

# Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 21 November 2018

Meeting time: 09.00

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Pre-meeting (09.00 – 09.15)

- 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**
  
- 2 Inquiry into diversity in local government: evidence session 1**  
(09.15 – 10.15) (Pages 1 – 43)  
Councillor Debbie Wilcox, Welsh Local Government Association Leader and Leader of Newport  
Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy, Welsh Local Government Association  
Siân Williams, Head of Democratic Services, Conwy County Borough Council  
Paul Egan, Deputy Chief Executive, One Voice Wales  
Break (10.15 – 10.30)
  
- 3 Inquiry into diversity in local government: evidence session 2**  
(10.30 – 11.30) (Pages 44 – 48)  
Jessica Blair, Director, ERS Cymru
  
- 4 Papers to note** (Page 49)
  - 4.1 Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services in relation to the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019–20**  
(Pages 50 – 55)
  - 4.2 Inquiry into diversity in local government – survey analysis**  
(Pages 56 – 75)



- 5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**
  
- 6 Inquiry into diversity in local government: consideration of the evidence received**  
(11.30 – 11.40)
  
- 7 Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2019–20: consideration of the draft report**  
(11.40 – 12.40)

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## Introduction

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's Inquiry on Diversity in Local Government and was pleased to advise and provide support in promoting the Inquiry throughout local government.
2. One of the WLGA's core roles is to promote local democracy and, along with local authorities, it has promoted and supported a range of initiatives through the years to encourage greater understanding, engagement and participation in the local democratic process.
3. 'Diversity in Democracy' was the main national coordinated campaign ahead of the 2017 elections, led by the Welsh Government and supported by the WLGA and a range of partner bodies, including the main political parties in Wales. It was also supported by local activities within authorities. Diversity in Democracy was the most well-resourced programme of its kind in Wales and is currently being evaluated (which is due to report towards the end of 2018). Although there have been some local successes, progress overall in terms of greater diversity has unfortunately been minimal.
4. The 2017 local elections saw small improvements in gender balance: 29% of all candidates were women (up by 1% from 2012); 28% of councillors elected were women (up 2% from 2012) and 32% of all newly elected members were women. The gender balance of cabinet members also remains low and lower than the proportion of women councillors at 27.5%. The age profile of councillors did not change significantly remaining proportionately older than the general adult population (47% of councillors were aged 60 years or older) and a higher proportion of councillors were retired (31%). Only 1.8% of councillors were black or ethnic minorities compared to 4.7% for the Welsh population. 16% of candidates and 11% of councillors stated that they had a disability, and there remain a range of challenges for disabled people participating in the democratic process. The report on the Local Government Candidates Survey 2017 provides further information about both candidates and elected councillors.<sup>1</sup>

Although Welsh local government faces particular challenges in terms of diversity of elected representatives, the challenges are not unique to Wales or local government, for example gender imbalance is also evidenced in England where 33% of councillors and 17% of leaders are women; 28% of Wales' MPs are women and only 31% of candidates at the 2017 elections were women; and 42% of AMs are women and only 32% of candidates at the 2016 elections were women. Progress is however being made in terms of the proportion of Non-Executive Directors and public appointments made by the Welsh Government. More widely, women make up only 29% on FTSE 100 company boards, although it is anticipated that by 2020 all FTSE 100 companies will have reached

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2018/180502-local-government-candidates-survey-2017-en.pdf>

a target of 33% women on their boards, a target set by the UK Government-backed Alexander-Hampton Review. Gender balance on FTSE 250 boards is however in decline.

5. There is cause for optimism within Welsh local government. The leadership of Welsh local government is more diverse than ever before, though we recognise it is not fully reflective of wider society; there are 4 women leaders (up from 2), including the Leader of the WLGA, 5 women Deputy Leaders, a quarter of leaders are below the age of 45 and 2 leaders recently featured in the Pride Cymru's 'Pinc List 2018'.
6. Championing and improving democracy and gender equality is one of the WLGA's core priorities for this municipal term and we are currently developing proposals for delivery ahead of the 2022 local elections.
7. The commitment and prominence of diverse role models in leadership positions as well as a commitment to bring forward some challenging policy discussions, following on from the Welsh Government's Rapid Review of Gender Equality, will ensure that diversity in democracy remains a political priority within Welsh local government. However, progress requires continued impetus from all partners and stakeholders, including the Welsh Government, National Assembly for Wales and the political parties in order to make significant change where historically only incremental change has been achieved.
8. Although it is important that councillors are as diverse as possible and there remains under-participation and representation across many characteristics, this response will focus mainly on age and gender balance given these are the most significant areas of imbalance.

### **What is the importance of diversity among local councillors, including the effect on public engagement, debate and decision making?**

9. There are several reasons why diversity is an important and much debated feature of representative democracy.
10. First and foremost, there is a moral imperative based on principles of equality and fairness that our democratic institutions and elected representatives should be as diverse as and reflect the populations they represent and serve.
11. It is widely agreed that a democratic deficit is becoming more problematic as councils make significant decisions about service provision in austerity. A more diverse democracy and elected representatives who are more reflective and understanding of their communities leads to better engagement with individuals and communities, in turn leading to greater levels of confidence and trust. Prominent decision-makers from under-represented groups can be influential role models, empowering and encouraging

others to aspire to follow in their footsteps and to contribute to public life. Similarly, more diverse senior political leaders who are more representative of an organisation's workforce can lead to improved workforce engagement, trust in leadership and a more confident organisational culture.

12. As noted above, all forms and tiers of representative democracy have historically not been as diverse or demographically reflective of the constituents or communities they represent. Elected representatives, whoever they are, are elected to represent all constituents and constituencies and must do so to the best of their abilities. The WLGA's Councillor Guide provides the following summary:

“As a councillor, you represent several different communities and individual citizens with diverse identities. You will want to treat everyone with respect...equality is about ensuring that all people are treated equally. This does not mean treating everyone the same, but recognising the differences in their situations and experience and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all. For you to represent the diverse people in your electoral division, you need to know who they are.”

13. Greater diversity ensures more diverse life-experiences shape our decision-making. Candidates and all elected representatives are deemed to have particular 'qualifications' relevant to their roles, whether it is local ties, professional or voluntary experiences or a track-record of community activism. Diverse-life experience should also be regarded as part of the 'essential criteria' or a qualification for the role of elected office given the added value that a diverse range of perspectives and life-experiences can contribute to decision-making.
14. Evidence shows that diverse decision-makers lead to better and more diverse decisions. Decision-makers with diverse life experiences, from different backgrounds, with different skills and different aspirations can lead to wider perspectives, greater challenge and scrutiny which in turn can lead to more rounded policy decisions. Diverse decision-makers encourage public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all.
15. Although process and procedure, such as engagement strategies and Equality Impact Assessments for example, can help contribute to and improve the quality of decision-making, they cannot be a substitute for a diversity of experiences, perspectives and policy debates from the outset. For example, studies of National Assembly for Wales debates by Chaney et al demonstrate a greater likelihood of gender related issues or topics (such as childcare, domestic violence and equal pay) being raised by women Assembly Members (see Fawcett Society's Does Local Government Work for Women Report 2017)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f>

## **What are the key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections?**

16. Councillors, and those people who put themselves forward as candidates, should be commended and their commitment to public service should be recognised and respected.
17. The role of a councillor is stimulating, rewarding and regarded as a privilege by many. The role however is a challenging and demanding one and is not one that should be considered lightly; it is a complex role, which requires a significant time commitment and can therefore have implications on people's family lives and work-life balance. It can impact on a professional career and on an individual's income and future financial security. It is also a role that can expose individuals (and their families) to regular personal criticism, insults and even threats, particularly through social media.
18. The number of candidates who stood for election in 2017 however increased by 5.6% (3,463 candidates compared to 3,279 in 2012 (including Anglesey candidates in 2013). There however remain too many uncontested seats in Wales, 92 or 7% of seats were uncontested in 2017 (though this is fewer than compared to 99 (8%) in 2012.
19. Despite these widespread challenges, there are specific barriers that potentially have a greater impact on attracting more diverse candidates to stand for local elections. There have been several studies in recent years including:
  - 'On Balance: Diversifying Democracy in Local Government in Wales' Report of the Expert Group on Diversity in Local Government (2014)<sup>3</sup>
  - 'Does Local Government Work for Women?' Final Report of the Local Government Commission (2017)<sup>4</sup>
  - 'New Voices: How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales' Electoral Reform Society (2018)<sup>5</sup>
20. The reported barriers in these studies include:

### **Time-commitment and meeting times**

21. Being a councillor requires a significant and flexible time commitment to the role. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales bases its remuneration framework on a

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<sup>3</sup> <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/localgov/140305-expert-group-report-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/does-local-government-work-for-women-final-report-of-the-local-government-commission>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/>

councillor spending an average of three days per week on council business, with executive members working full-time. These three days include day-time, evening and weekend commitments. Evidence suggests that most members actually commit more time than this, for example, the WLGA survey of those councillors who stood down at the 2017 elections showed that 63% of respondents spent more than 3 days a week (21 plus hours) on council business<sup>6</sup>.

22. Meeting times are often identified as a challenge if not a barrier, particularly to attracting younger people, people with young children or people in employment. Councils survey their members to determine preferred meeting times, however, as many councillors also manage part-time or full-time employment as well as family or other caring responsibilities, achieving a consensus on what times are most convenient to all is impossible. Those councillors in employment may prefer evening meetings however this may impact on those with young family commitments. The irregular and significant time commitments required inevitably influences who is able or prepared to stand as a councillor and is perhaps one of the reasons why a high proportion of councillors are retired and aged 60 years or older.
23. Remote attendance at meetings could resolve some of these issues. Video-calling or video-meeting technology is widely available and can be accessed via smart-phone devices, however, the remote attendance provisions as outlined in the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011 are too restrictive and inflexible and have curtailed authorities' ability to roll this out widely. It is anticipated that these issues can be addressed via the forthcoming Local Government Bill.

### **Political and organisational culture**

24. Although councils are increasingly accessible, open, transparent, seek to engage with communities and councillors are the most accessible and visible elected representatives, evidence suggests that the public's understanding of local government and the role and responsibilities of councillors is limited. Councils can also be seen to be traditional organisations with complex and intimidating governance arrangements, rules and standards.
25. Previous research has suggested that the nature of 'male-dominated' politics can be perceived as being combative, confrontational and is increasingly regarded as toxic which may disproportionately dissuade women, in particular, from engaging and participating<sup>7</sup>.
26. However, only two respondents to the WLGA's Exit Survey referred to 'bullying' or political dynamics as contributing to their desire to stand down, although more referred to criticism and abuse received from the media or the public as being a concern. Furthermore, the WLGA's survey suggests that women were proportionately not more likely to stand down than men.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=1256>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-45396521/politics-live-panel-discusses-toxic-culture-of-social-media>

27. Political parties' approaches or rules with regards recruitment and/or selection of candidates can also be complex or reliant on particular networks for potential candidates. Party activism, membership and organisational capacity varies and is in a period of flux<sup>8</sup>, however, and parties' capacity to deliver significant change to the diversity of candidates and councillors may be limited given their capacity to recruit and support sufficient numbers of candidates as well as the level of influence of any national diversity commitments or programmes over local branches or groups. The Diversity in Democracy evaluation is examining the experiences, challenges and successes of political parties during the 2017 local elections.

### **Child care and other caring responsibilities**

28. Child care and other caring responsibilities are a particular issue for councillors, given the extent and irregularity of time commitment to the role as outlined above. Although reimbursement of care costs is available to members, most members who are eligible do not draw such allowances due to concerns about political, press or public perception.

29. The Independent Remuneration Panel has recently changed its reimbursement of care costs criteria to encourage wider take up, including changing the name from 'allowance' to 'reimbursement of cost' and allowing councils to publish a non-attributed, total sum of costs claimed, rather than identifying individual recipients. It is too early to assess the impact of this, but it is hoped that it will create an environment where more eligible individuals will feel able to claim such allowances.

