

Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 5 December 2018

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

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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 3**
(09.15 – 10.15) (Pages 1 – 46)
Cerys Furlong, Chief Executive, Chwarae Teg
Catherine Fookes, Director, Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales
Uzo Iwobi OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Race Council Cymru
Paul Hossack, Senior Associate, Equality and Human Rights Commission
Break (10.15 – 10.30)

- 3 Inquiry into diversity in local government: evidence session 4**
(10.30 – 11.30) (Pages 47 – 64)
Mike Payne, Chair, Organisation Committee, Welsh Labour
Gareth Clubb, Chief Executive, Plaid Cymru
Councillor Bablin Molik, Councillor in Cardiff and Chair of the Cardiff and Vale local party, Welsh Liberal Democrats
Roger Pratt, Boundary Review Director, Welsh Conservatives
Tom Harrison, Regional Officer, UKIP Wales

- 4 Inquiry into diversity in local government: evidence session 5**
(11.30 – 12.30) (Pages 65 – 80)
Kathryn Allen, Vice-President, Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Service



Steve Davis, Service Manager, Principle Youth Officers Group

Julia Griffiths, Joint Acting Chief Executive, Youth Cymru

Chisomo (Chizi) Phiri, Women's Officer, NUS Wales

5 Papers to note

(Page 81)

5.1 Letter from the Minister for Housing and Regeneration in relation to the Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Wales) Bill

(Pages 82 – 84)

6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

7 Inquiry into diversity in local government: discussion of the evidence received under items 2, 3 and 4

(12.30 – 12.45)

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Introduction

Despite some progress, women remain under-represented in public life, particularly in local government. While the proportion of AMs has climbed back to around 43%, the proportion of female local councillors has remained stubbornly low at 28% following the 2017 elections. The picture varies by local authority with Swansea and Rhondda Cynon Taf having just over 40% female councillors while Blaenau Gwent, Ceredigion and Ynys Môn all have fewer than 12% female councillors.

This imbalance is also seen in cabinet and leadership positions with just 18% of council leaders being women and there are examples of all-male cabinets in some areas. In non-political leadership roles women are also under-represented, making up 27% of local council chief executives despite accounting for 73% of the local government workforce.

This lack of women in local government is contributing to a “diversity crisis”. We can no longer afford to rest on our laurels and hope that more women will put themselves forward for election. We need radical and effective action by local authorities and political parties to ensure that in 2022 people in Wales can be served by diverse councillors, who are representative of the communities that they serve.

Actions

Actions for government:

1. Introduce statutory quotas
Different approaches have been adopted by political parties to improve the number of women candidates. Data suggests the most effective tool has been the application of All Women Shortlists (AWS) in the Labour Party.¹ Introducing statutory quotas, as proposed by the Expert Panel for Assembly Reform report, would ensure all parties make gender balance a priority and could support a more consistent approach across Wales. Options for such a quota, requiring political parties to field balanced candidate slates, should be explored for local government.
2. Remove sunset clause for AWS
The Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 allows parties to use AWS. At current rates, it is unlikely that we will achieve gender balance at all levels of government by 2030, which is the current sunset clause. The UK Government should either remove the sunset clause, or use a less arbitrary measure, such as a number of consecutive elections that result in at least 45% of elected members being women.
3. Implement section 106 of Equality Act
Currently, political parties are not required to publish candidate equality and diversity data. The UK Government should enact Section 106 of the Equality Act and require political parties to

publish candidate equality and diversity data for all elections. This will improve transparency and support targeted action.

Actions for political institutions:

4. Promote role models
Political institutions should continue to actively promote diverse role models and engage in schemes, events and initiatives that enable people to engage with elected representatives and learn more about the role.
5. Review structures and identify any barriers to women
Local councils should regularly carry out reviews of structures and processes to identify and resolve any issues. Exit interviews with councillors not seeking re-election should also continue to identify any common issues and potential good practice.

Actions for political parties:

6. Commit to 50% of candidates in winnable seats at the next local election being women
Each party should make a public statement outlining their commitment to fielding 50% women candidates in winnable seats at the next local election.
7. Publish action plans that set out what steps will be taken to achieve this commitment
To support a public commitment, political parties should set out clear actions that will be taken to achieve the goal of gender balance in winnable seats.
8. Review internal party structures and selection processes to identify and address barriers
Every political party should review party structures and processes to ensure there are no barriers, consider providing unconscious bias training for those involved in selection panels and pro-actively support local branches and parties to engage with potential candidates from under-represented groups.

Detailed Response

1. **The importance of diversity among local councillors**
 - 1.1. Diverse leadership teams improve performance. 85% of global CEOs state that diversity has enhanced business performance. In politics, diversity can be more effective for a number of reasons including “more informed decisions as different talents and skills and perspective and experiences provide new insights and question ‘group think’ and the dominant way of doing things.”¹
 - 1.2. Diversity ensures that different issues are discussed, as people draw on different perspectives and experiences. Research has shown that in the Assembly, women AMs account for between two-thirds and three-quarters of all interventions using terms such as

¹ S. Childs *The Good Parliament* 2016

childcare, domestic abuse and equal pay.² They are also more likely to initiate debate on gender equality than male AMs³.

- 1.3. Diverse role models are important to dispel myths about what a politician should look like. Girl Guiding found that role models were consistently cited as being important by young women. 43% said that having a female Prime Minister/ First Minister makes them feel more inspired that they can be leaders and 53% said that political parties should make sure half their politicians are women.⁴
- 1.4. A recent ERS Cymru report also pointed to a lack of diversity contributing to a dis-connect between politicians and voters.⁵ This is supported by findings from Girl Guiding who found that 57% of girls said they did not feel politicians understand the issues girls and young women face and 28% said that having a female Prime Minister/ First Minister makes them more interested in politics.⁶ Greater diversity among local councillors could help bridge the gap between politicians and voters, which will only contribute to better politics, a more engaged electorate and better public services.

2. Key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections

2.1. Sexual harassment and abuse

- 2.1.1. ERS Cymru found abuse and harassment to be the biggest issue reported by elected politicians and those who had decided not to stand in their recent study into diversity in Welsh politics.⁷
- 2.1.2. There is a sense that this abuse has become more prevalent in recent years. While action is needed by social media platforms, political parties could also play a role by taking firmer action against party members who engage in online abuse and work must continue to bring about a cultural shift so such behaviour is reduced.

2.2. Family life, flexibility and work-life balance

- 2.2.1. Political roles, particularly that of councillor, can be even harder to access for those with family responsibilities, particularly women, who are more likely to be the primary carer in a household.
- 2.2.2. The majority of councillors surveyed by the WLGA in 2017 said they spent between 21 and 30 hours per week on council work.⁸ There remains an expectation that councillors will be accessible 24/7, and unlike AMs or MPs, councillors often need to maintain their main employment. In addition, meeting times that fall in the middle of the day or early evening could be particularly difficult for those with childcare responsibilities.
- 2.2.3. Improving the provision of childcare support, on-site crèches, support for pregnant mothers and families in terms of maternity and paternity leave could all support

² P. Chaney *Women and Policy-making: Devolution, Civil Society and Political Representation*, in [Our Changing Land: Revisiting Gender, Class and Identity in Contemporary Wales](#) (ed. Mannay D.). University of Wales Press: Cardiff. (p.220-238), 2016

³ Ibid

⁴ Girl Guiding *Girls Attitudes Survey 2017*

⁵ ERS Cymru *New Voices How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales 2018*

⁶ Girl Guiding *Girls Attitudes Survey 2017*

⁷ ERS Cymru *New Voices How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales 2018*

⁸ WLGA *Exit Survey of Members Standing Down in May 2017 2017*

greater diversity. A universal approach across local councils could also address any confusion for potential candidates around what support may be available.

- 2.2.4. ERS Cymru suggested in their latest report 'New Voices' the possibility of allowing some Councillors to take on the roll on a 'full-time' basis and allowing remuneration to reflect that.⁹ This might incentivise those who aren't able to balance the role alongside another job.

