

Appendix A – Example Diverse Council Declaration

This Council commits to being a Diverse Council. We agree to:

Commitment	What do we do? Actions needed?
Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy	Action: Democratic Services Committee to make a recommendation to the next Full Council meeting requesting the council sign up as a Diverse Council underpinned by the actions here.
Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct	Diversity ambassadors to promote the standards within their own groups as well group leaders adhering to the expected levels of behaviour as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
<p>Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the 2022 local elections including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a Diversity Ambassador for each political group on the Council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under represented groups • Encourage and enable people from underrepresented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing and official candidates • Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under represented groups. • Ensure that all members and candidates complete the Welsh Government candidates and councillors survey distributed at election time. • Set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the 2022 local elections. 	<p>Action: appoint a Diversity Ambassador from the Democratic Services Committee membership for each political group who can feed back updates on progress for committee to monitor and review?</p> <p>Shadowing and mentoring to be considered as part of the induction plan and preparation for the 2022 local elections. Needs political group involvement and buy in and relies on candidates being re-elected to follow through on mentoring programme.</p> <p>At 2012 and 2017 elections, pre-election briefings held with potential candidates to provide details on election process and highlight duties/expectations/commitments needed of a Councillor. Councillors will be invited to attend sessions to give personal experience of being a councillor to potential candidates. Work with other departments/groups to promote sessions as widely as possible.</p> <p>A copy of the survey is given to all candidates who submit a nomination paper to stand for election and it can be filled in online. As much as its promoted and followed up response levels have been low at both 2012 and 2017 elections. Councillors are also an exit survey (circulated on 8th October 2021) and are encouraged to complete this survey to</p> <p>Targets are difficult to set with limited control over selection processes but targeted campaigns to encourage participation and briefing sessions dedicated for hard to reach groups will be held.</p>
Work towards the standards for member support and development set out in the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development.	Significant work was undertaken in 2019 to evidence work to apply for charter status with the WLGA but work was halted due to the general election, preparations for the 2020 PCC election and the

	<p>pandemic.</p> <p>At the time there was only a small number of additional evidence required to achieve charter which can be prepared as part of this commitment however, it may be that a new council will be best place to submit that proposal for the next term ensuring it meets their needs.</p>
<p>Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for Councillors by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to counselling services for all councillors • Having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors. • Taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment by members including through social network. 	<p>A dedicated Health and Safety area for members is included in the member area on the hub here: Democratic Services - Health and Safety</p> <p>All members can access the Councils counselling services already through Democratic Services.</p> <p>A recent survey of members was undertaken to identify levels of abuse/harassment members receive in their role. Thankfully, incidents in Monmouthshire are currently very low but the Head of Democratic Services and the Monitoring Officer can support members in dealing with any issues that arise.</p>
<p>Provide flexibility in council business by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times • Encouraging and supporting remote attendance at meetings • Agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments 	<p>The timing of Full Council meetings are reviewed through the Democratic Services Committee at least once every term of Council (twice this term).</p> <p>Committees and Committee Chairs are given the flexibility to adjust their meeting times as they see fit in achieving the outcomes they wish to achieve.</p> <p>The Council Constitution was amended in 2015 to allow remote attendance at Council meetings subject to certain conditions. New legislation allows councillors to attend meetings remotely without the conditions attached to it and members are provided with the equipment and skills to participate remotely where they wish to do so. Recent upgrades to the Council Chamber will further improve the remote meeting experience for members attending remotely as well as in person and will ensure no matter how members participate in meetings, they will have the same experience.</p> <p>The Council diary is already drafted with school holiday periods defined as a period for not allocating meetings where possible and coupled with the conditions above on timings of meetings allow members/committees to influence the meeting diary to suit their needs.</p>

<p>Ensure that all members take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it</p>	<p>All members automatically receive the allowance they are entitled to, as set out by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, with exceptions only made at the request of individual members.</p> <p>In publishing the details of allowances, a total cost of care across all members is published rather than itemised against each councillor to encourage members to claim the costs they are entitled to.</p>
<p>Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.</p>	<p>This would be a role the Diversity Ambassador from each political group would feed into their own groups to ensure appointments to different roles the group are entitled to are distributed with this in mind.</p>