### **Public criticism and online abuse**

30. Councillors live and work in the council area and in the communities they represent, they are accessible and visible. Austerity has meant that councillors are also responsible for or are perceived to be responsible for taking some of the toughest and most unpalatable and unpopular service delivery decisions in decades.

31. Councillors expect and accept challenge and scrutiny as a core part of the role. However, the level and nature of public criticism and abuse of councillors is growing, and is delivered face-to-face, through correspondence, and increasingly via social media and commentary on online news platforms. Some senior councillors have had their cars or houses damaged and a number have had to install additional personal safety and security measures. Public abuse was described as a growing concern in the WLGA's Exit Survey of councillors who stood down.

32. The use of social media has grown significantly in recent years. Unfortunately, alongside the growth in usage has been a growth in online abuse, particularly of public servants and elected representatives. Several studies, including a review by the Committee on

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<sup>8</sup> <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05125>

Standards in Public Life<sup>9</sup>, have described the nature of social media abuse as well as its impact on elected representatives. Evidence shows that women and representatives from black and minority ethnic groups are much more likely to be subject to abuse and, on occasions, threats.<sup>10</sup>

## **Remuneration and Employment**

33. As noted earlier, the time commitment required to be a councillor can have a significant impact on individuals' employment prospects or their ability to continue to work part or full-time, which may have a longer-term impact on career progression.
34. Councillors in Wales receive a basic salary of £13,600 which is not an insignificant salary but is significantly below the average Welsh salary and therefore does not adequately compensate people for any potential loss of income in their careers. Most significantly, the Independent Remuneration Panel itself recognises that its own framework undervalues councillors by around £1,400 per year: 'the financial constraints on the public sector and particularly local authorities has meant that the link with average Welsh earnings has not been maintained. The Panel considers that this has undervalued the worth of elected members...If this alignment had continued the basic salary would currently be significantly higher than the current prescribed amount, (close to £15,000 pa).'<sup>11</sup>
35. Furthermore, councillors do not receive a 'resettlement grant' or severance package should they lose their seat at an election, unlike Assembly Members of Members of Parliament or like other fields of employment where redundancy is typically provided. This is therefore a financial and personal risk for those people who might consider standing particularly those who choose or are chosen to be a cabinet member or leader, which are generally regarded as full-time (and more) roles and often require individuals to either take a sabbatical or give up a secure job; such individuals are provided with no financial security and could feasibly be unemployed without any notice or 'redundancy pay' following an unsuccessful election. The WLGA understands that the current powers of the Independent Remuneration Panel may prevent such a scheme being considered in Welsh local government.

## **Role models and incumbency**

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<sup>9</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/666927/6.3637\\_CO\\_v6\\_061217\\_Web3.1\\_2\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666927/6.3637_CO_v6_061217_Web3.1_2_.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wlga.wales/social-media-and-online-abuse>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/localgov/180226-annual-report-2018-en.pdf>

36. Councils are seen to be dominated by white, middle-aged men and there are therefore few role models for people from wider more diverse backgrounds.
37. Some mentoring programmes have been developed to ‘pair’ people from diverse backgrounds with elected representatives and role models, these have included activity by Operation Black Vote, the recent Diversity in Democracy mentoring scheme, Chwarae Teg’s LeadHerShip programme and the current Women’s Equality Network programme.
38. The Local Government Commission interim concluded that “Incumbency in local councils disproportionately benefits men...[and]...the slow pace of change is significantly driven by incumbency.” According to the Elections Centre, in Wales’ local elections in 2017, 895 incumbents stood for election (across 71% of seats) with 693 or 77% being successfully re-elected. In summary, incumbents are more likely to be re-elected than other candidates due to their profile, reputation or track-record and, as most councillors are older, white men, most successful incumbents are therefore older white men. The impact of incumbency has therefore led some campaigners to call for term-limits, quotas or all-women shortlists.

### **What areas of innovation and good practice may help increase diversity in local government?**

39. The 2017 local elections in Wales were supported by local activities linked into the national Diversity in Democracy programme. The Diversity in Democracy programme was the biggest and most well-resourced programme of its type and was supported by a range of national partners including the main political parties. The programme included an awareness and promotional campaign, production of literature and online videos for candidates, businesses and mentees, working with employers to encourage them to encourage and support staff to be councillors and the roll-out of a mentoring scheme for people from under-represented groups. Although such nationally coordinated campaigns are vital and provide resources and profile ahead of the elections, the impact of such awareness raising and development programmes can be limited as the slow rate of improvement at the 2017 elections demonstrates.
40. A range of online materials have been produced to provide information to candidates and councillors, including the WLGA’s Be a Councillor guide<sup>12</sup> and Councillor’s Guide<sup>13</sup> and the Welsh Government’s Diversity in Democracy materials<sup>14</sup> which included specific leaflets to encourage businesses to support staff in becoming councillors<sup>15</sup>.
41. The Welsh Government produced a series of online videos with councillors as part of the Diversity in Democracy programme<sup>16</sup> and several councils, including Gwynedd,

<sup>12</sup><https://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=352>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=976>

<sup>14</sup><https://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/diversity-in-democracy/?lang=en>

<sup>15</sup><https://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/localgov/150605-did-businesses-supporting-communities-en.pdf>

<sup>16</sup><https://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/diversity-in-democracy/?lang=en>

Monmouthshire and Powys have also produced excellent videos to explain the role of councillors and to encourage candidates to stand<sup>17</sup>.

42. Councils have good links with school councils and youth forums and many actively seek to engage young people in council business and the democratic process through various initiatives such as mock elections, meetings with councillors and Local Democracy Week activities. These activities are important with regards wider interest and understanding of democracy generally and particularly so given the planned electoral reforms which include votes for 16 and 17 year olds; it is therefore vital that these activities continue and are linked to reforms to the Curriculum as well as the Welsh Youth Parliament.
43. A number of councils ran 'open days' ahead of the elections and mentoring and shadowing programmes are widely regarded as being beneficial, particularly in supporting people from under-represented groups to come forward to stand. A mentoring campaign was the central project within the Diversity in Democracy programme and participants received extensive support, advice, training and access to serving councillors who acted as mentors. Of the 51 mentees who participated, only 16 stood for election and only 4 were elected. The evaluation will be seeking views from mentees to explore the reasons why there was such a significant drop-out rate, which will provide invaluable perspective regarding the challenges and barriers faced. However, such a 'conversion rate' suggests that, in future, mentoring and support programmes may be more effective use of resources if they are provided to people who had already committed to standing as a candidate.
44. There are other arrangements that councils could introduce to make the role of councillor more accessible and support the work of a councillor, including facilitating 'remote attendance'. As noted above however, although video-calling or video-meeting technology is widely available, the remote attendance provisions in the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011 are too restrictive and inflexible.
45. As part of the Diversity in Democracy programme, the Welsh Government explored the potential of a 'Door to Democracy' fund, similar to the successful Access to Elected Office schemes in Scotland and England, which provides financial support for disabled people standing in elections. Despite interest, legal advice suggested that the Welsh Government did not have powers to deliver the programme in Wales and disabled people were supported through the wider mentoring programme. Powers over elections have since been devolved to the Assembly and therefore it is anticipated a future programme will be rolled out in Wales.
46. One of the issues affecting councillors, particularly those who also have full or part-time employment is the encouragement and support of their employer. Although the majority of respondents to the WLGA's Exit Survey noted that their employers were

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<sup>17</sup> <https://en-gb.facebook.com/MonmouthshireCC/videos/1311280965573005/>  
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/MonmouthshireCC/videos/1311192478915187/>  
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/MonmouthshireCC/videos/1311171622250606/>  
<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Councillors-and-committees/Being-a-Councillor.aspx>  
<https://www.wlga.gov.uk/be-a-councillor-2018>

supportive, some councillors suggest that being a councillor can affect their careers or make it difficult to re-enter the labour market. The WLGA provides a highly regarded Leadership Academy, with Academi Wales and the LGA, which is an ILM accredited programme designed to equip leading councillors with a range of skills for the role. The WLGA previously explored wider accreditation of other training programmes, but there was limited interest at the time, however, we are reviewing whether an accredited programme of training and development could be developed which would be relevant and tailored to appeal to future employers, for example, leadership development and financial management.

47. Most research suggests that political parties have the major role to play in terms of affecting change with regards diversity in democracy. Although independents are a valued and significant proportion of councillors and candidates, the majority of candidates and councillors represent political parties and therefore the parties can have a significant influence over who they recruit and select to stand for them in elections.
48. Many of the recent reports on diversity in democracy recommend significant political (if not legislative) commitment to either ensure more representative candidates lists (for example the previous commitment by some political parties to field women in 40% of winnable seats), to fielding all-women shortlists through to quotas.
49. Whilst such approaches have in the past been controversial within parties nationally and locally, they have been introduced as parties have recognised the value of ensuring a more diverse and representative democratic institution with wider life-experiences. Evidence also suggests that such initiatives are effective at engendering change.
50. There are a range of approaches that might be considered from statutory or national party quotas, to commitments to field diverse candidate lists, to more local or targeted interventions.
51. Minor parties and independents continue to play a valued and key role and will continue to compete electorally, but for example, if all by-elections that occurred during a municipal term were targeted through a voluntary agreement between the main political parties to field only all women candidate lists, gender balance could improve by up to 5% during a municipal term.
52. A wider approach, which might require some changes to electoral law regarding the nomination process, could see a similar approach adopted for 'vacant' seats, where councillors had decided to stand down or retire at the election. If such councillors were able to commit to standing-down by an early-enough deadline, political parties could agree to voluntarily field all-women candidate lists, which could see as much as a 10-15% swing in terms of gender balance at an election and gender balance could potentially be achieved in local government over a 5-year period over the course of 2 elections.
53. The practicalities and implications of such proposals would need to be explored further and are a matter for political parties to consider. The WLGA does not currently have a

policy position on quotas or other proactive political interventions, however, the WLGA may consider the merits of these as part of a wider review on Gender Equality in local government which will be commencing this autumn.

54. Even without such legislative or policy commitments, local authorities and political parties can and have made significant local progress in improving diversity of candidates and councillors, for example, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's gender balance is 43% women (up from 37% at the 2012 elections) and 42% of councillors in Swansea Council are women (up from 39%). Both councils not only have a higher proportion of women councillors than elsewhere but are increasing the proportion at above the average rate. These experiences and successes and those from elsewhere could provide invaluable learning for others.

### **What are the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers?**

55. The Welsh Government's Green Paper outlined a positive and supportive narrative around the role and contribution of Wales' councillors. The Green Paper explicitly included a section on 'Valuing Councillors' and noted that councillors' remuneration and support arrangements needed to be addressed, as well as the scope of the role, alluding to new powers and flexibilities for councils in future.
56. It should be noted that previous Welsh Government reforms have also provided flexibilities and support for councillors, including the establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel, care allowances regime, parental leave, sickness absence, remote attendance and support for development and training.
57. There are some possible changes in the forthcoming Local Government Bill that would be further welcomed, for example, flexibility around allowing councillors to job share (particularly for senior office holders), remote attendance reforms as well as options for the Independent Remuneration Panel to make changes to the remuneration framework.
58. The Green Paper observed:
- “Elected members are under increasing pressures...their representational role is under pressure from increased workloads, the demands of social media and the press and the impact on their personal lives...The pressures on elected members, combined with the level of remuneration, makes the role unattractive to many people who would make excellent councillors. They cannot afford either in financial or personal terms to make the commitment needed...The Welsh Government believes we should recognise the commitment involved in being a councillor and ensure they are properly remunerated, respected and recognised for the work they do in their communities.”
59. However, the Welsh Government's proposed improvements to councillor remuneration and support were linked to the proposal for fewer local authorities which, in turn,

intimated a need for fewer councillors and that existing sums of remuneration and support resources could be shared between fewer councillors.

60. At this stage, it remains unclear what reforms to the roles, remuneration or support for councillors the Welsh Government is committed to bring forward in the anticipated Local Government Bill.