2.3. *Financial constraints*

- 2.3.1. It is inescapable that as long as the role of councillor is remunerated at current levels that few people would be able to perform the role on a full-time basis. This will affect diversity as it will be much easier for older, more well off individuals to take on the role, which will likely mean a continuation of councils being dominated by white, older men.
- 2.3.2. Women are more likely to work in lower paid, part-time work and earn less over their working lives. This could make it difficult for them to consider standing for election as a councillor, particularly for younger women who may have to try to balance the role with caring responsibilities and work commitments.
- 2.3.3. Consideration should be given to whether current remuneration rates reflect the demands and needs of a modern council.

2.4. *Political party processes*

- 2.4.1. Party selection rules and processes can act as a barrier to women, and other under-represented groups, and not all parties are using the tools available to them to ensure they put forward a gender-balanced slate of candidates.
- 2.4.2. Many of the barriers listed here affect candidates as well as elected councillors. Better support for candidates, particularly those from under-represented groups should be put in place.
- 2.4.3. Parties should also put in place rules and targets for local parties to follow in the selection of council candidates. Banning all-male candidate slates for multi-member council wards, committing to no all-male council cabinets and collecting and publishing candidate equality and diversity data could all ensure that party processes become more effective and do not replicate existing issues.

3. **Areas of innovation and good practice that may help diversity in local government**

- 3.1. Swansea appointed two members into the cabinet position for Future Generations on a job-share basis and in Bristol two working mothers took on the role of Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods.¹⁰ Commenting on the move, Bristol Councillor Daniella Radice said that "many people are often put off by the full-time nature of politics and this move demonstrates that you don't have to choose between a career and other commitments – it's possible to job share, even at a senior level."¹¹

⁹ ERS Cymru *New Voices How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales* 2018

¹⁰ <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/34477/New-cabinet-to-deliver-1-billion-City-Deal> / http://news.bristol.gov.uk/new_member_for_bristol_city_council_cabinet_in_job_share Accessed 3.9.18

¹¹ http://news.bristol.gov.uk/new_member_for_bristol_city_council_cabinet_in_job_share Accessed 3.9.18

- 3.2. Others, such as Monmouth Council, have explored how technology such as Skype could be used to support remote access to meetings.¹² However, concerns remain about delivering the required functionality to chair meetings, vote and access translation services in a cost effective way.
- 3.3. Changing the way in which cabinet positions are allocated can also make a difference. For example, following the 2012 election Swansea council allowed any member of the controlling political group to apply for cabinet posts and participate in an interview with the leader and deputy.¹³ Taking this approach, rather than traditional patronage led to a council leadership with four women and two younger men.¹⁴
- 4. The potential impact of proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, *Strengthening Local Government*, to increasing diversity in council chambers**
- 4.1. It's welcome to see the Green Paper recognise the need for Councillors who reflect the diversity of communities, and for cultural change in order to deliver this. However, we need to see more detailed, pro-active steps to actually deliver this change.
- 4.2. While there are no longer plans to merge councils, it's important to note the risk that a reduction in the number of councils could pose to diversity of representation. Women are often representing more marginal seats and are more at risk of losing their position come election time, and through the reduction of seats may lose out to an older incumbent who is more likely to be a white man. Reducing the number of councils could also disproportionately impact women's employment given they often dominate in the roles and services that would likely be reduced through mergers, such as back office administrative support and HR.
- 4.3. Plans around investing in people and organisational development could impact positively on women and offer an opportunity to address gender imbalance in leadership positions.
- 4.4. Improving diversity needs to be a more clearly identified aim of local government reform.
- 4.5. Diversity could be improved as a result of some of the proposals but unless it is expressed as an explicit aim there is a risk that improving diversity could become less of a priority. Making it a clear aim of reform would ensure it remains a priority, that the right interventions are developed and the right indicators are used to measure success.
- 4.6. The Green Paper is accompanied by an equality impact assessment (EqIA), which correctly highlights that more transparent and open local government would benefit equalities generally. However, as with many EqIAs, it lacks meaningful analysis through a gender lens and concludes that there would be no positive or negative impact on equalities. Given the scale of these reforms and the focus on improving the diversity of elected councillors this should not be the case. An initiative focused on 'strengthening local government' with a specific focus on 'diversity' and 'representation' should have a positive impact on equalities, and this need to be embedded in the process throughout or we will not see the change needed.

¹² "Councillors in Monmouthshire using Skype at meetings a 'long way off'" South Wales Argus 11.09.17
http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/15528303.Councillors_using_Skype_at_meetings_a_long_way_off/
 Accessed 4.9.18

¹³ ERS Cymru *New Voices*

¹⁴ Ibid

Conclusion

Diversity in politics makes a difference. At the local government level, progress to improve the representation of women has been slow.

Action to improve diversity is inconsistent. While there are examples of good practice, there is a need for all actors – government, political institutions and political parties – to prioritise action and work towards a shared goal of equal representation.

“Local Councillors should reflect the views of the communities and its people, if all of them are white men I would find it challenging to believe the importance issues of gender equality (for example) are given due regard.” WEN Wales member

1. About the Women's Equality Network Wales:

- 1.1 WEN Wales is a representative women's network¹ and human rights organisation working to influence policy-making and empower women to achieve equal status in corporate and civil life. Our charitable objectives are to promote equality and human rights with specific reference to women and gender equality in Wales.
- 1.2 WEN Wales surveyed our members on the Committee's terms of reference. Of the 53 members whose feedback informs this response, 12% have run for local council and been elected; 15% have run for local council and been not elected; 46% have never thought about running for local council; and 27% have never run but might in the future.
- 1.3 WEN Wales strongly believes in equal leadership in Wales in terms of gender and other forms of diversity at all levels of politics and that a strong democracy closely reflects its electorate. Our Welsh local councils and both the National Assembly and Welsh Government should be as rich and diverse as the people of Wales. If we do not recognise or identify barriers to diversity, we cannot challenge them and make change for the better. WEN Wales welcomes this inquiry and the opportunity that it offers to transform Local Government in Wales so that it is more diverse and representative of local communities.

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

“No one who wishes to stand for public office should be barred or discouraged from doing so because of their characteristics, nor economic or social circumstances.” WEN Wales member

- 2.1 In 2018, it is simply not acceptable that local government politics is predominantly 'pale, male and stale'.² The recent Electoral Reform Society Cymru (ERS Cymru) report *New Voices* has highlighted that "piecemeal approaches to fixing diversity at council level clearly haven't worked" and suggests that "without quotas applied to diversity, progress will continue to be glacial".³ Research suggests that Wales is behind England in progress too – one report states that at the current pace, it will take 82 years (compared to 48 years in England) for gender parity to be achieved at local government level.⁴ While Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru have taken positive action for Assembly election candidates, direct positive action has not been taken at a local level, resulting in only marginal increases in percentages of women councillors.⁵ Clearly intervention is needed.
- 2.2 In Wales in the 2017 county council elections, 30% of all candidates were women, with 33% of wards having no women candidates at all, and just 349 (28%) of those elected are women.⁶ The

¹ Over 1000 individual members and organisational members, including women's rights and allied organisations from across the third sector, academia, international and national NGOs.

² Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/>, July 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Final Report of the Local Government Commission', <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f>, July 2017.

⁵ Stirbu, Larner & McAllister, 'Pitiful Progress: Women councillors in Wales after the 2017 local elections', <https://medium.com/athena-talks/pitiful-progress-women-councillors-in-wales-after-the-2017-local-elections-edbf39258c7>, 2017.

