Orders to achieve a balance of political representation would be met with 3 SNP representation on all the eight main thematic Committees and Boards with 1 Alba representation on four of the same Committees/Boards.

- 5.2 As a consequence of the new political balance SNP will require to reduce from 24 to 20 Members over the six main thematic Committees, the General Purposes Board and the Planning Board. The Alba party will gain 4 places over those Committees/Boards.
- 5.3 To give effect to the new political balance of the six main thematic Committees, the General Purpose Board and the Planning Board it is necessary to:
- Reduce by one the SNP representation on each of the four Committees in respect of which the Alba party has no representation (Policy & Resources, Health & Social Care, Audit and Planning Board).
 - Appoint one replacement to the above Committees and Boards from the Alba party so that Alba are equitably appointed to all 8 Committees/Boards.
- 5.4 It should be noted that there will be no change to the political balance of the Environment & Regeneration, Education & Communities, General Purpose Board and Police & Fire Scrutiny Committee as SNP will retain 3 Members and Alba has 1 Member.
- 5.5 Cllr Jim McEleny was formerly one of the three SNP Members on the General Purposes Board and the Police & Fire Scrutiny Committee. The SNP will require to nominate 1 replacement on both Committees.
- 5.6 Cllr Jim McEleny is one of the three SNP representatives on the Health & Social Care Committee, Audit Committee and the Planning Board. In order to minimise disruption to the Council during the last eight months of the Administration one option would be for Cllr Jim McEleny to remain on the Health & Social Care Committee, Audit Committee and Planning Board as an Alba Member. This is, of course, entirely within the discretion of the Council.

In summary, this would mean:

COMMITTEE	EXISTING	ACTION NEEDED TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL BALANCE
Policy & Resources	3 SNP/0 Alba	SNP to reduce by 1 Member and allocate to Alba.
Environment & Regeneration	3 SNP/1 Alba	No change necessary.
Health & Social Care	3 SNP/0 Alba	SNP to reduce by 1 Member and allocate to Alba.
Audit	3 SNP/0 Alba	SNP to reduce by 1 Member and allocate to Alba.
Education & Communities Committee	3 SNP/1 Alba	No change necessary.
General Purposes Board	3 SNP/1 Alba	SNP to nominate 1 replacement. No other change necessary.
Planning Board	3 SNP/0 Alba	SNP to reduce by 1 Member and allocate to Alba.
Local Fire & Police Scrutiny Committee	3 SNP/1 Alba	SNP to nominate 1 replacement. No other change necessary.

Note 1: If allocation to Committees or Boards are not wished by the Alba Members, it is acceptable for the Council to determine the membership of Committees i.e. Alba are not compelled to take up a place.

- 5.7 When considering adjustments to the membership of Committees to reflect the present political balance, the Council should seek to ensure that the replacement Member on each of the main Committees reflects the political balance as far as possible and in line with what each member may wish as individuals.

Appendix 2 sets out the existing membership of the Committees, General Purpose Board and Planning Board **Appendix 3** sets out the proposed membership to address the political balance.

- 5.8 The Council could, of course, seek to review the Membership of all Committees and Boards in implementing its decisions to reflect the new political balance, but the above summary in 5.1 to 5.6 provides for the greatest continuity in arrangements with the least disruption to established Committees and Boards in the final 8 months of the Council Administration.
- 5.9 The Licensing Board is a separate Statutory body and as the existing membership does not reflect the political balance with there being three Labour, three SNP, one Conservative and one Independent there is no formal requirement to include it in the current re-balancing exercise. Furthermore there is a requirement that any member of the Licensing Board must complete mandatory training before sitting on the Board. In the circumstances it is proposed that the Licensing Board is excluded from the re-balancing exercise.
- 5.10 The Strategic Leaders Forum, a sounding board for the Chief Executive, and the Members' Budget Working Group should comprise the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Leader of each of the political groups on the Council. Because of this, membership of the Strategic Leaders Forum and the MBWG should be amended to now include the Alba representation.
- 5.11 There are currently 2 SNP Members on the Policy & Resources Sub Executive Committee which has 6 Members in total. In order to achieve a political balance of representation it is necessary for the SNP Group to reduce by 1 Member and 1 Member requires to be appointed from the Alba party.

6.0 REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- 6.1 In terms of paragraph 54 of the Council's Scheme of Administration, the Council requires to ensure that appointments to Outside Bodies reflect as far as practicable the balance of political representation on the Council where more than 2 representatives of the Council are required.
- 6.2 It is essential to reflect as far as possible the actual political balance of the Council in Committees, Sub-Committees and Boards. With Outside Bodies, however, it remains important but not essential to apply the political balance and some discretion is possible. This discretion can take into account Member availability for the range of tasks and attendances involved with the respective Outside Bodies. This discretion appears also to have accommodated, at times, a less formal political balance among the individual political parties with a general balance being attained informally between the Administration and the Opposition, overall, rather than a party-by-party split.
- 6.3 As listed in **Appendix 4**, there are 14 Outside Bodies where more than 2 representatives of the Council are required and the current Political membership of each Outside Body with more than 2 representatives is set out.
- 6.4 The current party-by-party balance is set out for information and guidance in **Appendix 5**. This party-by-party approach can be modified by the Council if it wished to take account of pressures on Members or their individual wishes for representation on the Outside Bodies by a more general arrangement based on the overall proportion of Labour Members (36.36%) to all Opposition Members (63.64%). At the present time it is only proposed that consideration

is given to the membership of Inverclyde Leisure. Cllr Jim McEleny was the SNP representative on this 4 Member Committee. SNP are entitled to a place on the Committee which would involve Cllr Jim McEleny coming off the Committee and the SNP nominating a replacement.