The Voice of Community and Town Councils in Wales

## **One Voice Wales**

**Evidence to the Inquiry into Diversity in Local Government**

**October 2018**

## Evidence:

1. One Voice Wales is recognised by the Welsh Government as the national representative body for community and town councils in Wales. It represents the sector on the Local Government Partnership Council and over 82% of the 735 community and town councils are already in membership, with numbers growing year on year. As well as our representative role, we also provide support and advice to councils on an individual basis and have previously launched, with Welsh Government support, a modular training programme for councillors, which continues to deliver effectively. We believe strongly that community councils are well-placed to develop the economic, social and environmental well-being of the areas they serve and, as such, are active and proactive in debating key issues such as energy policies, environmental issues and strategic planning.
2. One Voice Wales (OVW) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's Inquiry on Diversity in Local Government.
3. One of the One Voice Wales's core roles is to promote local democracy and, along with community and town councils, it has promoted and supported initiatives to encourage greater understanding, engagement and participation in the local democratic process over recent years.
4. One Voice Wales has identified and has encouraged its membership to take up a number of key sustainable development roles including activities based on the evolving economic, potentially changing governance structures and environmental climate which potentially supports greater diversity in democracy at the community and town council level of local government:
  - Conducting audits of community assets within communities and becoming the focal point for asset based leadership in communities.
  - Seek the views of residents in service delivery and involve young people in decision making – evidence based community leadership
  - Promote and support where possible the development of community renewable energy initiatives for community benefit – being seen as the catalyst for sustainable development initiatives
  - Work in 'clusters' with other local councils to maintain infrastructure and service delivery at a sub Unitary Authority level – implementing the development of 'Joint Delivery Partnerships'
  - Support employment initiatives and make decisions that boost local economy activity such as youth employment mentoring schemes
  - Consult in a robustly democratic way to ensure that precept spend and any rises are accountable and aimed at what the community wants
  - Boost social capital by working in partnership with development trusts, voluntary groups and social businesses

- Supporting local tourism and embracing local cultural and historical assets that enhances a sense of place and encourages local distinctiveness.
5. The drivers, synergies and justification for these roles are set out below:
  6. The Welsh Government's Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act – will force a re-think in public service delivery. In future, more collaboration and more innovation in the way services are delivered (as above for example)
  7. Financial Pressure – cuts force innovation. The Wales Wellbeing Bond and the Community Interest Fund in general provide an opportunity for co-production in designing and delivering services. New partnerships could emerge between Community and Town Councils, voluntary sector and unitary authorities
  8. Charters with unitary authorities (including a Local Councils/ County Councillor Member's "Protocol" in Carmarthenshire). In best cases, these have resulted in a much healthier relationship between the two tiers – more respect and coherent partnership. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between One Voice Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association in November 2013 established the foundations for future collaboration between the two tiers of local government. This continues to flourish through the National Training and Advisory Group where joint working on a range of training materials supporting Councils and Councillors has occurred.
  9. In Brecon Beacons National Park, the charter between the park authority and the councils, clarifies planning issues and is linked to an action plan which each council develops and is responsible for delivering. At the National Parks Conference 2015 this arrangement was held up as best practice and has assisted in improving the Management Plan for the Beacons Park. We will be working with both Snowdonia and Pembrokeshire National Parks in 2018-19 to replicate the success in the Brecon Beacons.
  10. A proportion of Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL) collected by principal authorities in Wales with up to 15% being devolved to local Councils. (One Voice Wales has published a guide for Councils in relation to the levy)
  11. Although 'place plans' were not included in the Planning (Wales) Act there is still much interest in their development within the local council sector. Shropshire Place Plans as a best practice example that can be borrowed from and built upon: these have been developed by Shropshire County Council and enable all lead bodies operating in a specific zone to consider how their available resources can be re-engineered to provide maximum benefit and impact. This bottom up approach is now being re-looked at by Planning Aid Wales as a new level of community planning – it is anticipated that community and town councils will have a greater role in bringing these plans to fruition in Wales. The existence of 'place plans' could support how the spending of CIL is undertaken.

12. However, several barriers and challenges were identified to developing these roles and this has recently been confirmed in feedback received in regional consultation on the future of the community and town council sector:

- There is a lack of capacity in patches across Wales: some councillors lack clarity on their role and the confidence to do anything practical.
- Action cannot be local in isolation – it has to integrate into the work underway to co-ordinate sustainability and sustainable economic development at a regional scale. The challenge remains the same - to integrate the local with the regional and national. Aligning the work of local councils with the Local Well being Plans and Local Development Plans has been challenging to date though not insurmountable in future with better lines of communication between the sector and other public bodies.
- Community and Town Councils are not fully represented across Wales on the Public Service Boards as yet or the Local Development Plan structure – they are part of the statutory consultees to these plans but often feel side-lined. However in some cases they are not helping themselves and do not make vigorous representation when given the opportunity. Local village plans or ‘Place Plans’ are not part of the LDP process although their potential use is supported by the Local Government Act 2000. No formal, legislative powers for local/village plans but it could be argued that they should be adopted as supplementary planning policy guidance documents.
- Councillors as individuals receive limited remuneration (though this is increasingly being addressed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales who are recognising the changing role of local councillors) and as a consequence have limited capacity to engage with major strategic issues. They are characterised by a tendency of not wanting to rock the boat. They lack confidence and time and prefer to concern themselves with what is immediate, local and smaller scale.
- Clerks are often under resourced and work longer hours than they get paid for.

13. Additionally the Review of Community and Town Council Funding in the autumn of 2015 identified there was a consensus that the nature of the sector – a high number of very small councils – means that communicating with the sector and effecting change in it is not a straightforward matter. Features of the sector which were highlighted in discussions included:

- Councils do not cover the whole of Wales
- A high number of small councils;
- Councillors see themselves as volunteers, and the fact that they are unpaid means their goodwill needs to be maintained;
- In many places there can be difficulties in recruiting councillors and many are co-opted after the elections have been held.
- Many councils rely on a part-time Clerk, and have limited ICT and other facilities;

- Significant changes in the role of councils, and the demands placed on them, could see a high turnover of clerks and councillors. One Voice Wales has been giving increasing support to community and town councils on employment matters and the recruitment of clerks.
- Councillors regard the link to their local community as absolutely vital and believe that the creation of larger councils covering a wider geographical area will break that link and lead to greater difficulties in recruiting councillors. The potential for 'clustering' of councils will need to be dealt with sensitively.
- Councils were highly concerned about increases to their precept, and a careful approach to use of their budgets was a factor in their attitude to OVW membership fees.
- Cuts to services and the delegation of local authority services was the most pressing issue facing councils at the present time and generated heated discussion, particularly on the role of local authorities in enabling councils to take sound decisions on the viability of transferring services.
- For larger councils, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act presents new challenges in terms of how they engage with their electorates and collaborate with Public Service Board plans.

14. All of the above were raised as ongoing issues in the eight consultation events held by One Voice Wales in November and December 2017.

15. To overcome the barriers and challenges a number of issues need to be addressed. Again these issues were re-affirmed as still existing in the consultation events mentioned above:

- A clear demarcation and public statement on what the precept pays for: what does the unitary authority do and what does the community/town council do. Precept linked to specific services and outcomes – it becomes obvious what the local electors money is spent on and whether it has been spent well.
- Some Charters with unitary authorities are a bit light touch. The charters need to be given more weight and linked to a clear annual action plan. The Cabinet Secretary has been made aware of the concerns of the Community and Town Council sector during 2017-18 and representation will be made during 2017-18 via feedback to the Community and Town Council Review Panel consultation on the need to make these work for the benefit of local communities.
- There is a need for regional committees or structures that include larger councils and/or cluster representatives for the smaller ones/all – One Voice Wales will be working with the Local Government Democracy and Boundary Commission in 2018-19 to discuss criteria to be used by Unitary Authorities when considering 'Community Reviews'.
- Councillors need better instruction on their roles and some kind of intervention to give them more confidence in carrying out these roles – One

Voice Wales has worked with Welsh Government in 2017 to develop a positive narrative for the local councils sector in advance of the 2017 elections in the form of a Local Elections Guidance document for prospective candidates. One Voice Wales supported the marketing of the 2017 elections encouraging local people to stand for election as a community or town councillor.

- Clerks need to be better equipped. Increasing the professional capacity and status of the clerk role would have enormous benefits. Clerks are the corner stone of an effective council. This inevitably means greater financial support from the Welsh Government and that this should be administered by a central body – One Voice Wales. Councils often perform best when they have access to easy to understand guidance about practical action that supports strategic agendas – for example the development guidance in 2016-17 on Youth Councils. In 2018-19 One Voice Wales will endeavour to provide additional guidance and support documents to the community and town council sector in Wales.
- Local scale plans have to be based on wide democratic engagement. They have to address immediate and locally relevant issues if they are to generate commitment and support. Whilst in principle they support wider and larger strategic aims such as resilience and sustainability, they have to be presented in an accessible and locally relevant context. With the requirement to produce Annual Reports for those councils who fall under the statutory requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act One Voice Wales will be actively engaged in providing support for the Councils concerned.
- One Voice Wales needs more resource either in staff or the financial capacity to procure expertise that can be directed to increasing the capacity and confidence of councils to fulfil the roles described above. The review of Community and Town Councils Funding Arrangements in 2015 recognised that the organisation had a low resource base and was struggling to cope with the increasing demands being placed on it. It has become apparent in 2017-18 and in the current financial year that the demands upon One Voice Wales are increasing especially as membership has increased to over 82% of all local councils in Wales.

16. There are however several impending opportunities for overcoming the barriers and meeting the needs:-

- The implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act by community and town councils will need to be carefully monitored to determine its impact - it presents significant challenges to the sector in terms of developing the capacity and skills needed to comply with the SD Duty requirements.
- Together with the local councils Manifesto launched in October 2015, the current Community and Town Council Review 2017-8 by Welsh Government represents an opportunity for the Community and Town Council sector to present a vision for the future role of local councils in Wales.

- The Local Wellbeing Plans should in theory provide a structure into which Community and Town Council planning and strategy can integrate and thus complement and be supported by county and emerging regional approaches. To date there has been a very mixed level of engagement by Public Service Boards and further work will be needed to ensure greater consistency of engagement with the sector across Wales.
- The potential development of community hubs and third sector-Community and Town Council partnerships would ensure that responsibility and resources are shared. Consortia of councils, voluntary groups and social businesses present a stronger more representative structure for raising funds and taking action. In this model, Community and Town Councils can provide seed funding from reserves or precept and form the basis of applications for charitable, lottery or loan funding.
- Organisations with a specific remit such as The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG), Community Energy Wales and Planning Aid Wales are able to provide practical guidance and financial support to councils and their local partners.

17. The work begun in 2015-16 on Alternative Delivery Models (albeit this has been delayed since) provides an opportunity to consider new working relationships and organisational partnerships across Wales between local councils and stakeholder organisations. For example, Community Hubs would give councillors more confidence – in this model the council works in partnership with voluntary groups and residents and gets clarity on what the people want for their community and what they expect from their council. The forum can act as a means for clarifying misunderstandings and establishing what the precept can/should be spent on and whether it should be raised to meet certain objectives.

***Key strategic and operational requirements for the development of diversity of Community and Town Councillors in Wales***

18. One Voice Wales very much welcomed the Cabinet Secretary's announcements at the National Conference in October 2016 to take forward an agenda of action to help build resilience and renewal in community and town councils:

- Produce a toolkit to support community councils in working through what is required in taking on new services and assets, building on experiences of the key ingredients. Work has begun on this in 2017-18 and it is anticipated this work will be completed in 2018-19.
- Press ahead with legislating for the **General Power of Competence**, shaped by the suggestions made in response to the previous

Government's consultation, for innovative ambitious councils looking for more freedom to serve their communities.