⁶ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

percentage of women elected mirrors that of the percentage of candidates, therefore access to candidacy remains a key driver in terms of gender parity in elected office.⁷

- 2.3 Diversity goes beyond gender inequality – yet the alarming dearth of diversity data of any kind, including gender, age, sexuality and ethnicity is a barrier itself in challenging the lack of diversity within local government. Much of the limited data that is available does not give a full picture because it relies on voluntary participation in surveys/interviews⁸ and therefore cannot reflect all councillors.
- 2.4 WEN Wales' members have highlighted the importance of diversity in local government. One respondent to our survey stated that *“local government is about understanding local people”* yet there is a broad perception that current councillors are *“not diverse at all”* as they are disproportionately white working/middle class middle-aged/old men and that often the limited number of women councillors are also white, often retired and of the same class as the male majority within the council. Many WEN Wales members highlighted that seat-blocking/incumbency was common (80% of councillors elected in Wales and England are incumbents⁹) and the Fawcett Society suggests that this disproportionately benefits men and acts as a significant barrier to change.¹⁰ Concerns were raised at the lack of women, young mothers, disabled people, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) councillors: one person stated that *“we only have two women councillors but five called David and no BME councillors.”*
- 2.5 When asked whether members felt that their councillors represented them. often the disparity between councillors and WEN Wales members' lived experiences was a barrier, another was a lack of engagement with the electorate and local community other than at election time. One respondent stated that *“There are some councillors who are good but my local ones don't really represent people like me. I don't feel like I could approach them and say 'Hey, I've got this issue that affects me as a young woman/mother.”*
- 2.6 A cohort of councillors and cabinet members who fail to represent their electorate create a barrier of service to communities as engagement is compromised. One member highlighted that if groups do not feel they are represented or understood by those in office then they cannot be held to account effectively. Many others pointed out that retired white men are less likely than a diverse mix of councillors to understand the lives of their communities in relation to issues that do not affect them – for example, one respondent stated that retired male councillors do not appreciate how hard things are for working people and have different or limited understandings of policy areas.
- 2.7 Professor Mary Beard goes further in her essay 'Women in Power': “A number of studies point to the role of women politicians in promoting legislation in women's interests (in childcare, for example, equal pay and domestic violence¹¹). A report from the Fawcett Society¹² recently suggested a link between the 50/50 balance between women and men in the Welsh Assembly and the number of times 'women's issues' were raised there. I certainly do not want to complain about childcare and the rest getting a fair airing but I am not sure that such things should continue to be perceived as 'women's issues'; nor am I sure that these are the main reasons we want more women in parliaments [and local government]. Those reasons are much more basic: it is flagrantly unjust to keep women out, by whatever unconscious means we do so; and we

⁷ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

⁸ Such as in the ERS Cymru's work and reports by the Fawcett Society.

⁹ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

¹⁰ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Final Report of the Local Government Commission, July 2017.

¹¹ *Coincidentally 'gendered issues' such as domestic violence, equal pay and childcare that act as barriers to women entering into politics at any level, as indicated by WEN Wales members.*

¹² Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Final Report of the Local Government Commission, July 2017.

simply cannot afford to do without women’s expertise, whether it is in technology, the economy or social care.”¹³

- 2.8 Effective accountability and scrutiny is not only a cornerstone of democracy, it enhances good policy and decision-making practices and effectively pays for itself.¹⁴ If public perception is that councillors are unapproachable or will have little understanding of the full breadth of the experiences of the communities they are seemingly representing, public engagement, debate and decision making are all compromised. Interventions are needed to remedy this issue and to increase communities’ understanding and respect for local politics by raising the standard of local councils and councillors themselves and their engagement.

“It is important to have a broad understanding of the bigger picture and not just make decisions based on their experience and interests. It is too easy to have a narrow outlook on life and if all Councillors have a similar background then decisions will be made that don’t reflect the needs of residents.” WEN Wales member

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

“Culture and environment [within local government] can be very difficult and creates a barrier of transparency and openness to consider a position in public life. child care, non flexible job share role, bullying culture, lack of opportunity, class, race, gender and age can be barriers as diversity is not encouraged.” WEN Wales member

- 3.1 As in all employment areas of Wales, women face barriers to elected local government through maternity leave pressures, a lack of provision for those with childcare and caring responsibilities and due to outdated, non-flexible working systems, highlighted by both research¹⁵ in this area and WEN Wales member feedback of experienced or perceived barriers. One WEN member stated *“There are many barriers that face women and these need to be addressed by a strategy that is implemented and audited for compliance”*.
- 3.2 The Fawcett society has stated that at local government level BME women, disabled women, and younger women are underrepresented and experience significant discrimination.¹⁶ A WEN Wales member highlighted *“Age, gender, sexuality¹⁷, ethnicity”* as barriers. Another member also highlighted uncertainty around EU citizens’ status in Wales post-Brexit. While EU citizens can currently vote in local government elections, it is not clear whether these rights will be revoked and whether it will even be possible for EU nations to run in council elections.
- 3.3 **BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) candidates and elected councillors:** Many WEN Wales members highlighted the lack of BME councillors in their areas, yet accurate data is scarce:

¹³ Beard, Mary, ‘Women in Power’ in *Women and Power: A Manifesto*, Profile Books, 2017, pp.85-86

¹⁴ *While the Expert Panel’s report states that for Assembly Electoral Reform improvements in scrutiny of Welsh Government spending and policy decisions will reap significant dividends to the taxpayer, we believe that the same can be said at all levels of government, including Welsh local government:* McAllister, Laura. ‘A Parliament that works for Wales: the report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform’, <https://www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/About%20the%20Assembly%20section%20documents/Expert%20Panel%20on%20Assembly%20Electoral%20Reform/A%20Parliament%20that%20Works%20for%20Wales.pdf>, November 2017.

¹⁵ Fawcett Society, ‘Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission’, <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f>, April 2017.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *During the Committee’s inquiry, a councillor Graham Down’s homophobic slurs in emails to the chief executive (comparing homosexuality to paedophilia and describing homosexuality as ‘unnatural, perverted, immoral and wrong’) has been suspended. While this breached the code of conduct for Monmouthshire County council led to disciplinary action, it does little to encourage people who are not heterosexual from wanting to work as a local councillor.* <http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2018-08-15/councillor-who-described-homosexuality-as-unnatural-perverted-immoral-and-wrong-suspended/>

attempts to collect Welsh statistics through voluntary surveys confirms only the overwhelming majority of white British respondents without giving a clear picture of other ethnicities.¹⁸ Lack of diversity at local government can also lead to lack of diversity throughout all political institutions as local government can be a stepping stone to national politics – there may be more women Assembly Members (42% elected in 2016; 45% currently) but there has never been a BME woman Assembly Member.¹⁹

- 3.4 **Maternity, Childcare & Caring Responsibilities:** Councillors in Wales have the right to six months of maternity leave²⁰, which is not in line with the maternity leave allowance for employed women.²¹ It is not surprising that women councillors age 18-34 years old are the most underrepresented age group across England and Wales (note that maternity rights are far worse in England) with 3.5 times more men than women this category, compared to the largest age group for councillors – age 65-74 where men outnumber the women by two to one.²² Even then, 47% women councillors have clashes with caring commitments (compared to 26% man councillors), while childcare is an issue for 28% of women councillors (compared to 18% of men).²³
- 3.5 **Remunerations/Cost:** Several WEN Wales members highlighted that it is frowned upon for councillors to claim their full entitlement of remunerations, and that as the data is published, it can be used against councillors wishing to progress in their political careers by both their parities, other councillors and the public. This creates an environment where those who can afford to not take their entitlement are favoured, while some working mothers are impacted by childcare costs, costs of additional caring responsibilities, the gender pay gap and salary decreases as full-time employment is reduced once they are elected. This system favours the rich, retired, men that we already know dominate these spaces.
- 3.6 **Inflexible Eorking & Poor Use of IT/Technology:** For women on county councils one of the biggest challenges is travel – with over half finding the distances to meetings are an issue.²⁴ Wales is both a cosmopolitan and rural country – pan-Wales discussions in other sectors frequently use technology such as video conferencing and remote working to enable better engagement. The total lack of flexible, modern working is unnecessary and detrimental to the work of councillors, whose commuting time and travel expenses could be cut and converted into much more valuable work time through up-to-date work practices, in line with those that have been standard practice in a large number of Welsh work environments for years.
- 3.7 Many WEN Wales members also highlighted that both party and council meetings held in the evenings were difficult for candidates and councillors with children. ERS Cymru explore innovations such as the use of Skype, adjusting meeting times, allowing babies and children to come to meetings if necessary, and the importance of regularly consulting with councillors about times that work best for the majority at any one time²⁵ – of course, if councils continue to be dominated by retired men with fewer caring responsibilities, this is not an adequate solution. Job-sharing for candidates and councillors could make a huge difference; Swansea Council currently has job-sharing councillors²⁶. Wales needs consistent and fit-for-purpose policies for job-shares.

