

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



Date of meeting:	7 th October, 2021
Title of Item:	Gwynedd Council's Diversity Declaration
Purpose:	Present the Council's Diversity Declaration for adoption by the Council and arrange for a work programme to be developed to support the declaration.
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Council Leader
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen, Head of Democracy Services

Report to meeting of Gwynedd Council

1. DECISION SOUGHT

It is recommended that the Full Council adopt the Diversity Declaration below and request that the Democratic Services Committee develop a work programme to support the declaration.

2. BACKGROUND AND REASONS

Foreword

1. Gwynedd Council has been supportive of the agenda to promote diversity in democracy with numerous steps taken over the years to try and persuade more people from different backgrounds to stand in local elections.
2. With the Wales Government elections looming in May 2022, it is timely to state publicly that Gwynedd Council promotes diversity in democracy. We are eager to ensure that the elected members of Gwynedd Council are a fair and rational representation of society in Gwynedd, and therefore encourage individuals from all backgrounds to stand in the elections.
3. The Democracy Services Committee has led on the improvements with the preparatory work prior to the 2017 local elections, and further work to be undertaken prior to the 2022 elections. In addition, a specific project was included in the Council's Equality Plan, 2016-20, with the work now continuing on a day to day basis.

4. In addition, political Leaders from all authorities in Wales have been working with the Wales Local Government Association to identify a number of possible steps to be taken to further promote diversity - some at a National level, others at a political level, and others at a local level. Work will progress on the national level with the political leaders.
5. The Council is eager to adopt a Diversity Declaration in order to make a clear and public statement of the Council's commitment to diversity in democracy.

Diversity Declaration

6. Note the declaration below:

This Council commits to being a Diverse Council. Therefore, we wish to reflect the community in which we live by, in the first instance, increase the number of females, young people, disabled and ethnic minority who stand in the elections to be a Gwynedd Councillor.

We agree to

- *Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy*
- *Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct*
- *Promote actions as a Diverse Council ahead of the 2022 local elections.*
- *Work towards the standards set out in the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development.*
- *Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for Councillors*
- *Consider how to provide flexibility in council business by reviewing our practical arrangements*
- *Continue to encourage all members to 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.*
- *Work towards ensuring that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.*

Work programme

7. Obviously, we must ensure that the Council is taking specific steps in an attempt to promote diversity in democracy and realise the declaration. As noted above, the Democratic Services Committee has led on developments for some years, therefore it is reasonable to ask them to lead on the development of a full work programme in order to realise the declaration.
8. Work is already being undertaken to move the agenda forwards, and includes close collaboration with the 16 and 17 year old franchise project. Also, arrangements are being developed for Gwynedd democracy week, to be held during the week commencing 18th October. A series of messages will appear on social media in an attempt to encourage

individuals to stand as a Councillor. The week will culminate in an opportunity for prospective applicants to attend a virtual Q&A session on 26th October.

9. Obviously, the political groups have a specific role in promoting diversity in democracy, and a discussion was held on the matter at the latest Business Group meeting.
10. Therefore, it is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee gives further attention to the work programme at its meeting on 16th November 2021, and to submit the full work programme to the Full Council on 2nd December, 2021.

3. ANY CONSULTATIONS HELD PRIOR TO RECOMMENDATION

3.1 VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS:

The Monitoring Officer:

I support the adoption of the statement which sets a range of principles and aims in order to promote and support participation in our democratic bodies. The creation of an associated work programme will support the realisation of these aims.

Head of Finance:

Nothing to add from a financial propriety perspective.