- Re-energise ties between community councils and local authorities and provide a platform to share the good examples across Wales, bringing the new cadre of county and community councillors
- Facilitate the creation of **clusters** of smaller community councils, making some modest funding available to support the initial setting up of joint arrangements. The findings of the 2017-18 pilot program will assist in the future direction of such arrangements.
- Legislate to make it an obligation on councils to **consider and plan for their training needs** and review it regularly.
- Ensure citizens are kept informed and have the right to **make representations** on any business conducted at a council meeting. Learn from where this is done well and look for a legislative opportunity to strengthen current provisions.
- Commission the **Local Democracy and Boundary Commission** to draw up guidelines for local authorities to secure consistency in the manner in which community reviews are conducted.
- Support community councils to **raise awareness and encourage participation** in community council elections and to increase diversity

19. However, in order to realise the opportunities the current environment offers there are several activities that need to be progressed:

- Introduction of guidance on grouped councils, partnerships and federation arrangements isn't currently in place however it is anticipated that useful learning will be derived from the Cluster Pilots programme in 2017-18 which can be shared with local councils.
- Guidance developed for TUPE and delegated functions for community and town councils
- Introduction of an accreditation scheme – One Voice Wales will be presenting papers to the National Training and Advisory group in 2018-19 to look at how this may be taken forward within the community and town council sector. welcomes the
- One Voice Wales has begun work on the Alternative Models of Delivery with Welsh Government and this provides the vehicle to explore the development of guidance on these topics.
- The creation of a specific post in One Voice Wales to support local councils with the current 'devolution of services' agenda and transfer of assets.
- The creating of a specific post within One Voice Wales to support local councils in taking forward the Welsh Language Champions initiative.
- The development of clear guidance on the funding arrangements for delegated or devolved services/assets

- Commissioning the regular surveys of Community and Town Councils to better understand their needs and activities and the outcomes achieved for communities. Working with Welsh Government a comprehensive survey was undertaken on the asset and devolution of services in 2017-18 which will help to inform future support and developments on this topic.
- Commission research to examine possible mechanisms for directly funding Community and Town Councils to include:
  - Reviewing current practices in the funding of delegated functions
  - Procedures for the avoidance of double taxation
  - Implementation of directly funded grant schemes
  - Address the issue of concurrent functions and improve local accountability and transparency
  - Development of a programme for improvement based on the availability of community based grant scheme for community and town councils to encourage innovation and efficiencies in service provision at the very local level
- Additional financial support for One Voice Wales and /or for groups to enable the creation of new Councils in those communities currently without a local council

## ***20. Looking Ahead: Potential Changes to Support Diversity***

21. Community and town councils are facing a further and significant period of change in the coming years. Inevitably the findings of the Community and Town Council Review Panel in autumn 2018 will have implications in terms of the form and function of community and town councils in the years ahead – the 46 recommendations are by and large welcomed by One Voice Wales and will help to address barriers to greater diversity within the sector in future.

## **22. The power of competence**

23. The draft local government bill introduces a power of competence for all local authorities and for community councils that have declared themselves “councils with competence” having met the following criteria:

- Two thirds of members having been elected;
- The Clerk holds a relevant professional qualification;
- Having unqualified accounts for the relevant period.

24. The timing of these changes will depend on the passage of the bill when introduced but will affect councils in the period after the 2017 election. One Voice Wales already collaborates with the Auditor General in relation to finance and governance matters affecting the sector; and improvements have been seen, although there is still progress to be made. Welsh Government already works in partnership with the SLCC and OVW in relation to training for clerks. However, only a relatively small number of Clerks hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification. Further, information collated by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales indicates that more than two-thirds of councillors elected in May 2012 were

returned without a contest – around 5000 individuals – and that over 1000 seats remained vacant after the elections, to be filled by co-option. The percentage of contested seats varies greatly according to council – just over 10% in Blaenau Gwent and 75% in Torfaen. Therefore substantial efforts will be required if a majority of councils are to achieve these criteria in future.

## **25. Delegation of services**

26. The UK government's austerity agenda means that unitary authorities are in the position of having to consider cutting services or transferring them to other bodies. The strong message from the focus group meetings held with councils in the course of the recent consultation in relation to the Community and Town Council Review Panel review was that the delegation of services was the most pressing and most important issue facing councils at the present time. A number of councils are in discussion with local authorities regarding the transfer of services from April onwards. One Voice Wales is already involved in policy discussions on asset transfer and delegation of services but there is still considerable work required in order for community and town councils to be in a position to take on services.

- Welsh Government and One Voice Wales ongoing work with the community and town council sector will need to include the following priorities:
- In collaboration with WLGA, WCVA, National Assets group, local authorities and other partners, supporting councils in responding to the delegation of services agenda;
- In collaboration with the Future Generation Commissioner for Wales office and organisations such as Cynnal Cymru, supporting larger councils with the requirements of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act;
- Developing a policy position on the principles which should underpin the forthcoming LDBCW reviews of council areas;
- In collaboration with the Auditor General for Wales, identifying councils which are likely to need targeted support to enable them to comply with audit requirements;
- In collaboration with the SLCC developing an appropriate training / assessment programme for Clerks;
- In collaboration with relevant experts e.g. Participation Cymru; e.g. WCVA e.g. Electoral Commission Wales develop an action plan for increasing local interest in forthcoming community and town council elections;
- Continue to provide training, advice and support to councils to enable them to conduct business effectively. In collaboration with Planning Aid Wales continue to improve councils' ability to engage effectively with the planning process and the development of Place Plans as appropriate.

## **27. Nominations for elections**

28. The National Assembly be informed that the Council considers that diversity in democracy could be improved by simplifying the process for candidates to submit their nominations for elections to include the introduction of a mobile app to complete and submit nomination forms and the requirement for candidates to hand deliver their nomination forms for prior checking by Elections Officers be removed as this can restrict those working full-time from visiting the designated officer during work time.

## **29. Working with Employer Organisations**

30. One Voice Wales members feel that the number of days needed to attend council meetings and undertake council duties should be extended with companies/organisations being compensated for supporting their staff to carry out this important community function. There also needs to be additional understanding of what the role entails for those companies/organisations to understand the benefits.

## **31. Local Democracy on School Curriculums**

32. One Voice Wales members consider more could be done to enable children to understand how local democracy works and how best they can engage with it. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 introduced the ability of Community and Town Councils to establish youth councils and co-opt up to two youth council members onto the Council – this has resulted in a number of community and town councils developing such arrangements which enables younger people to become engaged with local democratic structures.

Mr Lyn Cadwallader

Chief Executive, One Voice Wales

November 2018



## ERS Cymru submission to Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee inquiry into diversity in local government

### Introduction

Earlier this year ERS Cymru published 'New Voices' a report looking at the barriers to diversity across Welsh politics. The report examined UK Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and Welsh local government in turn, assessing the unique circumstances in each which halt gender equality and greater diversity generally being reached.

As part of this work on local government we have assessed the current makeup of Welsh local authorities, following last year's local elections, surveyed elected representatives in Wales with 224 councillors responding and undertook in depth interviews with key figures in local authorities in Wales, including Debbie Wilcox, Leader of Newport Council and the WLGA, Rodney Berman, Councillor and former Leader of Cardiff Council and Yvonne Jardine of Swansea Council.

The full report can be found here: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/>

#### **1. Understanding the importance of diversity among local councillors, including the effect on public engagement, debate and decision making.**

- 1.1. At present just 28% of Wales' councillors are women. In two local authorities in Wales there are no women at all in the cabinet. Only 30% of candidates in last year's election were women, with a third of wards having no women standing at all.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2. In our survey, which 224 councillors undertook we asked for a range of information including age, sexual orientation and ethnicity in addition to gender. 76.3% of those that took the survey were over the age of 45. 91% characterised themselves as white. 88.4% defined themselves as heterosexual or straight<sup>2</sup>. While this is a relatively small sample of Wales' 1264 total councillors, it does paint a picture of a political culture in local government that is pale, male and stale.

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<sup>1</sup> ERS Cymru. 2018. New Voices. Available at: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/#sub-section-8>

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

- 1.3. This creates a situation where local authorities are attempting to represent the people they serve while completely failing to reflect them. With all of the councils in Wales having a majority of men, with high rates of those white and middle aged or older there is a lack of diversity of experience and opinion. In the Vale of Glamorgan, for example, we must consider how a cabinet entirely made up of white, middle aged men can effectively make decisions which consider the perspective of, for example, women, people from ethnic minorities or young people. A multiplicity of voices and perspectives can only serve to improve the decision making processes of such a leadership team.
- 1.4. Furthermore, voters are offered a complete lack of choice. Given this it is unsurprising that at the 2017 election turnout was just 41% of registered voters.

## 2. **Understanding key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections.**

- 2.1. The 'New Voices' report considered a number of barriers to better diversity in local government, including those that are specific to local government and those that are societal issues that put people of political office on a wider basis.
- 2.2. In terms of issues specific to local government, we have identified the following as key barriers to diversity:
  - **A lack of positive action-** Across politics and specifically in local government it is clear that a lack of parties working to specific targets and quotas is a fundamental barrier to greater diversity. In the Welsh Assembly in particular methods such as all women shortlists and twinning have been used to great effect, with the Assembly becoming the first legislature in the world to reach gender parity in 2003. While this is now at around 43% the fact that this is largely due to the electoral fortunes of those parties that do use positive action highlights the impact that this does have. Unless these methods are adopted in local government on a cross party basis, there will be little change to the current stasis.
  - **A lack of data-** To be able to effectively correct the issues we see around a lack of diversity we need to be able to better understand the scale of the problem. While the survey we conducted with councillors for the 'New Voices' report spoke to 224 councillors to understand the lack of diversity in Welsh politics, we must now look to ensure we receive a much fuller picture of exactly how diverse our local authorities are. For other elections could be done by the UK Government implementing Section 106 of the Equality Act, however political will to do this is, at this point in time, lacking. It is also worth noting that the legislation doesn't include local government.
  - **The voting system-** Using the first past the post system in any election creates a situation where safe seats are created that councillors can essentially hold onto until they wish to stand down. Our research in Parliament has shown the vast impact of this, with 80% of the Welsh MPs elected in 2010 or before that still hold their

seats being male<sup>3</sup>. The same principle applies in local government. While parties may put an emphasis on selecting more diverse candidates to stand in vacant seats, it is those that have been held by the same person for years where a lack of diversity will persist.

- **The role of a councillor-** A fundamental reason for the lack of diversity in local government is the role of the job. The role of a councillor as essentially a part time job, with many meetings in evenings is a specific barrier to diverse candidates, in particular women, standing for election. Debbie Wilcox, Leader of Newport Council, spoke to us extensively on this issue for our 'New Voices' report stating:

*"When I started on the council and I was working full time as a teacher it was really impossible to try and get to some of these meetings that were held at 10 o'clock in the day [AM]. I've helped to change that over the years. For example, main council now begins at 5 o'clock [PM]... my own cabinet meeting, it used to be that you would have a pre-cabinet at 9 o'clock on a Monday morning and the public meeting at eleven. Well, I have switched that so now on a Monday we have pre-cabinet at half past four so I can have cabinet members who work. And then we have public cabinet then on Wednesday at 4 o'clock. So its about moving meetings. Again there is ups and downs with that. Some women tell me that's when the kids get home from school, that's when we have got to get tea sorted and get them onto their clubs and whatever so there is no perfect solution but moving meetings around, and we will develop more Skype and technology in the future. It's still rudimentary at the moment but that would be a way forward so you can actually attend a meeting without actually physically being in a place"*

The Welsh Government have promoted greater flexibility for local authorities, with each council now having to survey their members for the best meeting times for them. However, with such a dominance of men in local authorities, the voices of women with childcare obligations are often minimised.

