

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



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| MEETING | Democratic Services Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 November 2021 |
| TITLE OF ITEM | Gwynedd Council's Diversity Declaration |
| PURPOSE | To submit a draft work programme outlining the steps in order to realise the Gwynedd Council Diversity Statement, and recommend for it to be adopted by the Full Council |
| CONTACT OFFICER | Geraint Owen, Head of Democratic Services |

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

It is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee considers the work programme to support the Diversity Statement and recommend it to the Full Council meeting on 2 December, 2021.

2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Foreword

3. At the Full Council meeting on 7 October 2021, Gwynedd Council adopted a Diversity Statement in order to state clearly and publicly our commitment in Gwynedd to diversity in democracy. The statement can be seen in **Appendix A**.
4. We must ensure that the Council is taking specific steps in an attempt to promote diversity in democracy and realise the above statement. The Council resolved to ask the Democratic Services Committee to lead on developing a full work programme in order to realise the statement as Committee members have already been leading in the field in Gwynedd for some years.
5. Work is already being undertaken to move the agenda forwards. It includes
 - close collaboration on the 16 and 17-year-old franchise project.
 - Holding many varied activities for the Gwynedd democracy week, held during the week commencing 18 October. A series of messages appeared on social media in an attempt to encourage individuals to stand as a Councillor.
 - Discussing with Political Group Leaders on their specific role to promote diversity in democracy in encouraging and selecting individuals to stand for election in May 2022.

6. A draft work programme has been included in **Appendix B**. Therefore, it is recommended that the Democratic Services Committee offers observations and improvements to the work programme, and to adopt it for it to be submitted to the Full Council on 2 December, 2021.

APPENDIX A - Gwynedd Council Diversity Statement

This Council commits to being a Diverse Council. Therefore, we wish to reflect the community in which we live by increasing the number of females, young people, disabled people, people from the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people who identify as LGBTQ+ who stand in the elections to be a Gwynedd Councillor.

We commit 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.*

APPENDIX B - DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

In committing to being a Diverse Council, we will:

| Commitment | What are we going to do? | Timetable |
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| <p><i>Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy</i></p> | <p>Full Council adopts the diversity statement.</p> <p>Enquire with members about their experiences, including which obstacles they have faced and what additional steps can be taken to remove these obstacles. Building on the work already carried out with the group of Women Councillors.</p> <p>Update the 'being a councillor' page on the website, working with the elections team</p> <p>Hold a campaign, under the banner of the 'Democracy Week' in the first instance, to raise the public's awareness of the role of councillors, their role within the community and how to become a councillor. Develop a strapline for the week such as "do you want your voice to be heard? Why not stand as a Councillor?"</p> <p>Continue with the above 'marketing' campaign to raise awareness of the role of councillor, working with the elections team to draw attention to the benefits of voting, the voting rights of young people aged 16 and 17, and raising awareness of the Local Government elections at the same time. All of which with the intention of encouraging individuals to consider being a councillor.</p> <p>Continue to webcast meetings in order to be open and transparent. Consider developing ways of raising the public's awareness of the meetings being held and the items under consideration.</p> | <p>07/10/2021</p> <p>November/December 2021</p> <p>September/October 2021</p> <p>October 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p><i>Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct</i></p> | <p>Raise the awareness of the current political group leaders to the possibilities of promoting diversity in democracy and the requirements regarding promoting the standards of conduct from the highest level in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, discussing the possibility of appointing Diversity Ambassadors within the political groups.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive induction programme based on the Welsh Local Government Association induction framework to include training on the</p> | <p>September 2021 and November 2021</p> <p>April 2022</p> |

| Commitment | What are we going to do? | Timetable |
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| | <p>Code of Conduct (including respect towards others), and Equality and diversity (including self-awareness and conduct).</p> <p>Continue to develop a training programme annually in consultation with the Democratic Services Committee in order to offer continuous development.</p> | April 2022 |
| <p><i>Promote actions as a Diverse Council ahead of the 2022 local elections</i></p> | <p>Hold a programme of on-line activities during the Gwynedd democracy week in order to promote the role of Councillors and raise awareness of Local Government elections and encourage individuals to consider standing (an ongoing programme starting in October 2021, repeated at various intervals)</p> <p>Offer a question and answer session for people who are considering standing for election to conclude the Gwynedd democracy week. It will include an explanation of the role of councillor, expectations, commitment, opportunities, support etc. Videos of various councillors sharing their experiences are likely to be a part of the event.</p> <p>Offer observations as part of the consultation to the candidate survey, and then encourage every individual standing to respond to the Welsh Government survey.</p> <p>Attend a diversity in democracy workshop held by the Welsh Local Government Association in order to learn from a panel experienced in supporting some of the groups which have traditionally been under-performing, particularly in politics. Adjust the work programme following the above if relevant.</p> | <p>October 2021 and January 2022</p> <p>October 2021 and January 2022</p> <p>November 2021 March/April 2022</p> <p>November 2021</p> |
| <p><i>Work towards the standards set out in the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development</i></p> | <p>Develop a full induction and training programme as noted above.</p> <p>Consider developing mentoring and/or shadowing arrangements as part of the programme to support new Councillors.</p> | <p>April 2022</p> <p>April 2022</p> |
| <p><i>Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for Councillors</i></p> | <p>Consider holding specific training for new Councillors on lone working, personal safety, work-life balance, bullying and social media as part of the induction programme over the course of the first year.</p> | April 2022 |

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| | <p>Continue to offer mental well-being and further support sessions for members.</p> <p>Provide advice and guidance on practical matters in terms of setting out your workspace properly - information on the councillors' intranet site.</p> <p>Offer an opportunity for Councillors who wish to note an official address rather than a home address on the website.</p> <p>Raise the awareness of political leaders of the duty under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 regarding promoting good conduct.</p> | <p>Now / On-going</p> <p>Now / On-going</p> <p>Now / On-going</p> <p>November 2021</p> |
| <p><i>Consider how to provide flexibility in council business by reviewing our practical arrangements</i></p> | <p>Implement hybrid meetings and fully virtual meetings in order to make better use of Councillors' time.</p> <p>Hold a survey following the 2022 election on the timing of the Council's main committees.</p> <p>Consider school holiday periods (avoiding them where possible) when creating the Council's annual meetings calendar, consulting with the Democratic Services Committee before submitting to the full Council for adoption.</p> <p>Ensure training and assistance for Councillors to have the technical skills to be able to take part in virtual and/or hybrid meetings.</p> | <p>Currently developing</p> <p>2022/23</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>on-going</p> |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>Information about financial remuneration to be a part of the sessions for the public during the democracy week, information on our website, and information in the Councillors' handbook which is being developed for the induction sessions.</p> <p>Salaries are paid automatically to Councillors in accordance with the Adjudication Panel for Wales, unless an individual Councillor notes differently.</p> <p>Councillors are reminded regularly of the reimbursement of care costs that is available - via the newsletter of the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee and by political Group Leaders.</p> | <p>October 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

| Commitment | What are we going to do? | Timetable |
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| <i>Work towards ensuring that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.</i> | Work with political group leaders to ensure that consideration is given to under-represented groups for high profile, high influence roles. | 2022/23 |