¹⁸ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

¹⁹ *During the first Cross Party Group on Women meeting in July 2018 Maria Mesa, CEO of Women Connect First highlighted one contributing factor that restricts BME women's advancements: English as a foreign language classes, designed to help non-native speakers integrate into society reach only a certain level, offers a standard of English that is not a high enough for graduates of these course to be able to seek public office or pollical appointment. This language-skill deficit means that even those with a rich diversity of knowledge and professional experience who could greatly contribute to local and national politics cannot access these positions of power, influence and representation.*

²⁰ The Family Absence of Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013.

²¹ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

²⁶ Ibid. (New Voices)

- 3.8 **Sexist culture:** The Fawcett Society found that across Wales and England, 38% of women councillors overall experience sexist comments when engaging with their local parties. A third experience sexist comments in the council chamber. 10% of women councillors have experienced sexual harassment when interacting with their party.²⁷ 10% have reported sexual harassment from other councillors. Within the age category 35-44 years this is much higher with one fifth reported sexual harassment from their fellow councillors. When standing as a councillor, the Fawcett Society also found a gender difference between councillors identifying 'fear of violence' (13% of women; 8 % of men), or 'harassment or abuse from the electorate' (46% of women; 35% of men) as barriers. Even within the chamber, 44% of elected women councillors say they felt a lack of confidence in making their voice heard.²⁸ This must be stopped.
- 3.9 **Disability:** Across Wales and England, 19% of women councillors said they have a disability or long-term health condition (22% of men).²⁹ Disabled women councillors are also far more likely to experience multiple discrimination as both women and due to their disability.³⁰ Much more needs to be done to encourage disabled candidates to stand for local government, and several WEN Wales members have emphasised the need to redress that there are "no formal structures for adjustments for disabled people" as candidates or elected councillors, with the Fawcett Society calling on the government to reintroduce financial support to help disabled women with costs of candidature.³¹
- 3.10 **Old boy networks:** Almost half of women say a lack of access to informal networks is a barrier to them as councillors, compared with 36% of men.³² The Fawcett Society surmises that "there may be some truth in the claim that real power in town halls is often held outside official meetings in 'old boys' networks', and this impacts particularly on women."³³ This needs to be addressed.

4. Exploring areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government

"More funding should be made available for underrepresented groups to stand and quota should be introduced for all tiers of local government. Increasing diversity in local government will not happen by itself you must force it." WEN Wales member

- 4.1 There are a substantial number of Independent councillors in Wales (unlike in England)³⁴, which means that relying on parties to make adjustments to increase diversity will not adequately increase diversity at local government.
- 4.2 Research shows that the 'first past the post' system itself is by its nature an unrepresentative system, and generally few women are elected that way.³⁵ Needless to say, the 50:50 record of gender parity at the National Assembly for Wales did not use this electoral system. A radical upheaval of the electoral system with inbuilt gender quotas³⁶, such as those recommended by the Electoral Reform Expert Panel for the National Assembly³⁷ could revolutionise local government. ERS Cymru states that while quotas are not a panacea in local government, we

²⁷ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Stirbu, Larner & McAllister, 'Pitiful Progress: Women councillors in Wales after the 2017 local elections, 2017.

³⁶ Temporary gender quotas to address gender inequality are endorsed by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) under article 4: Temporary Special Measures. For more information on CEDAW by WEN Wales, please see: 'All About CEDAW' <http://www.wenwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/allaboutCEDAW-FINAL-1.pdf>.

³⁷ McAllister, Laura. 'A Parliament that works for Wales: the report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform', November 2017.

must consider working hours and remunerations as well as how to tackle the sexism and abuse unearthed in their research.³⁸

- 4.3 80% of councillors elected in England and Wales in any one year are incumbents.³⁹ There were also 92 uncontested seats in 2017 – most of which were held by men.⁴⁰ Women and men are equally as likely to say their reasons for standing were: because someone asked them to, or because they were inspired by someone.⁴¹
- 4.4 Getting more women to stand and be selected for local government is key. Community and voluntary organisations are important pools of prospective female talent. That many women stand simply because they were asked is also an important reminder for political parties of how simple it can be to get more women into local government.⁴²
- 4.5 There are a number of support forums for women (perhaps serving as an answer to ‘old boys’ networks). At WEN Wales, we run a 9-month mentoring scheme, which includes around six full training days, to encourage women into political and public life. Similarly, Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) will soon launch a mentoring scheme to encourage young BME people into public life. Fabian Women’s Network also offers support, as do some Welsh Labour fora, encouraging women to stand through training and mentoring. Women Connect First also offer active citizenship courses for BME women and Chwarae Teg is recruiting for their *Shadow a Local Council Leader* scheme as part of a move to inspire future women leaders is also an important initiative. Many WEN Wales members stated that they simply were not aware of how to run for local government and information was scarce; these schemes try to redress that.
- 4.6 While each network and training scheme incrementally creates better conditions for improved diversity in Local Government, alone they are not enough and do not reach all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. Three Local Authorities in Wales still have below 15% women councillors (Ceredigion: 14%; Merthyr 12%; Wrexham 11%)⁴³. These should be targeted to push progress.
- 4.7 A far more radical, whole-systems-approach is needed. Equalities data must be effectively collected to demonstrate the complexity of the issue of the lack of diversity in local government. Only then can electoral reform models be mapped, quotas legislated for and women from all backgrounds encouraged and enabled – through the elimination of barriers and discrimination – to take their rightful place as influencers in the heart of their local communities as elected councillors.

“Diversity is important but the most important thing is for the councillors to represent the population they represent, to have similar values and standards. There are insufficient number of women in these roles.” WEN Wales member

WEN Wales Recommendations:

1. **Welsh Government should appoint a Cabinet Secretary for Women by 2021, with key responsibilities to ensure that women have an equal share of power at all levels of Welsh public and political life, including local government.**
2. **Welsh Government must develop a strategy and action plan in collaboration with BME women and charities working with BME communities to get more BME women into politics at all levels, into public life and employment, and offer advanced English as a foreign language classes for those women wishing to enter public and political life.**

³⁸ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

³⁹ Fawcett Society, ‘Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission’, April 2017.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

3. **Maternity provisions for councillors should be at the same standard as it is for employed women, with equal shared-parental leave provisions. Affordable, wrap-around childcare needs to be available and support for carers, and childcare should be a claimable expense for candidates seeking election.**
4. **Consider the ERS Cymru's recommendations to appoint fewer councillors, full-time on an appropriate salary, ensuring that those who take their remuneration entitlements are not treated detrimentally by both parties, councillors and communities.**
5. **Update work place practices and use of technology to offer more flexible working for councillors and put in place consistent policies across Wales to enable job-sharing for councillors.**
6. **Better tackle the entrenched sexist culture within local government, holding perpetrators to account, updating Codes of Conduct if needed, ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place and that complains are dealt with appropriately so that the system is seen as worthwhile and trustworthy by victims of sexism, harassment and assault.**
7. **Councils must formalise structures for adjustments for disabled people and tackle discrimination against disabled people.**
8. **By 2021, gender quotas and diversity quotas for councillors with disabilities and BME councillors should be integrated into the electoral system so that all political parties put forward at least 50% women candidates to support and encourage gender-balanced representation in Wales.**
9. **Local Authorities should do all they can to encourage political parties to put forward candidates for all seats to increase candidacy rates in areas where seats are uncontested and actively encourage women, disabled people, young parents, the LGBT+ community and BME people to stand in local elections. A limit in the number of terms that a councillor can stand for should also be considered.**
10. **Full implementation of the Local Government recommendations of the ERS Cymru's New Voices report⁴⁴ (listed in appendix B)**

Deadline: 10th Sept. 18

Contact: SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

WEN Wales would like to thank the National Assembly for Wales' Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry.