2.3. In terms of the wider societal barriers to greater diversity in local government our 'New Voices' report identified a number of barriers:

- **Abuse and harassment-** The levels of abuse and harassment we uncovered in the process of pulling together our report were shocking and disturbing. Across the political spectrum we heard stories of sexual and racist abuse, online threats and in person harassment. Of the 266 politicians that responded to our survey 45% overall had experienced abuse or harassment. In women this was 54%. These levels of abuse raise the question of why someone, especially someone from a diverse background, would want to put themselves forward for election given the kinds of abuse they are likely to face.
- **Financial barriers-** There are financial implications of standing for election, even at a council level. While we tend to talk about the cost

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, subsection 9: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/#sub-section-9>

of standing for Parliament or the Assembly many councillors will see implications on other jobs or the ability to do other jobs restricted upon election. For people with childcare commitments having an existing full time or part time job, then adding the role of a councillor on top of that and childrearing adds fundamental strain to an individual.

### **3. To explore areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government.**

3.1. We have a number of recommendations, which we believe would increase diversity in local government and tackle some of the barriers we have identified in section 2. These are outlined below:

- Welsh Government should introduce a 45% quota for women for each party at local government elections, meaning that at least 45% of their candidates should be female. While the issue of how to enforce a quota for independent candidates remains a problem, this would at the very least fundamentally increase the levels of women standing for, and getting elected to councils in Wales.
- Measures should be put in place to encourage a broader range of candidates from ethnic minorities, age spread and those with disabilities alongside ways to monitor the development of this. While the implementation of Section 106 remains the best way to ensure data on this is collected for other elections we believe this should also be rolled out in time to local government. In the absence of this being enacted and extending to local government, each party should ask candidates to fill out an equalities monitoring form upon selection and every party should make the headline figures of their candidates public in a standardised format to allow the progress of parties to be compared fairly. Each local authority should then publish a complete report of their makeup after each election.
- Council leaders should be held to account by Welsh Government if they fail to select councillors who are diverse for their leadership teams.
- Welsh Government should commission a review into councillor remuneration, which should include an analysis of the potential for fewer councillors at a higher salary. The two barriers of the part time nature of a councillor and the financial implications could possibly be overcome by the remodelling of the role of a councillor. We would urge this to be looked into by Welsh Government.
- A proportional electoral system should be introduced for local elections in Wales, to ensure greater representation of people's views at the ballot box but also to reduce the levels of 'seatblocking' where men have held council seats for generations acting as a barrier to diversity.
- The Welsh political parties should develop a joint code of conduct on intimidatory behaviour in attempt to tackle the abuse and harassment councillors are seeing. Better training and guidance to candidates on

social media abuse should also be offered, as was also recommended by the CSPL last year.

- Job sharing, while being trialed currently in some local authorities in Wales, should be rolled out on a wider basis. In Swansea there are currently two shared Cabinet roles<sup>4</sup>. More options like this would make the role of a councillor easy to juggle for those with other commitments, while not holding them back from reaching leadership roles.

#### **4. Exploring the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers.**

- 4.1. ERS Cymru welcomed many of the proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government, however as reform in local government currently stands there are gaps where measures to increase diversity could be included.
- 4.2. We would urge the Welsh Government to consider legislating on some of the recommendations outlined in section 3 when it presents the Local Government Bill, due for publication in early 2019. The specific recommendations we believe would be suitable for inclusion include; quotas ensuring political parties take measures to boost gender diversity, and action around completely undiverse council cabinets. We also believe that there is a need to look at the legislative arrangements of job sharing. Furthermore, the Welsh Government should review remuneration and the role of councillors.

For further inquiries please contact:  
Jess Blair

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<sup>4</sup> Swansea Cabinet. 2018. Available at: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/Cabinet>

# Agenda Item 4

## Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

21 November 2018 – papers to note cover sheet

Paper no.	Issue	From	Action point
ELGC(5)-32-18 Paper 4	Scrutiny of the Welsh Government draft budget 2019-20	Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services	Statement on the levels of reserves held by local authorities
ELGC(5)-32-18 Paper 5	Diversity in local government	Assembly Commission Communications team	Analysis of the online surveys for the general public and councillors



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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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**TITLE**        **Reserves Held by Local Authorities**

**DATE**        **14 November 2018**

**BY**            **Alun Davies, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government & Public Services**

As part of a range of information intended to support transparency in public affairs the Welsh Government publishes data annually on the levels of reserves held by local authorities.<sup>1</sup> The levels of reserves held by Local Authorities in Wales are a matter for local elected members. It is of course important for local electors and elected members to understand the local detail and authorities' policies around setting and holding reserves. The information presented in this statement sets out wider comparative examples and trends over time.

It is prudent to build up and hold reserves for specific purposes, including transforming services to meet the continuing financial pressures, which I recognise councils face. There will always be a need for authorities to carry reserves for such things as insurance and PFI liabilities, which can be significant. Slippage for certain types of projects can impact on the timing of drawing upon reserves. The Welsh Government also carries reserve provision, in the context of expenditure allocations of £14.5 billion and proportional to the range of risks the Government faces across all portfolios.

Local Authorities are expected to set out, in a way that is clear and accessible to members of the public, how the level of general contingency reserve has been set and the detail of activities or items to be funded from each earmarked reserve.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/finandfunding/whole-government-accounts/publications/whole-government-accounts-reserves/?lang=en>

Reserves can only be used once. The Welsh Government has continued to protect local authorities from the worst of the UK Government's spending reductions and while there are specific circumstances for each authority, the evidence shows that in recent years, the levels of reserves held by some local authorities have continued to increase. Authorities which increase levels of reserves need to explain how these financial decisions serve the best interests of their communities. If reserves are held for budget contingencies against the risk of not delivering on planned service changes in order to meet budget pressures, authorities will need to consider whether their plans are realistic.

I believe that local authorities in Wales will wish to use their reserves strategically to drive forward the change required to deliver essential services to communities. They will need to consider how to use available funds to work with others to deliver longer term efficiencies. All authorities should continue to ensure that their reserves remain adequate for planned future needs and contingencies without placing undue constraints on current expenditure. Local authorities with high levels of reserves relative to their spending should review the purposes for which these are held to ensure they are still required. The purposes for holding reserves, particularly where they are increasing, should be communicated clearly through the annual accounts. The information attached contextualises authority's reserves with reference to their annual spending so that standardised comparisons can be made between different size authorities and over time. The annex also illustrates the variation and movement across authorities on the same basis for each authority at March 2011, 2016 & 2018.

The latest data available indicates that, at the end of March 2018, earmarked reserves for all local authorities in Wales amounted to £866 million. These are reserves set aside for specific projects or purposes. Authorities also hold non-earmarked reserves to deal with unforeseen situations. The balance of these reserves stood at £198 million at the end of March 2018.

The average of earmarked reserves as a percentage of expenditure in Wales at March 2018 was 12.1% compared to 10.9% at March 2011. Levels have increased by £122 million since March 2011; eleven authorities have seen a reduction over this period, eleven increased.

Similarly the levels of unallocated reserves have increased by £41 million since March 2011. Five authorities reduced levels over the period but seventeen increased.

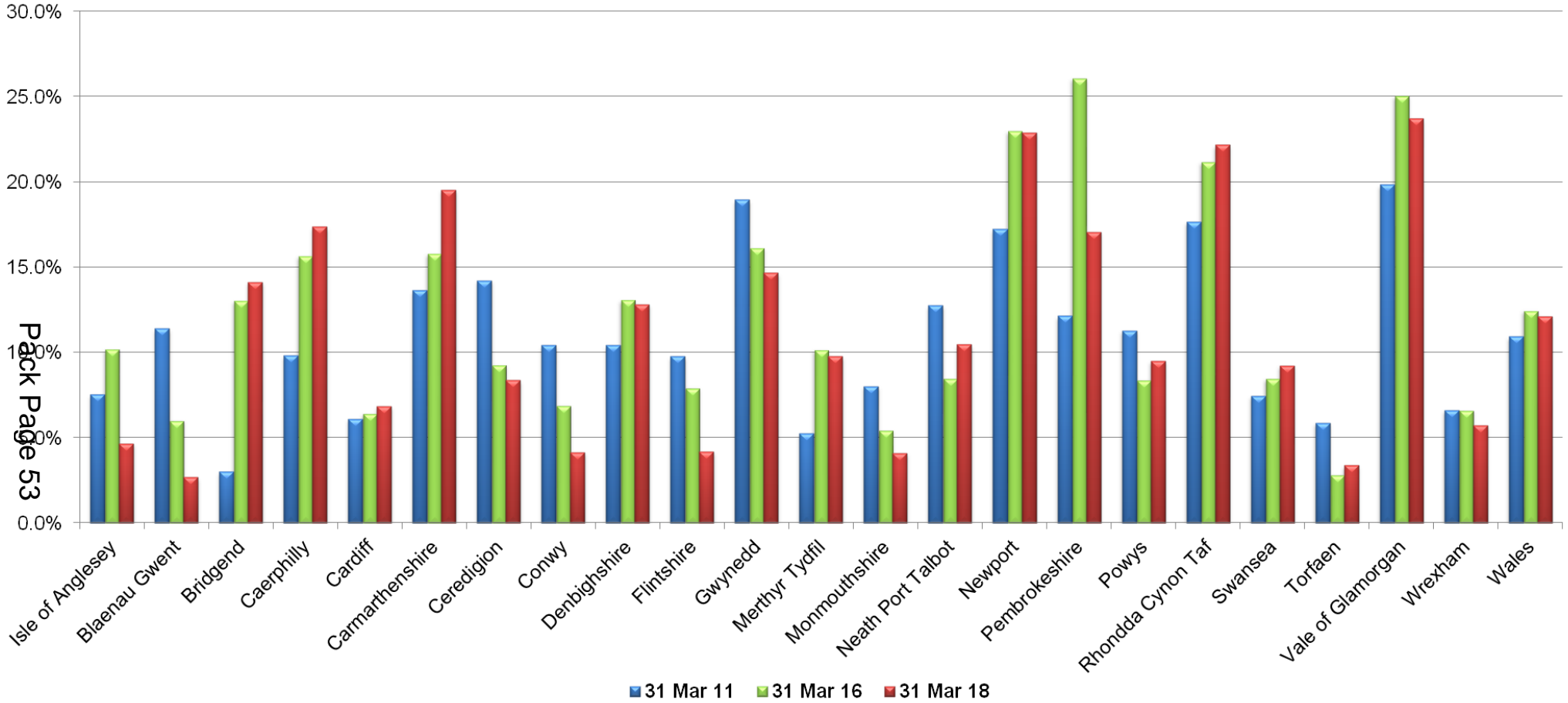
**Reserves**

	USABLE RESERVES*						-
	General or Unallocated Reserves	HRA Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Schools Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Other Earmarked Reserves	TOTAL USABLE RESERVES
<i>carried forward at 31 March 2018</i>	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>County &amp; County Borough Councils</b>							
Anglesey	6.9	7.4	0.3	1.9	0.0	7.6	24.1
Blaenau Gwent	6.1	0.0	8.3	0.2	0.7	4.8	20.1
Bridgend	8.3	0.0	21.2	0.4	0.3	47.7	77.9
Caerphilly	13.2	5.1	8.5	2.0	9.1	71.8	109.8
Cardiff	14.3	12.2	21.3	6.0	0.0	55.8	109.6
Carmarthenshire	9.8	20.1	8.6	1.5	0.6	81.1	121.7
Ceredigion	5.5	0.0	6.4	1.9	1.9	14.0	29.7
Conwy	6.3	0.0	1.4	3.4	0.6	11.1	22.7
Denbighshire	7.5	2.2	5.4	-0.3	3.2	29.8	47.7
Flintshire	13.7	1.9	14.1	1.3	4.8	13.6	49.4
Gwynedd	5.9	0.0	1.7	4.0	2.1	42.5	56.2
Merthyr Tydfil	4.7	0.0	0.2	1.8	2.0	14.6	23.4
Monmouthshire	7.1	0.0	3.6	0.2	0.0	7.4	18.2
Neath PT	20.0	0.0	6.8	2.9	10.1	36.6	76.4
Newport	5.9	0.0	8.9	4.8	0.0	82.7	102.3
Pembrokeshire	6.7	0.8	4.9	1.8	0.0	45.3	59.5
Powys	9.7	3.3	7.6	-0.9	1.5	28.3	49.4
RCT	10.7	0.0	1.1	3.4	7.4	129.4	152.1
Swansea	9.4	6.8	6.5	7.3	13.5	51.8	95.1
Torfaen	9.2	0.0	8.5	2.0	2.5	7.5	29.7
Vale of Glam	9.6	0.8	11.3	2.6	1.9	66.5	92.6
Wrexham	7.0	5.0	13.1	2.0	0.6	16.8	44.5
<b>All County &amp; County Borough Councils</b>	<b>197.6</b>	<b>65.5</b>	<b>169.6</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>866.7</b>	<b>1,412</b>
<b>Police</b>							
Dyfed Powys	4.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	15.7	20.5
Gwent	14.7	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.0	41.3	57.7
North Wales	5.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	19.2	25.9
South Wales	9.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.2	31.9
<b>All Police</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>135.9</b>
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue Authorities</b>							
Mid & West Wales	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.6	9.0
North Wales	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	2.7
South Wales	3.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	15.0	18.8
<b>All Fire &amp; Rescue Authorities</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>21.5</b>

