

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
REPORT**

<p>SUBJECT: Diversity in Local Democracy MEETING: Democratic Services Committee DATE: 4th November 2021 DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: N/A</p>

1. PURPOSE:

For this Council to agree to sign up to the WLGA Diversity in Local Democracy programme and agree the actions committed to in the declaration to improve diversity.

2. KEY ISSUES:

At its meeting on the 28th September 2018, WLGA Council committed to advance gender equality and diversity in local democracy ahead of the 2022 local elections. As such a cross party working group was formed to explore issues and actions that could be developed to improve diversity in local democracy.

WLGA Council received and approved the report of this crossparty working group in early 2021 and identified three areas for action:

- Encouraging Councils to ensure all councillors receive their full entitlement to allowances and salaries and encouraging the introduction of resettlement grants, 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
- An agreement by Council to undertake new or developed work in this area and visibly commit to this by signing up to becoming Diverse Councils.
- To discuss positions and making representation to political parties and acting locally to set quotas and/or voluntary targets for the election of councillors from underrepresented groups.

Monmouthshire County Council has limited or no control over some aspects of the recommendations such as the way in which political parties put forward their candidates for election and the issue of providing resettlement grants to senior salary post holders who are not successful in getting re-elected. Further information on these proposals will be provided at a future meeting of the Democratic Services Committee should they take effect.

This report focusses solely on the request for all Councils to commit to being a Diverse Council and the actions needed to demonstrate the work that is/will be undertaken to support that commitment and also aligns with the motion agreed by Council on the 24th June 2021 that aims to achieve a more diverse Council.

Attached at appendix A to this report is an example declaration and list of actions agreed through the Democratic Services Committee that the Council can commit to ahead of the 2022 elections to try and engage with candidates from more diverse backgrounds and encourage them to stand for election.

The report seeks to approve diversity ambassadors from each political group on the Council to encourage diversity within the groups and maintain the standards as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Ideally, that appointment should be a member of the Democratic Services Committee to allow for continuous monitoring and feedback on the arrangements and application of the declaration. If agreed, group leaders should send the name of the nominated ambassador for their group to the head of democratic services following the appointment.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Limited resource implications. Most of the requirements of the pledge are already being undertaken or scheduled to take place already.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

In signing up to be a Diverse Council, the Council is ensuring candidates and local representatives from all backgrounds are able to stand for election and represent the views of their communities. The more diverse the Council can be, the more diverse and wide ranging policies and decisions taken by the Council will become and better reflect the communities those decisions effect.

5. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[WLGA Report - Diversity in Local Government](#)

7. AUTHOR:

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