If you have any further comments or queries, please get in touch.

⁴⁴ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

Appendix A

WEN Wales, Women Connect First, Welsh Women's Aid and Chwarae Teg's 'Equality for Women and Girls in Wales: Our Manifesto'⁴⁵ recommendations for Local Government reform:

Over the next few years Welsh electoral reform could provide a crucial opportunity to make substantial changes to the gender balance within Welsh politics. International evidence shows that the most effective means of delivering political change is the implementation of positive action measures such as statutory quotas. Of the 33 countries with 30 per cent or more women in parliament today, 26 have quotas in place that helped to ensure this outcome.⁴⁶

Recommendations:

1. By 2021 Welsh Government should commit to long-term funding to increase the representation and active participation of BME, LGBTIQ+, disabled and working-class women in public and political life in Wales. Projects could be delivered in collaboration with the third sector and an *Access to Elected Office* fund should be set up and include measures to ensure that disabled women have equal opportunities to benefit from the fund.
2. By 2020 a commitment from all Welsh political parties to appoint a gender balanced cabinet if elected within Local Councils and Welsh Government.
3. By 2021 gender quotas integrated into the electoral system so that all political parties put forward at least 50% women candidates to support and encourage a gender-balanced politics in Wales.
4. Job sharing: candidates should be enabled to stand for election based on transparent job-sharing arrangements.
5. Compulsory publication regarding candidate diversity: the Assembly should request that the Secretary of State commences Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Welsh elections, or transfers the powers to do so to Welsh Ministers, so that information on the diversity of all candidates from all parties is openly available.
6. By 2025 all local authorities to introduce reasonable adjustments policies for disabled councillors.

⁴⁵ Some amendments have been adjusted for local government by WEN Wales and are not necessarily the joint view of Women Connect First, Welsh Women's Aid and Chwarae Teg. To read the full Manifesto document: Wharf, Hannah, 'Equality for Women & Girls in Wales: Our Manifesto', WEN Wales, Women Connect First, Welsh Women's Aid & Chwarae Teg, http://www.wenwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/LR_11509-WEN-Manifesto-20pp-A4-English.pdf, 2018.

⁴⁶ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2012/7/bringing-cedaw-to-life-the-committee-on-the-elimination-of-discrimination-against-women-turns-30>

Appendix B

The Local Government recommendations of the Electoral Reform Society Cymru's New Voices⁴⁷ report

1. Recommendation 1

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.

2. Recommendation 2

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. As part of this 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.

3. Recommendation 3

Council leaders should be held to account by Welsh Government if they fail to select councillors who are diverse for their leadership teams.

4. Recommendation 4

Welsh Government should commission a review into councillor remuneration, which should include an analysis of the potential for fewer councillors at a higher salary.

5. Recommendation 5

The UK Government should enact Section 106 of the Equality Act in time for the next General Election requiring all parties to publish equality data in a coherent and standardised format. At a Welsh level parties shouldn't wait for the next UK General Election and should collate this information for the next Assembly and local elections.

Papur 3 – gan: Cyngor Hil Cymru Paper 3 – from: Race Council Cymru

Overview

Race Council Cymru is an umbrella body of different organisations working together to combat prejudice, race discrimination, harassment and violence. It operates to promote art, heritage and cultural activities for black and minority ethnic communities in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee has announced that they will be undertaking an inquiry into diversity in local government.¹ We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

Race Council Cymru believes unequivocally that diversity amongst local councillors is extremely important, in all aspects of identity, particularly as outlined by the Equality Act 2010. As elected representatives, county councillors have a duty and responsibility that “due regard”² is given to matters of equality under the 2010 Act. This must include advancing opportunities between people, fostering good relations and in the creation of documentation such as Equality Impact Assessments.

From 2001-2011 the population of black and minority ethnic individuals in Wales doubled.³ At the time of writing we are 3 years from the next census report and evidence from the Oxford Migration Observatory and other sources indicates that we will potentially see that population double again from 2011-2021. Consequently, we see a need for councillors to reflect the communities who they are serving and anticipate a large democratic deficit around the representation of BAME councillors.

Between 2012 and 2017 there was an increase of 1.2% in elected BAME councillors in Wales, however there was a slight decrease in the total percentage of BAME candidates for the county councillor roles.⁴ The 1.8% of current local authority representatives who are BAME is evidently not representative of the 4.4% of Wales’ population that is BME, and the rate of growth in representation does not reflect the rate of growth in BAME population in Wales.

Terms of Reference

The consultation’s terms of reference offer opportunity to take stock of the over-arching areas of implementation that are needed. We understand the terms of reference to be as follows:

- To understand the importance of diversity among local councillors, including the effect on public engagement, debate and decision making.
- To understand key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections.
- To explore areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government.
- To explore the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh Government’s Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers.

¹ <https://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1867>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/1>

³ <https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2012/121217sb1262012en.pdf>

⁴ <https://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/130503-local-government-candidates-survey-en.pdf> & <https://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2018/180502-local-government-candidates-survey-2017-en.pdf>

Race Council Cymru offers the following broad responses and thoughts in relation to these terms of reference.

Importance of Diversity

Diversity of elected representatives is vital to fostering good relations between people and addressing the diverse needs of the represented population. Improvement of diversity in local government must be on-going and genuine, and there must be rigorous self-analysis and criticism to achieve this. For example, the Welsh Government's Diversity in Democracy Programme⁵ ran for three years, and was publicly praised,⁶ but examination is needed of such projects for their failings as well as their successes – as reflected upon above, there has not been a significant increase in BAME candidates or representatives in the period 2012-2017, which encompasses the period during which the Diversity in Democracy Programme ran.

Barriers

There are several barriers that affect diverse communities in accessing democratic representation at all areas of local and national government in Wales and in Westminster. The current lack of BAME representation, for example, might suggest to people that standing for local government roles is not for them. There is a prevailing perception of local authorities being “for white people only” mainly white, middle to upper class may deter potential candidates from applying for positions.

Socio-economic disadvantage amongst the BAME population can affect opportunity through poverty related ideologies and lack of confidence. However, it must be considered that there are many individuals who are educated to a high standard and still face barriers. Despite a strong sense of ambition and motivation amongst BAME individuals, there is a sense of lingering racism and prejudice in the workplace. Our Race Council Cymru research in 2012, 2015 and 2016 all identify everyday racism as a key factor blighting the lives and opportunities of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds achieving their full potential and applying for senior executive and management positions (8). Racial disparity in the UK is prevalent and there are well-reported episodes of institutionalised racism.

A vital consideration in addressing these issues, is to create a link between political representation and local communities. It is simply not enough to post leaflets through the doors of those who are hard to reach. Political and authoritative figures have to meet face to face with BAME communities. The use of third sector organisations such as Race Council Cymru would provide an example of a bridging method, whereby through the use of the charities community connections, rapport and trust could be built.

With time, schemes could be negotiated such as internships, shadowing and peer mentoring which would create the opportunity of having role models in the community who could offer hope, encouragement and a sense of purpose for those in hard to reach communities.

In addressing this matter it is important to note that the barriers are frequently multiple, e.g. socio-economic barriers might also disproportionately affect BAME individuals. Therefore, addressing multiple barriers will form an important part of addressing individual barriers. There needs to be an improved sense of trust in the democratic process and in the work and research that is committed in improving matters of diversity – this includes the membership of committees such as the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

Good Practice

⁵ <https://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/diversity-in-democracy/?lang=en>

⁶ <https://gov.wales/newsroom/localgovernment/2016/161013-diversity-in-democracy-programme/?lang=en>

The Welsh Assembly Local Government Candidates survey (2012 and 2017) are welcome interjections in surveying and understanding the demographics of candidates. However, the percentage of respondents to these surveys is low. Areas of innovation here might involve the recording of demographic information at the point of candidate registration, which can then be analysed, reported and acted upon. Elected representatives should be working constantly to improve the diversity of their provision in relation to their local authority and it must not be seen solely as a bureaucratic activity.