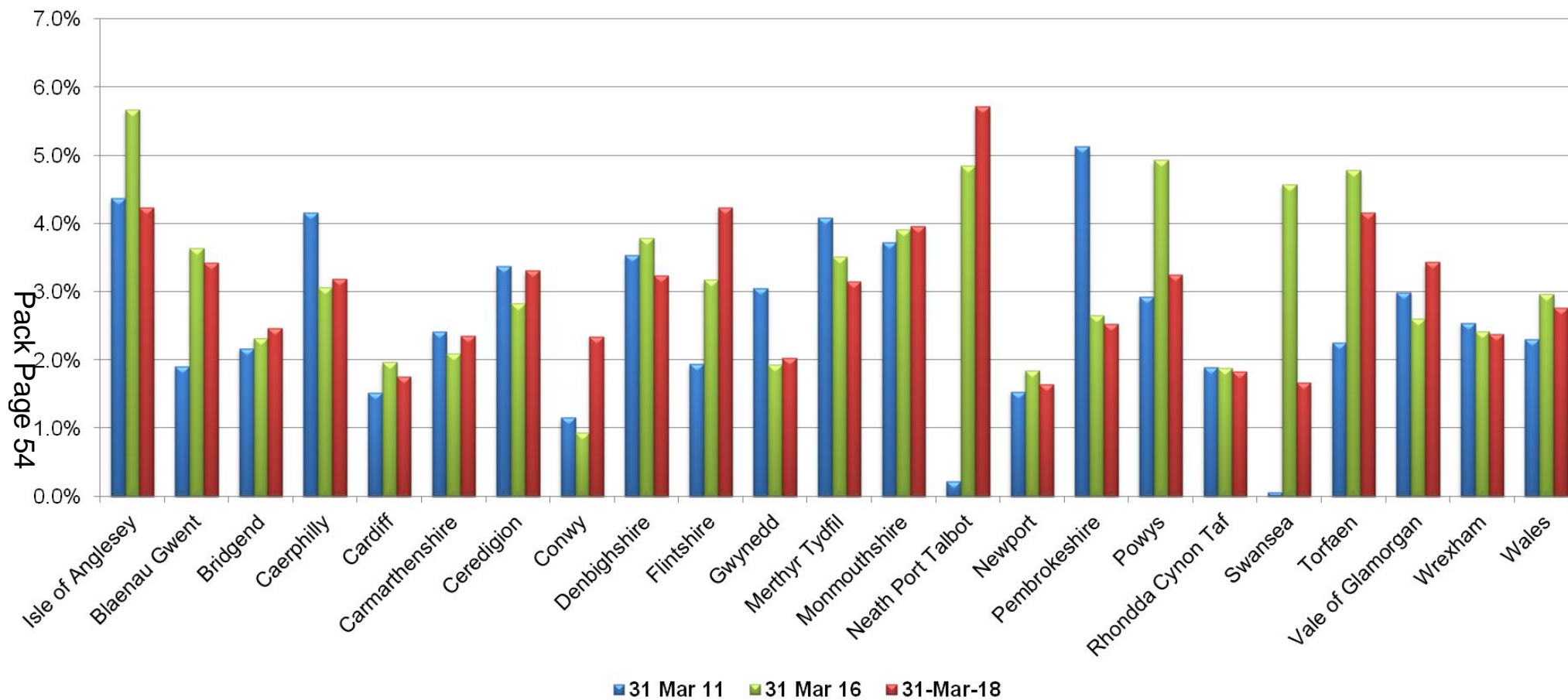
\* "Usable reserves" is a recognised accounting term with specific meaning. However some reserves are legally restricted in their use. Only the general and earmarked reserves are used in the following graphs.

**Source: 2017-18 Whole of Government Accounts-round 2 forms**

Earmarked reserves as % of gross revenue expenditure

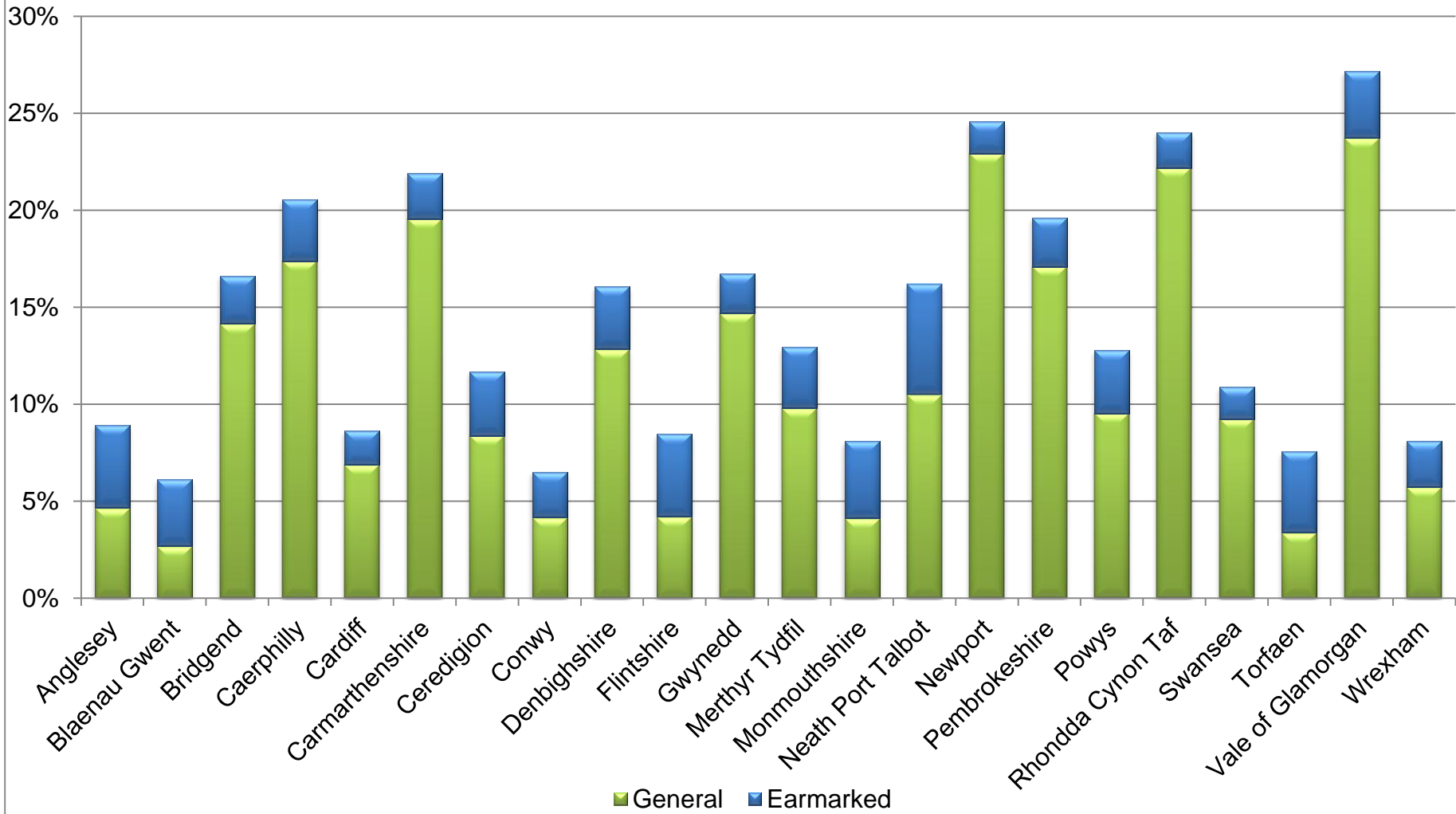


### Unallocated reserves as % of gross revenue expenditure



**Combined earmarked & general reserves as % of gross revenue expenditure  
as at March 2018**

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# Diversity in Local Government:

## Summary of survey – general public

November 2018

The **Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee** launched an inquiry into Diversity in Local Government in May 2018. As part of its inquiry, the Committee conducted two surveys – one aimed at the general public and the other aimed at local councillors who are currently in post. The following analysis deals with the survey aimed at the general public only.

### Survey promotion and analysis

The aim of the survey was to hear from as diverse a range of Welsh citizens as possible. The survey was promoted extensively through a variety of channels:-

- Through the networks of key stakeholders;
- On social media, including focused advertisements which enabled us to target audiences in areas where we tend to get less survey responses;
- People visiting the Senedd during the National Eisteddfod for Wales and those who visited our stand at the Royal Welsh Show, Pride Cymru and during Senedd@Delyn; and
- People taking part in Assembly Education and Youth Engagement school visits, outreach sessions and visits to the Senedd and Pierhead, which ensured that a section of those who responded to the survey were not self-selecting.

To compile this summary an in-depth analysis of a complete data set was conducted; all data can be sourced to individual responses and further analysis can be undertaken upon request. Each question in the survey is addressed in turn.



Results are calculated from the number of respondents who answered the specific question and not the overall number of respondents of the survey, of which there were **872 responses** in total.

## 1. Do you know who your local councillor(s) is/are?

53.8% of respondents to this question do know who their local councillor(s) is/are.

34.8% do not know who their local councillor(s) is/are, whilst 11.3% are not sure.

## 2. Thinking about your community, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

***“I’m able to influence the decisions made about my community, such as decisions on roads, schools, public transport and social care.”***

22.5% agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement.

18.9% neither agreed nor disagreed with the above statement.

54.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement.

4.3% did not know whether they agreed or disagreed with the above statement.

## 3. In your view, who makes the key decisions about your community?

33.7% of respondents to this question believed that local councillor(s) made the key decisions about their community. 17.6% chose Assembly Member(s), with 15.8% choosing Community/ Town Councillor(s).

11.3% chose Member of Parliament and 3.2% chose Mayor.

10.7% of respondents to this question selected ‘Don’t know’. For those who selected ‘Other (please specify)’, (7.7%) these were some of the more common answers given:-

- Council officers
- Business
- Council Cabinet
- Those with money

#### 4. What do you think is/are the main role(s) of a local councillor? (Tick all that apply)

14.5% of survey respondents believed the main role of a local councillor was to engage with members on matters of importance to them.

13.9% chose representing the views of residents at council meetings, whilst 13.7% chose responding to the queries and concerns of residents..

13.2% believed that keeping the community informed of issues that affect them was the main role of a local councillor, whilst 12.6% believed that developing policies and strategies to benefits the community was their main role.

10.4% of respondents to this question chose putting residents in touch with the relevant people within the council, with 10.1% selecting scrutinising decisions made by the council as the main role of a local councillor. 9.3% chose leading campaigns on behalf of residents.

1.2% of respondents selected 'Don't know' with 1.0% selecting 'Other (please specify)'. For those who selected 'Other (please specify)', the following responses were some of the answers given (please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses are available on request):-

*"Community leadership"*

*"Develop and manage relationships with key stakeholders such as local police etc"*

*"Put their constituents priorities above those of their political allegencies and/or private gain"*

*"Hold regular, informal street surgeries"*

*"Having a spine to realise that sometimes doing the right thing for the greater good and not bend to the will of a few to keep themselves in position!"*

*"Make sure they regularly attend meetings and don't fall asleep. Councillors need to be very fit and well to carry out their dutites and responsibilities."*

#### 5. Please select the statement that best applies to you

67.5% of respondents to this question said that they had never considered standing as a local councillor for a local government election.