6.5 Councillor Jim McEleny is also presently the Council's representative on Inverclyde Branch of the Scottish Veterans' Garden City Association, National Association of Councillors and Scottish Councils Committee on Radioactive Substances.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

7.2 Legal

There are no legal implications.

7.3 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications.

7.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

7.5 Repopulation

There are no repopulation implications.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 N/A

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A

APPENDIX 1 – POLITICAL BALANCE (STANDING COMMITTEES, GENERAL PURPOSES BOARD AND PLANNING BOARD)

EXISTING

PARTY	NO. MEMBERS	% OF TOTAL	NUMBER	REPRESENTATION
Labour	8	36.36	4	4
SNP	6	27.27	3	3
Independent	4	18.18	2	2
Conservative	2	9.09	1	1
Liberal Democrat	1	4.55	0.5	1
ALBA	1	4.55	0.5	
	22	100	11	11

PROPOSED

PARTY	NO. MEMBERS	% OF TOTAL	NUMBER	REPRESENTATION
Labour	8	36.36	4	4
SNP	5	22.72	2.5	2 or 3
Independent	4	18.18	2	2
Conservative	2	9.09	1	1
Liberal Democrat	1	4.55	0.5	1 or 0
ALBA	2	9.09	1	1
	22	100	11	11

APPENDIX 2 – MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND BOARDS - EXISTING

COMMITTEE	NO. MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE	LABOUR	SNP	LIB DEM	CONS	INDEPENDENT	ALBA
Policy & Resources	11	4	3	1	1	2	0
Environment & Regeneration	11	4	3	0	1	2	1
Education & Communities	11	4	3	0	1	2	1
Health & Social Care	11	4	3	1	1	2	0
Audit	11	4	3	1	1	2	0
General Purposes Board	11	4	3	0	1	2	1
Planning Board	11	4	3	1	1	2	0
Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	6	2	4	0	1	1	
Local Police & Fire	11	4	3	0	1	2	1

APPENDIX 3 – MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND BOARDS AS PER OPTION IN PARAGRAPH 5.6

COMMITTEE	NO. MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE	LABOUR	SNP	LIB DEM	CONS	INDEPENDENTS	ALBA	COMMENTS
Policy & Resources (Proposed)	11	4	2	1	1	2	1	Replace 1 SNP Member with 1 Alba Member
Environment & Regeneration	11	4	3	0	1	2	1	Unaffected
Education & Communities	11	4	3	0	1	2	1	Unaffected
Health & Social Care	11	4	2	1	1	2	1	Replace 1 SNP Member with 1 Alba Member
Audit	11	4	2	1	1	2	1	Replace 1 SNP Member with 1 Alba Member
General Purposes Board	11	4	3	0	1	2	1	SNP to nominate 1 replacement
Planning Board	11	4	2	1	1	2	1	Replace 1 SNP Member with 1 Alba Member
Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	6	2	1	0	1	1	1	Replace 1 SNP Member with 1 Alba Member
Local Police & Fire	11	4	3	0	1	2	1	SNP to nominate 1 replacement

APPENDIX 4 – OUTSIDE BODIES (MORE THAN 2 REPRESENTATIVES) – EXISTING

OUTSIDE BODY	NO. OF MEMBERS	LABOUR	SNP	LIB DEM	CONS	INDEPENDENT
Fair Trade Steering Group	3	1	0	0	1	1
Inverclyde Alliance Board	4	1	1	0	1	1
Inverclyde Branch of the Scottish Veterans' Garden City Assoc. (inc.)	5	1	2	1	0	1
Inverclyde Community Development Trust	3	1	1	0	0	1
Inverclyde Leisure	4	1	1	0	1	1
James Campbell Buchanan Trust	5	2	2	0	0	1
Peter Stanton Memorial Trust - Trustees	3	2	1	0	0	0
Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board	4	1	1	0	1	1
Riverside Inverclyde	3	1	1	0	0	1
Accident Awareness Scotland	3	1	1	0	0	1
Boglestone Community Association	3	1	1	0	1	0
Inverclyde Integration Joint Board	4	1	1	1	0	1
Inverclyde Alcohol & Drug and Drugs Partnership	3	1	2	0	0	0
Shared Services Joint Committee	4	1	1	0	1	1

APPENDIX 5 – POLITICAL BALANCE (OUTSIDE BODIES)

3 REPRESENTATIVES

PARTY	NO. MEMBERS	% OF TOTAL	NUMBER	REPRESENTATION PARTY-BY-PARTY	REPRESENTATION ADMINISTRATION/OVERALL
Labour	8	36.36	1.09	1	1
SNP	5	22.73	0.68	1	2
Liberal Democrat	1	4.45	0.14	1	
Conservative	2	9.09	0.27		
Independent	4	18.18	0.55		
Alba	2	9.09	0.27		

4 REPRESENTATIVES

PARTY	NO. MEMBERS	% OF TOTAL	NUMBER	REPRESENTATION PARTY-BY-PARTY	REPRESENTATION ADMINISTRATION/OVERALL
Labour	8	36.36	1.45	1	1
SNP	5	22.73	0.90	1	3
Liberal Democrat	1	4.45	0.18	2	
Conservative	2	9.09	0.36		
Independent	4	18.18	0.73		
Alba	2	9.09	0.36		

5 REPRESENTATIVES

PARTY	NO. MEMBERS	% OF TOTAL	NUMBER	REPRESENTATION PARTY-BY-PARTY	REPRESENTATION ADMINISTRATION/OVERALL
Labour	8	36.36	1.82	2	2
SNP	5	22.73	1.14	3	3
Liberal Democrat	1	4.45	0.23		
Conservative	2	9.09	0.45		
Independent	4	18.18	0.91		
Alba	2	9.09	0.45		