Green Paper

Race Council Cymru anticipates the forthcoming reports on the Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People green paper, although we note that amongst the respondents to the original consultation, none were representing race organisations in Wales. We welcome the rigorous EIA⁷ produced in relation to this paper, and hope that many of the suggestions within – such as a social media awareness campaign – are put into practice.

Close

In order to enact the “due regard” that elected local government councillors must give to matters of equality, including matters of race, diversity of representatives needs to improve. Councillors with diverse racial, ethnic, faith, religious or national identities are able to bring these viewpoints and lived experiences to promote and foster good relations between people from different communities, while being in a unique position to positively affect and advance equality in Wales in serving the wider public.

⁷ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-03/180322-local-gov-equality-impact.pdf>

⁸ https://www.equality-ne.co.uk/downloads/807_breaking-down-barriers.pdf

Papur 4 – gan: Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol
Paper 4 – from: Equality and Human Rights Commission

Response of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to the Consultation:

Consultation details

Title:	Inquiry into Diversity in Local Government
Source of consultation:	National Assembly for Wales Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
Date:	September 2018

Introduction

The Commission welcomes the Committee's Inquiry into diversity in local government in Wales.

In 2015, our 'Is Wales Fairer?'¹ report noted that women, disabled people, young people, people from ethnic minorities, people from religious minorities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people remain under-represented at all levels of politics in Wales.

In January 2017, our 'Who Runs Wales?' report² examined the diversity at all levels of politics in Wales. The report found that only 26% of councillors, and 9% of council leaders, across Wales were women.

The report found considerable variation across Wales' 22 local authorities. Anglesey had the lowest proportion of councillors who were women, with just 10%. Wrexham, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil all had less than 20%. As was the case in 2014, the three councils with the highest proportion of councillors who were women were Rhondda Cynon Taf and Swansea with 38% and Cardiff with 35%.

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/wales-fairer-2015>

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/who-runs-wales-2017>

In our report, we were unable to provide information on people with other protected characteristics as this data is not consistently available across Wales.

The Local Government elections held in May 2017 resulted in little progress being made, with the total percentage of female councillors in Wales increasing to only 28%.

The Local Government Candidates Survey 2017³ showed that 33% of candidates were women, 47% were aged 60 or over, 1.8% were from an ethnic minority background, 66% were Christian, 7.1% were lesbian, gay or bisexual and only 12% of candidate were disabled people.

The Commission's upcoming research on diversity in politics

Later this year, the Commission is to publish a report which examines the available data on the diversity of candidates and elected representatives at UK, national and local level elections and identify limitations and gaps. Where data existed, it analysed six protected characteristics: age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This report will make a range of recommendations to improve the collection of diversity data in politics. We will share this research with you during the course of your Inquiry.

The Commission in Wales is also about to commission research to develop further our understanding of the experiences of women, disabled people, trans people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds in relation to standing for election. This research will examine barriers and pose solutions identifying recommendations aimed at increasing the diversity of politicians in Wales. In particular, this research will explore opportunities arising from the Wales Act 2017's devolution of legislative competence over electoral arrangements to the National Assembly for Wales.

³ <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/local-government-candidates-survey/?lang=en>

Pathways to Politics

In 2011, the Commission published research⁴ that explored the relationship between common pathways into politics and under representation of groups protected by the Equality Act (2010).

The study looked at Members of the House of Commons, the House of Lords, Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, the London Assembly and European Parliament. Local Government representatives were not directly included in the report, but many of those interviewed had experience of being a councillor as part of their pathway. Many of the barriers identified are common across political institutions.

The report highlighted many factors that prevent people entering politics. These include:

- The personal and financial costs of being in politics can be high and act as a barrier to those seeking involvement. This is a particular concern for those in underrepresented groups, who are disproportionately concentrated in lower income social groups.
- The perceived ideal candidate is often male, white, middle aged, middle class and professional, often reflecting the characteristics of those selecting candidates and of previously successful candidates. The informal, unwritten rules and conventions governing politics, including ‘knowing how to play the game’, work to exclude those who do not meet this model of the archetypal candidate.
- Established cliques and systems of informal patronage within parties have the effect of reinforcing existing under-representation.
- Individuals from under-represented groups reported being asked inappropriate questions by their political party which, they felt, would not have been asked of other candidates. For example, women were asked about their family and marital situation and ethnic minorities asked about their religion or belief.

More information from Pathways to Politics is appended at Annex 1.

Once our latest research is published we would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss the recommendations in the context of your inquiry, should this be considered helpful.

⁴ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-65-pathways-to-politics.pdf>

About the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is a statutory body established under the Equality Act 2006. It operates independently to encourage equality and diversity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and protect and promote human rights. It contributes to making and keeping Britain a fair society in which everyone, regardless of background, has an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Commission enforces equality legislation on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It encourages compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and is accredited by the UN as an 'A status' National Human Rights Institution. Find out more about the Commission's work at: www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Annex 1 – Extracts from Pathways to Politics:

Prevent factors identified by protected characteristic:

- Women felt a perception remained that they lacked the appropriate gravitas and authority in politics. They perceived themselves to face a double bind of being seen as either not assertive enough or overly pushy. Their personal appearance was more of an issue than for men while their caring and domestic responsibilities limited their opportunities and were scrutinised by political parties. Women in national politics found it difficult to establish a work-life balance.
- A widespread lack of understanding persists about disability and the difficulties faced by disabled people in seeking selection and election. A lack of awareness and understanding about disability at the local party level was also identified, including by selection panels. Barriers include negative attitudes towards disability and obstacles that prevent disabled people's full participation in political life and discourage them from getting involved. Respondents felt that the public and the media wrongly perceived disability as inability.
- Ethnic minority candidates felt they were viewed by party selectors as more acceptable in areas with a relatively high ethnic minority population.
- Some politicians suggested there were few barriers to political participation by lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) people. However, there was evidence that LGB people seeking elected office still contend with homophobia not only from the media, but also from their own and other political parties. LGB politicians are often not visible as part of an under-represented group, unless they choose to disclose their sexual orientation.
- There are no openly trans politicians currently in local or national politics. Barriers to trans people participating in politics include outright hostility and a lack of understanding about their lives. While trans politics has seen development, the community is small and lacks capacity to support trans candidates.
- Age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, transgender and social background can intersect to create multi-dimensional identities. This inter-sectionality can present greater

barriers to people's involvement in national politics, for example, for younger mothers, ethnic minority women and lesbians.

The role of political parties

- Despite ideological and historical differences between political parties in addressing under-representation, there was evidence of a 'disconnect' between the rate of progress and leadership shown at the national level and a change in outcomes and attitudes at the local level.
- Recruitment of a more diverse party membership is a key step to encouraging more diverse candidates.
- Mentoring, informal peer networks and the activity of established interest and lobby groups were positive ways in which parties could, and sometimes did, use to recruit, elect and retain under-represented members.

The way forward

The report's findings suggest focusing on three areas to promote diversity in representation:

- re-frame the debate to include the positive electoral consequences of having more diverse candidates;
- open up pathways and the political recruitment process; and
- initiate debate on electoral reform and diversity, responding to opportunities for change.

The report states:

'(An) effective framing of the arguments about diversity would acknowledge that fielding more diverse candidates and supporting under-represented groups has potential electoral consequences in individual constituencies, and at an aggregate level. A re-framing needs to include discussion and better empirical data so that political parties can take effective action to improve their electoral appeal to a diverse electorate.

'For candidates from under-represented groups who do put themselves forward, the barriers to their success are high, the pathways available are narrow, and the support they receive from institutions is limited. Significant change is needed to address this.

‘Push, pull and prevent factors act to reinforce each other. Reform needs to happen at many levels to widen opportunities to participate in politics, broaden existing pathways and potentially create new routes.