19.2% of respondents to this question said they had considered standing as a local councillor for a local government election but decided not to pursue it, whilst 0.9% said they had considered standing as a local councillor for a local government election and pursued it.

8.8% of respondents to this question said they have stood for election and were elected, whilst 3.6% said they have stood for election but were not elected.

## 6. Following on from your answer to the previous question, what are the factors that influenced your decision? (For example, time commitment, salary, to influence policies and strategies and make a change in your community).

Qualitative data analysis revealed the following overarching themes.

Theme	Quotes
<b>Time commitment</b>	<p><i>"Time commitment. Jobs to do in evenings and throughout morning and afternoon"</i></p> <p><i>"Time, what is spare time? 3 jobs. Work, sleep, repeat."</i></p> <p><i>"time commitment with a young family and the thought of it being dominated by the older generation and mainly men"</i></p>
<b>Lack of interest</b>	<p><i>"No interest in politics or similar due to next to no education on the subject throughout school etc"</i></p> <p><i>"I wouldn't like a public role and would hate campaigning to get elected"</i></p> <p><i>"I'd rather not work in politics thanks - too political!"</i></p>
<b>Age</b>	<p><i>"I'm 18 and female, therefore people would not take me seriously."</i></p> <p><i>"Seems to be a job for old people??"</i></p> <p><i>"I wouldn't know how I would stand as a councillor and as I'm fairly young (25) I'm still deciding what I'd like to do as a career."</i></p>
<b>Lack of information</b>	<p><i>"No idea what it entails, or even how to"</i></p> <p><i>"Not knowing where to start. Whom to speak to or get advice on standing from."</i></p> <p><i>"Unaware of what the job entails, how to run for the role, the impact of the role, etc."</i></p>
<b>Political allegiance</b>	<p><i>"Not sure which party to join. So appointment as a councillor is out of the question"</i></p> <p><i>"Do not want to be aligned to a particular political party"</i></p> <p><i>"I am not a member of a political party and feel it would be a massive challenge to get elected as an independent. I am also a woman and most of the councillors in my community are men which makes it a huge challenge."</i></p>

## 7. If you have previously been elected as a councillor but stood down during your term, or decided not to stand at the following election, what were your reasons for doing this? (Tick all boxes which apply)

22.9% of respondents to this question chose *'time commitment'* as their reason for choosing to stand down during their term, or not to stand at the following election. 12.4% selected the *'pressure of the role'*, with 11.1% selecting *'support within the role'*.

10.5% of respondents chose *'work pattern'*, with 9.2% choosing *'abuse or harassment'* and 7.8% choosing *'salary'*.

26.1% of respondents to this question selected *'Other (please specify)'*. Some of the answers given were as follows (please note that the following is a sample of the responses received. All responses are available on request):-

*"The impact on personal life both in time and privacy is way beyond expectations. Social media and the new climate of abuse and hate has made things different ad more personal"*

*"Frustration, role limitations, bureaucracy"*

*"Inner political maneuvering"*

## 8. What are the factors that would make standing at local council elections more appealing to you? (Tick all that apply)

A *'better understanding of the role and responsibilities'* (28.5%) was chosen by respondents to this question as the leading factor that would make standing at local council elections more appealing. This was followed by *'Flexible working pattern'* (19.0%) and *'Greater support for local councillors'* (17.3%).

14.0% of respondents to this question chose *'Better salary/ allowances'* with 11.5% choosing *'The support of my existing employer'*.

For the 9.7% of respondents who chose *'Other (please specify)'*, these were some of the answers submitted, which have been categorised by theme (please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses received are available on request).

Theme	Description
Improved processes/ system	<p><i>“A restructured system in which the councilors are in fact capable of serving the community”</i></p> <p><i>“A reduction in powers of councillors: all too often they are ill-informed and incapable of making responsible decisions, and overly beholden to a variety of interests.”</i></p> <p><i>“Adjustments to overcome barriers to my participation as disabled person. Political parties being more disabled aware. More accessible public transport. More disability awareness amongst local government staff”</i></p>
Making a difference	<p><i>“If there was a genuine opportunity to make a difference”</i></p> <p><i>“The belief that I would be able to make positive change”</i></p> <p><i>“Honesty transparency and a willingness by all levels to actually serve the community that employs them all”</i></p>
Support	<p><i>“Mentoring from someone I trust, to help me work with people I don't like and to help me get resilient”</i></p> <p><i>“Better information on how to conduct a campaign for those who don't have the support of parties - official or otherwise.”</i></p> <p><i>“Support for independent candidates”</i></p>
Greater diversity	<p><i>“A likelihood to see people like myself”</i></p> <p><i>“Colleagues that were like me - not 60+ white, male.”</i></p> <p><i>“More diverse role models and more transparency/ fairness for party selectors.”</i></p>

## 9. Do you undertake any community or voluntary work locally?

56.0% of respondents to this question said they did undertake community or voluntary work locally.

42.0% said they did not undertake any community or voluntary work locally, whilst a further 1.9% said they were not sure.

## Demographic of respondents

### Location

67.6% of survey respondents came from South Wales, with 17.3% coming from Mid and West Wales and 15.2% from North Wales.

### Age

32.8% of survey respondents were aged 25 and under, 50.4% were aged between 26 – 64, with 16.9% aged 65 and over.

### Gender

56.8% of survey respondents identified as female, with 38.7% identifying as male. 2.1% preferred not say with a further 2.4% preferring to use their own term. For those who preferred to use their own term, the following were some of the answers given:-

*“Bigender”*

*“Gender fluid”*

*“Non binary”*

1.7% of survey respondents considered themselves to be transgender, with 2.5% preferring not to say. 95.9% did not consider themselves transgender.

### Sexuality

73.0% considered themselves to be heterosexual, 7.2% as bisexual, 6.0% and as gay/lesbian (or homosexual). 9.8% of respondents preferred not to answer, whilst a further 4.0% chose ‘Other (please specify)’. For those who selected the latter, these were some of the answers given (please note that this is a sample of the answers received. All responses are available on request):-

*“Pansexual”*

*“Helisexual”*

### Ethnicity

90.0% of survey respondents identified as White. 4.3% identified as Asian, 2.3% as Mixed/Multiple Ethnic, 1.2% as Black/African/Caribbean and 2.3% identifying as an other ethnic origin.

## Disability

**75.6%** of respondents to this question said they did not have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability (anything that has lasted at least 12 months or that is likely to last at least 12 months). **18.6%** did have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability and **5.9%** preferred not to say.

For those who did have a disability, **25%** were physical, **36.8%** were mental health related, **5.9%** learning related, **9.9%** sensory, **18.4%** related to a medical condition (e.g. Cancer) and **3.9%** preferred not to say.

# Diversity in Local Government: Summary of survey – councillors

November 2018

The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee launched an inquiry into Diversity in Local Government in May 2018. As part of its inquiry, the Committee conducted two surveys – one aimed at the general public and the other aimed at local councillors who are currently in post. The following analysis deals with the survey aimed at serving councillors only.

## Survey promotion and analysis

The survey was sent directly to serving councillors as well as to the Head of Democratic Services (or equivalent) at each local authority in Wales, who in turn encouraged the local councillors in their area to respond.

To compile this summary an in-depth analysis of a complete data set was conducted; all data can be sourced to individual responses and further analysis can be undertaken upon request. Each question in the survey is addressed in turn.

Results are calculated from the number of respondents who answered the specific question and not the overall number of respondents of the survey, of which there were **528 responses** in total.

### 1. How long have you been a local councillor?

44.1% of respondents to this question had been serving as a local councillor for 1 – 5 years. 25.3% of respondents had been a local councillor for 6 – 10 years, with 12.7% of respondents serving between 11 – 15 years. 7.2% had been a local councillor for 16 – 20 years and 10.7% for 21 years and over.

### 2. What motivated you to stand as a local councillor?\*



40.2% of respondents to this question, chose ‘to serve the community’ as their reason for standing as a local councillor. This was followed by ‘to change things’ (23.7%) and ‘for political beliefs and values’ (18.6%).

8.6% of respondents chose ‘because I was asked to’, with 6.0% selecting ‘to resolve an issue’ and 0.4% choosing ‘member allowances’. 2.4% of respondents chose ‘Other (please specify)’. The following are some of the answers given (please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses are available on request.):-

*“to help those who couldn't help themselves”*

*“Because the other candidates were poor quality”*

*“my father was a councillor for 40 years”*

*“To represent people who feel they have no voice, those with less resources, those with disabilities”*

*“To try and change the insular outlook that has pervaded my area for far to long”*

\*respondents were able to select more than one option.

### 3. What barriers or challenges, if any, did you encounter while standing for election?

The following themes emerged from the answers submitted to this question. Please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses are available upon request.

Theme	Quotes
<b>Time commitment</b>	<p><i>“Trying to campaign while still in full time employment”</i></p> <p><i>“Time. Campaigning and holding down a full-time job. As a man of working age, finding the time to campaign and subsequently be a councillor is difficult.”</i></p> <p><i>“Being able to take time off work to canvass for votes/knock doors/deliver leaflets”</i></p>
<b>No barriers</b>	<p><i>“None really, perhaps a couple of eyebrows raised at my (perceived!) youth”</i></p> <p><i>“No barriers but the main challenge was to get the non political voter to get involved in the election”</i></p> <p><i>“None, as my party has a system helping all”</i></p>

<p><b>Personal attacks/ bullying</b></p>	<p><i>“Personal attacks from opposing party members and supporters that affected my family and my business”</i></p> <p><i>“Hostility from previous Councillors who felt I deselected them. Mostly barriers from within own party. Social Media ferocity and increasing hate tactics. Fear for family”</i></p> <p><i>“Social Media became a barrier and a challenge for it was used for personnel attacks and distracted voters from the main issues of my manifesto”</i></p>
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p><i>“People thought I was too young”</i></p> <p><i>“A lot of voters could and would not vote for me because I was young and not experienced. I think there is an expectance that Cllr's are old &amp; white but I do believe it is changing”</i></p> <p><i>“Vested interest and internal politics. Existing members considering others wards as their hinterlands. Timings of meetings and expectations of workload more suited to retirees or cabinet members and not to younger candidates”</i></p>
<p><b>Cost</b></p>	<p><i>“As an Independent, cost of campaign literature. Access to electoral register”</i></p> <p><i>“The biggest challenge was that I was an independent standing against two party candidates who had the full party machine behind them. Plus financially I didn't have a large budget”</i></p> <p><i>“I stood in a by election a few years before and learnt quite a bit, the biggest barrier was paying for the promotional material”</i></p>
<p><b>Lack of information</b></p>	<p><i>“Lack of information once elected”</i></p> <p><i>“Knowing how to organise a campaign. Finding a 'public' voice”</i></p> <p><i>“As an independent candidate, there was no one to learn from or support network, simply had to work things out from first principles”</i></p>

**4. How easy is it to progress in local government? Please share any relevant experiences with us below:**

Theme	Quotes
<p><b>Easy with hard work</b></p>	<p><i>“If you are willing to put the work in and are hardworking I think the opportunity is there for progression”</i></p> <p><i>“Very easy if you are prepared to commit time and effort”</i></p> <p><i>“With hard work and patience fairly easy”</i></p>
<p><b>Difficult</b></p>	<p><i>“as I work full time, very hard”</i></p>

	<p><i>"It is not easy to progress because there are internal politics that influence progression"</i></p> <p><i>"It's difficult. I have support from other members but it's still not easy to make progress"</i></p>
<b>Gender</b>	<p><i>"Male usually preferred to lead, advance. Cabinet system inappropriate for local gov. decision making by a few, scrutiny seen as a " dog without teeth"</i></p> <p><i>"Difficult if female. No child care facilities / support. Difficult to be employed and a councillor more so in a big rural authority with no direct bus link to County Hall or train links"</i></p> <p><i>"Women are always short changed in government because there are always more male candidates"</i></p>
<b>Dependent on political party</b>	<p><i>"This depends on what party you are with, if you are with the ruling party and are sensible and approachable you can go a long way"</i></p> <p><i>"Ease of progress is mainly down to political set up of authority and how you fit into this set up"</i></p> <p><i>"To a large extent it depends on whether or not you are a member of the ruling group"</i></p>

## 5. Do you intend to stand for re-election at the end of your term in office?

47.3% of respondents to this question said they do intend on standing for re-election at the end of their term. 13.2% said they do not, whilst 39.5% said they don't know.

## 6. If you do not intend to stand for re-election, what are your reasons for this decision? (Tick all that apply)

25.7% of respondents to this question chose 'retirement' as the reason they do not intend on standing for re-election. This was followed by 'pressure of the role' (20.7%) and 'no support within the role' (8.1%).

7.2% of respondents selected 'inflexible working pattern' whilst 5.0% selected 'salary/ allowance.'

33.3% of respondents to this question selected 'Other (please specify)'. Please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses are available upon request.

Theme	Quotes
Bullying	<p><i>“Bullying and attitude of cabinet members”</i></p> <p><i>“Social media abuse, lack of a national system of support for Councillors and the continuous public attitude that we are all unscrupulous and untrustworthy”</i></p> <p><i>“Bullies and not enough openness. No way to move further with the role if your face doesn't fit its a lonely place to be with your fellow Cllrs. Public are great and appreciate what you do”</i></p>
Other opportunities	<p><i>“To pursue other interests”</i></p> <p><i>“To seek other opportunities”</i></p> <p><i>“Other things to achieve in life, causes to fight outside the council chamber, age at which I would continue to be a councillor untill, duty to party and electorate, the job is never fully done, its all in the balance hence don't know”</i></p>
Austerity	<p><i>“because of Austerity it is increasingly difficult to serve the community. Less staff, more work and no money for anything other than essential services”</i></p> <p><i>“Not convinced that being a Councillor is worthwhile, especially given the financial constraints of current austerity”</i></p> <p><i>“massive budget restraints, severe cuts”</i></p>
Time	<p><i>“The amount of time required to fulfil the role”</i></p> <p><i>“I work full time and sometimes might have to attend many hours of meetings after work. In addition we do need to drag local government into the 21st century and enable ICT to be utilised so councillors can participate via email, text etc rather than have to attend meetings in person. On occasion we drag people from all parts of our area for a meeting which might last 10 mins or less”</i></p> <p><i>“The hours of work are 24/7with other councillors working very little the pressure of some wards compared to others are extremely challenging the pay works out on average at £1phr with no work family life balance the officers seem to put themselves on a pedestal often giving the Councillors on the ground the run around it is extremely frustrating for any councillor today and this only adds to the general publics frustration”</i></p>
Age	<p><i>“I will be 70 years old perhaps the councillors should have a retirement age?”</i></p> <p><i>“I don't think retirement is the issue. It is more likely that with a rapidly changing landscape - economically, socially and politically, younger people should be encouraged to stand. In the absence of contenders, I would continue”</i></p>

*"I would hope that there will be younger people coming forward, as I will be 64 at the end of this term"*

## 7. How could the candidate selection processes be improved to encourage a greater diversity of candidates to stand at local council elections?

Please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses are available upon request.

Theme	Quotes
<b>No need for improvement</b>	<p><i>"The selection process I underwent was very open and enabled candidates from all walks of life to submit their application"</i></p> <p><i>"I think it works as it is know"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't see anything wrong with what we have"</i></p>
<b>More information</b>	<p><i>"More information. But this would not address the apathy amongst the electorate"</i></p> <p><i>"Provide more information on a councillors role but be more honest too about the pressures councillors face in particular budget cuts"</i></p> <p><i>"More information circulated throughout the authority in different ways to advertise the opportunity and process"</i></p>
<b>Education</b>	<p><i>"Education and information to the younger generation"</i></p> <p><i>"More education in schools regarding the role of Councillors"</i></p> <p><i>"Learning about Local Politics during education. Encouraging 6th Form placements attached to Councillors. Open Meetings/discussions to include young people in their communities - perhaps without a political bias"</i></p>
<b>Promotion</b>	<p><i>"Wider direct promotion of process to local organisations supporting diversity - young people, disabled, ethnic groups"</i></p> <p><i>"I think there needs to be more promotion around that anyone can be a Cllr if they so wish"</i></p> <p><i>"Raise awareness locally and nationally via social media"</i></p>
<b>Flexible working</b>	<p><i>"Details of part time, flexible work needs to be highlighted and groups of people from these diverse groups need to be encouraged to stand"</i></p>

	<p><i>“Work with employers to allow good young candidates to stand for election by allowing them time away from work to attend meetings”</i></p> <p><i>“I think it would be good to have younger members. However the difficulty would be that it is not realistic to be an effective councillor and work full time. It might be possible to work part time and be a councillor”</i></p>
<b>Gender</b>	<p><i>“All women shortlists in all parties and groups”</i></p> <p><i>“positive discrimination i.e. all women’s shortlist’s”</i></p> <p><i>“Equal opportunity for men and women. No all women shortlists”</i></p>
<b>Financial remuneration</b>	<p><i>“Either the allowance has to be appropriate for a young person with family responsibilities or in this financial climate I would not encourage anyone we will continue to attract political obsessives and elderly retired people”</i></p> <p><i>“The allowance needs to be greater”</i></p> <p><i>“Regrettably it comes down to remuneration for younger people. The role is insecure and other employment takes priority. Councillors are subject to unnecessary criticism when priorities need funding at the expense of residents wish list”</i></p>

## 8. Outside of the candidate selection process, are there any other steps that should be taken to encourage a greater diversity of candidates standing for local council elections?

Please note that the following are a sample of the responses received. All responses are available upon request.

Theme	Description
<b>Education</b>	<p><i>“greater education of what the role actually entails”</i></p> <p><i>“Educate people as to what a good councillor does and the impact they can have on the local community”</i></p> <p><i>“I believe politics etc. Should be taught in schools and colleges to give young people an insight into politics and may encourage younger people to stand for Councillors”</i></p>
<b>Promotion/ publicity</b>	<p><i>“More public promotion of the benefits of diversity and not being afraid to point the finger at male, pale, stale representation”</i></p> <p><i>“Better publicity about role of local councils and importance of inclusivity to facilitate change”</i></p>

	<i>“Encouragement through advertising and advice on how more diverse candidates can successfully participate in local government”</i>
<b>Financial remuneration</b>	<p><i>“The allowance does not reflect the time commitment or responsibilities of the role. Difficult to juggle a full time job with role. Unless rich or retired financially difficult”</i></p> <p><i>“Allowances are low when you realise how hard it is to keep your job or find a new one”</i></p> <p><i>“Pay, many cannot afford to become a local councillor. Most need a second job, many are not flexible enough to allow this”</i></p>
<b>Flexible working</b>	<p><i>“More flexible working practices, meeting times not starting at 5 or during the working day. Childcare not considered an expense to be claimed, as there is a reluctance to claim expenses. The allowance really isn't enough to expect anyone who hasn't completed their career to raise a family on.”</i></p> <p><i>“Greater flexibility eg with Carer Expenses”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, have Council meetings at times when those in work can fully participate”</i></p>

## 9. Excluding your work as a local councillor, please tick the boxes that apply to your current situation

28.2% of respondents to this question were retired. 16.9% were self-employed or freelance, whilst 15.7% were in full-time paid employment. 14.0% were not in paid work, 12.3% with caring responsibilities, 11.3% in part-time paid employment and 1.7% in full-time education.

## 10. If you have caring responsibilities, who are you responsible for?

34.0% answered ‘child/children’, 18.0% answered ‘partner’, 26.0% answered ‘relative’. 22.0% selected ‘Other (please specify)’. For those who selected the latter, the following were some of the answers provided. Please note that the following are a sample of the answers given. All responses are available on request.

*“non related stepson with learning disability”*

*“disabled foster children”*

*“elderly mother and father and a severely disabled sister so understand first hand the difficulty these cuts are having on ordinary people”*

*“1 school age dependent and 1 disabled young adult”*

## 11. Have you ever experienced any abuse, bullying, discrimination or harassment during your time as a local councillor? (Tick all that apply)

25.4% said yes, from the local community, whilst 19.2% said yes from within the Council, 11.8% said yes from within their political group/ party, 10.1% selected 'Yes, other' and 33.6% said no, none of the above.

## 12. If you have ever experienced any abuse, bullying, discrimination or harassment during your time as a local councillor, please provide further information on your experience

Theme	Description
Social media	<p><i>"From time to time when dealing with contentious issues or a perceived lack of action with local issues ( particularly litter ) mostly on social media"</i></p> <p><i>Social media bullying from political opponents and anger from local community over planning issues.</i></p> <p><i>Verbal and physical attacks Attacks on social media</i></p>
From colleagues/ other members of the political party group	<p><i>"Bullying by a colleague"</i></p> <p><i>"Yes from other members of the political group. Undermining and condescending comments including spreading malicious rumours"</i></p> <p><i>"Yes from some colleagues"</i></p>
Attacks from other political parties	<p><i>"false statements from opposition party"</i></p> <p><i>"Mostly from opposition supporters"</i></p> <p><i>"when in power abuse from the opposition and when in opposition abuse from party in power"</i></p>
Attacks from the public	<p><i>"Received abuse because of decisions on planning meetings not meeting local residents expectations"</i></p> <p><i>"Verbal abuse from the community and local party members"</i></p> <p><i>"General verbal abuse in community and wider areas"</i></p>
Gender	<p><i>"Being female seems men think we are lacking intelligence"</i></p> <p><i>"Women being referred to as girls. Women's ideas being given less weight than men's. Attempts to intimidate through belittling and bullying behaviour, not directed at me but at others around me, with the intent of putting new councillors in their place"</i></p>

*"Personal name calling; innuendo or fake news, especially from the media. But I have witnessed others experience worse particularly women on women abuse"*

## Demographic of respondents

### Location

54.8% of survey respondents came from South Wales, with 21.3% coming from Mid and West Wales and 23.7% from North Wales.

### Age

2.2% of survey respondents were aged 25 and under, 19.1% were aged between 26 – 44, 47.3% were aged between 45 – 64 and 31.4% were aged 65 and over.

### Gender

34.8% of survey respondents identified as female, with 62.2% identifying as male. 2.2% preferred not say with a further 0.9% preferring to use their own term. For those who preferred to use their own term, the following answers were given:-

*“This is my own business”*

*“Not relevant to the question”*

*“Abimegender”*

0.6% of survey respondents considered themselves to be transgender, with 4.0% preferring not to say. 95.3% did not consider themselves transgender.

### Sexuality

81.0% considered themselves to be heterosexual, 3.9% as bisexual, 5.2% as gay/lesbian (or homosexual). 6.9% of respondents preferred not to answer, whilst a further 3.0% chose ‘Other (please specify)’. For those who selected the latter, these were some of the answers given (please note that this is a sample of the answers received. All responses are available on request):-

*“Normal”*

*“It shouldn’t matter what I consider myself to be”*

### Ethnicity

96.1% of survey respondents identified as White. 1.0% identified as Asian, 0.6% as Mixed/Multiple Ethnic, 0.3% as Black/African/Caribbean and 1.9% identifying as an other ethnic origin.

## Disability

**70.5%** of respondents to this question said they did not have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability (anything that has lasted at least 12 months or that is likely to last at least 12 months). **23.6%** they did have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability, with **5.9%** preferring not to say.

**37.6%** identified as having a physical disability, **26.9%** a medical condition (e.g. cancer) and **17.2%** having mental health disabilities. **11.8%** said they had a sensory disability, **3.2%** a learning disability and **3.2%** preferring not to say.