‘Arguably, sustained and radically positive action and systematic change as well as education and training to influence attitudes are needed to improve outcomes and address under-representation.’⁵

⁵ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-65-pathways-to-politics.pdf>

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee **Inquiry into Diversity in Local Government - *Evidence from Welsh Labour***

Welsh Labour's approach

1. Welsh Labour welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to this inquiry. The Party's values are underpinned by a commitment to a more just society and a more open democracy and, accordingly, aiming to improve diversity in local government is a crucial part of the work we do. A total of 472 Welsh Labour councillors were elected in the most recent round of local elections in Wales in 2017 and, while we have done much to improve diversity amongst our councillors, we recognise that there is still much more that can be done.
2. With the next round of local elections in Wales set to take place in 2022, we are at a crucial juncture in being able to positively influence our selection processes in order to attract a more diverse set of representatives. To this end, we have already put a number of strategies in place to help us in this aim.
3. Welsh Government research has found that in the 2017 local elections, only 33 per cent of all county councillors were female.¹ Amongst the political parties, Welsh Labour was found to be by far the most representative, with 39 per cent of elected councillors being female.² While we welcome this progress, we recognise that the proportion is still not high enough, and we need to do more to achieve parity at the very least.
4. Welsh Labour is committed to more positive action to encourage and enable more people with protected characteristics to come forward and play our part in ensuring that there is more diversity in local government. The drive to recruit a more diverse pool of councillors has often been focused on encouraging more women to stand and this work remains essential. We are, however, very aware that there are a number of other groups underrepresented in local government. We need more BAME, LGBT+ and disabled councillors, as well as younger councillors and more councillors from working class backgrounds. All stakeholders in local government should be acting to empower and enable people from these backgrounds to stand as candidates.
5. Welsh Labour recognises that increasing the diversity of its candidates and councillors is part of a longer process of improving the diversity of its membership and activists. The recent rapid growth in Labour Party membership will assist with this and we are making specific efforts at local and national level to welcome and

¹ *Local Government Candidates Survey* <https://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2018/180502-local-government-candidates-survey-2017-en.pdf> (Cardiff: Welsh Government, 2017), p.12.

² *Ibid*, p.13.

involve new members. Through its Welsh Labour Democracy Review, the party is currently reviewing all of its ways of working to ensure that these help and encourage a wide range of members to engage. Local parties are being encouraged to appoint a variety of equalities officers in addition to the long-established role of Women's and Youth Officers and these may include BAME, LGBT+, Disability and other officers. Similarly many are creating committees and informal groups, alongside existing Women's Forums and Young Labour groups, through which members with protected characteristics can come together.

6. We also recognise that many other forms of public service are both valuable in themselves and can provide stepping stones towards standing for major councils, Parliament or the Assembly. In most parts of Wales, we stand Welsh Labour candidates for Town and Community Councils and we encourage local parties to stand a wide range of members for these. The party's renewed emphasis on community organising will both provide members with valuable experience of representing others and bring a wider range of people into party activity. We encourage members to consider becoming school governors and to play a full part in many community and voluntary organisations. We are proud of our long-standing relationship with the trade unions that have traditionally started many of their members on the road to public office and continue to do so today.
7. Welsh Labour has recently launched a Futures Candidates Programme, our flagship scheme for encouraging a more diverse pool of candidates in future elections, whether for the Assembly, Parliament or Local Government. The programme – now underway - is open to all members who are successful in securing a place, but has a focus on encouraging women and people from BAME backgrounds to stand in elections. In conjunction with the Welsh Labour Women's Committee, we have held a number of small events around Wales for women to encourage female members to think about standing in future elections – including local government. Similarly we have held a specific taster event for BAME members.
8. Local Campaign Forums, the bodies which co-ordinate our work in each local government area, are being encouraged to build on best practice as we look forward to the next round of local government selections and elections. In particular they are being asked to run more informal taster events, training events and mentoring schemes and to recognise the needs of underrepresented groups in general work while also creating specific, targeted opportunities for them. The Local Government Subcommittee of the Welsh Executive Committee is currently reviewing this work and the support that can be given to LCFs in delivering it. Alongside this, we are planning to build on current provision for the application of women's quotas in winnable seats.
9. Welsh Labour is also intending to launch a Welsh Labour young councillor's network for councillors in the near future, allowing our younger councillors to develop a network of supportive colleagues across Labour groups in Wales.

The wider context

10. Councils in which groups are under-represented cannot fully reflect or deliver for the communities they serve. This would always be a problem, but it is thrown into sharper relief in straitened times, with non-diverse councils making difficult decisions on priorities in the provision of services without the full involvement of many in the community.
11. In spite of some successes on a local level, reflecting the hard work of a range of organisations, progress in electing more diverse councils in a broader sense has nevertheless been slight and far too gradual. The pace of incremental work needs to increase in order to create long term cultural and structural change.
12. A council made up of a diverse and reflective set of councillors will be better able to reflect and engage with its community, creating more trust and confidence, and resulting in better government for local communities. In short: greater diversity leads to better decisions. Furthermore, a more representative field of councillors allows individuals to see themselves represented in their council. This, in turn, will inspire future candidates to put themselves forward.
13. While being a councillor is a rewarding and fulfilling role to take on, it is also demanding and challenging and can impinge on family life and a healthy work-life balance. Constraints on time and finances and a lack of flexibility can all act as barriers to an inclusive local government. It is important to continue to review councillor remuneration to ensure more people can afford to take on the role. Councils should also seek to improve childcare provision so that those with young children are not deterred from becoming councillors.
14. Many potential councillors of working age are worried that taking on the role might impact on their job security and future promotion prospects. There needs to be a major effort to encourage employers to see that holding elected office provides an employee with valuable experience in analysing complex problems, participating in major budget decisions, interacting with a wide range of people and providing leadership. Employers should be encouraged to see acting as a councillor as a plus rather than a minus for an employee – in the same way that many actively encourage participation in the TA and charitable organisations.
15. Barriers do not begin and end with selection and election. Retention can be a problem across the board for councillors from underrepresented groups who, once elected, may find it difficult to develop the support networks needed to thrive in what can be an isolating environment. Underrepresented groups are also more likely face discrimination while in office: research by the Fawcett Society has found

that 50 per cent of female BAME councillors and 41 per cent of male BAME councillors have experienced discrimination while in office.³

³ *Does Local Government Work for Women?* <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Does-Local-Government-Work-for-Women-Interim-Report-April-2017-Fawcett-Society.pdf>, (Fawcett Society, 2017) p.7.

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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Datganiad Plaid Cymru – Ymchwiliad i Amrywiaeth ym Maes Llywodraeth

Leol

Y sefyllfa hanesyddol a phresennol

1. Mae Plaid Cymru yn benderfynol o wella'n amrywiaeth o blith ein haelodau etholedig. Fel Plaid, rydym yn ymwybodol bod amrywiaeth yn gryfder: mae'n helpu i ni ymgysylltu â'r cyhoedd yn nhermau sy'n berthnasol iddyn nhw a mae'n ein helpu ni i wneud penderfyniadau sy'n adlewyrchu pryderon a dyheadau pobl Cymru'n well.
2. Rydym yn cydnabod nad ydy'n aelodau etholedig yn gynrychioladol o boblogaeth Cymru o ran hunaniaeth ethnig, rhywedd nac anabledd. Nid oes gennym ddata ddibynadwy o ran ymgeisyddiaeth pobl ddu, Asiaidd a lleiafrifoedd ethnig, nac ychwaith o ran ymgeisyddiaeth pobl anabl, neu bobl lesbiaid, hoyw, deurywiol a thraws.
3. Mae gennym 199 o gynghorwyr sir, a channoedd o gynghorwyr tref a chymuned. Gan bod diffyg gwybodaeth o ran cynghorwyr tref a chymuned, o hyn ymlaen byddwn ond yn ystyried cynghorwyr sir.
4. Mae'r canran o gynghorwyr sir sy'n fenywaidd, gwrywaidd, ac o leiafrif ethnig, yn ymddangos yn y Tabl islaw.

Cynghorwyr	Gwyn	Du, Asiaidd a lleiafrifoedd ethnig
Benywaidd	51	1
Gwrywaidd	146	1
Cyfanswm	197	2

5. Yn rhannol, gellid esbonio'r diffyg cynghorwyr du, Asiaidd a lleiafrifoedd ethnig arall wrth nodi dosbarthiad cynghorwyr y Blaid dros y wlad. Hynny yw, mae'r rhan helaeth o gynghorwyr Plaid Cymru wedi'u hethol mewn wardiau lle mae canran y boblogaeth â hunaniaeth ethnig lleiafrifol yn isel. Serch hynny, cydnabyddwn y gallai, ac y dylai, ein cynrychiolaeth o'r cymunedau hynny fod yn well ac rydym wedi ymrywmo i gymryd camau cadarnahol i gynyddu nifer o ymgeiswyr sy'n ddu, Asiaidd neu o leiafrif ethnig mewn etholiadau yn y dyfodol.
6. Yn amlwg, nid yw'r un rhesymeg yn ddilys dros ein tangynrychiolaeth o gynghorwyr benywaidd.
7. Mae'r canran o ymgeiswyr a chynghorwyr sy'n fenywaidd yn y tri etholiad diwethaf wedi'i nodi yn y Tablau islaw.

Etholiad	Ymgeiswyr (cyfanswm)	Nifer o fenywod	Canran o fenywod (%)	Canran o fenywod (pob Plaid)
2008 ¹	494	129	26	27
2012 ²	552	142	26	28
2017	584	171	29	dim data

¹ <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Does-Local-Government-Work-for-Women-Interim-Report-April-2017-Fawcett-Society.pdf> t. 22

² ibid

Etholiad	Cynghorwyr (cyfanswm)	Nifer o fenywod	Canran o fenywod (%)	Canran o fenywod (pob Plaid)
2008 ³	193	52	27	27
2012 ⁴	159	41	26	27
2017	199	52	26	28 ⁵

8. Mae tangynrychiolaeth Plaid Cymru o ran menywod ar lefel llywodraeth leol, ysywaeth, yn debyg iawn i dangynrychiolaeth Cymru benbaladr.
9. Fe'i gwelir bod y canran o fenywod a etholir yn debyg i'r canran sy'n sefyll mewn etholiadau cyngor. Yr her bennaf, mae'n debyg, ydy cynyddu'r nifer o fenywod sy'n sefyll mewn etholiadau lleol.
10. Mynychodd Prif Weithredwr y Blaid seminar y Gymdeithas Fawcett ar 15 Mehefin 2017: "A yw llywodraeth leol yn gweithio ar gyfer merched".
11. Mae Prif Weithredwr y Blaid hefyd wedi cael nifer o drafodaethau gyda [REDACTED], Pennaeth yTîm Democratiaeth, Amrywiaeth a Chydnabyddiaeth Ariannol, Llywodraeth Cymru. Ym mis Chwefror 2017, anfonwyd fanylion ein Adran Menywod a Chymdeithas y Cynghorwyr at dîm Mr [REDACTED]. Y bwriad oedd i sefydlu rhwydweithiau trawsbleidiol i annog a mentora cynghorwyr newydd, gyda ffocws arbennig ar fenywod a chynghorwyr o leiafrifoedd ethnig. Nid yw'n amlwg a oes cynnydd wedi bod yn hyn o beth.

Camau nesaf

12. Gan fod yr etholiadau lleol nesaf yn 2022, mae Plaid Cymru yn canolbwyntio ar hyn o bryd ar wella'n cynrychiolaeth o fenywod fel ymgeiswyr, a, maes o law, aelodau etholedig i Senedd Cymru.
13. Mae'r gwaith yma wedi dechrau. Newidiwyd rheolau sefydlog y Blaid i sicrhau ymgeisyddiaeth gyfartal mewn etholaethau targed (gweler atodiad 2) yn ein Cynhadledd Flynyddol fis Hydref eleni.
14. Gobeithir, wrth i aelodau Plaid Cymru weld mwy o fenywod mewn rôl uchel-ei-phroffil (megis ymgeisyddion Senedd Cymru), y bydd yr awydd i sefyll fel cynghorwyr yn cynyddu.
15. Mae'r Gymdeithas Fawcett wedi holi menywod am eu rhesymau dros sefyll fel ymgeisyddion mewn llywodraeth leol, a'u cefndir. Datganodd dros hanner yr ymatebion fod menywod wedi ymwneud â sefydliadau cymunedol, elusenol neu grefyddol cyn iddynt sefyll.
16. Mae'n debygol bod gwaith i'w wneud gan Blaid Cymru i ddenu menywod sy'n weithgar yn eu cymunedau i ystyried sefyll dros y Blaid mewn etholiadau lleol.

³ <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Does-Local-Government-Work-for-Women-Interim-Report-April-2017-Fawcett-Society.pdf> t. 22

⁴ ibid

⁵ <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f> t. 22

17. Mae 38% o gynghorwyr benywaidd yng ngwaith ymchwil y Gymdeithas Fawcett⁶ wedi dioddef sylwadau rhywedd sarhaus *pan yn ymwneud â'u plaid yn lleol*. A mae 10% o gynghorwyr benywaidd yn adrodd dioddef aflonyddu rhywiol pan yn ymwneud â'u plaid yn lleol. Mae'n bwysig iawn i Blaid Cymru ein bod yn sicrhau gofod goddefgar, caredig i'n holl aelodau wrth iddynt ymwneud â'r Blaid yn lleol. Mae Plaid Cymru wedi mabwysiadu newidiadau i'r rheolau sefydlog sy'n galluogi menywod i gwyno am ymddygiad "*sydd yn cyfateb i gamwahaniaethu tuag at unrhyw unigolyn ar sail unrhyw rai o'r priodweddau canlynol: oedran, rhyw, anabledd, hil, ethnigrwydd, cenedligrwydd, crefydd, cred, cyfeiriadedd rhywiol, hunaniaeth rhywedd, beichiogrwydd, mamolaeth neu statws priodasol*"; ymddygiad "*sydd yn cynnwys defnyddio neu fygwth trais, bwlio neu aflonyddu*", neu "*Ymddygiad yng nghyfarfodydd y Blaid neu yn erbyn aelodau'r Blaid yn ystod digwyddiadau a drefnwyd gan y Blaid neu mewn gohebiaeth yn ymdrin â materion y Blaid sydd yn codi dychryn, aflonyddu neu sy'n achosi loes neu ddadrithiad ymysg aelodau a/neu staff y Blaid*".
18. Mae traean o gynghorwyr benywaidd hefyd yn datgan eu bod yn dioddef sylwadau rhywedd sarhaus pan fyddant yn ymwneud â'u gwaith tu fewn neu yng nghyrion Siambr y Cyngor, a deg y cant wedi dioddef aflonyddu rhywiol gan eu cyd-cynghorwyr. Rydym yn awyddus i sicrhau bod cynghorwyr Plaid Cymru ddim yn cymryd rhan yn y math yma o ymddygiad, a byddwn yn darparu hyfforddiant i ymgeiswyr i'r perwyl hwn yn arwain at etholiadau 2022. Mae adroddiadau o aflonyddu rhywiol yn cael eu trin yn ddifrifol iawn gan y Blaid.
19. Cydnabyddwn hefyd bod rhwystrau strwythurol sywleddol yn atal menywod a rheiny o grwpiau eraill sydd wedi'u tangynrychioli rhag cymryd rhan mewn llywodraeth leol. Mae hyn yn cynnwys materion megis amseroedd cyfarfodydd cyngor, diffyg ystyriaeth o anghenion y rhai sy'n rhieni neu'n ofalwyr, rhwystrau ariannol a chanfyddiadau o ddiwylliant mewnol cynghorau sir. Credwn fod cyfrifoldeb ar gynghorau sir, Llywodraeth Cymru, Senedd Cymru a phob plaid wleidyddol i fynd i'r afael â'r rhwystrau strwythurol hyn.
20. Mae dau draean o gynghorwyr benywaidd yn credu y byddai mentora wedi bod o fudd iddynt ddod yn gynghorwyr. Mae Cynhadledd Plaid Cymru wedi ymrwymo'r Blaid i gynllun mentora – yn y man cyntaf, yn canolbwyntio ar etholiadau 2021 i Senedd Cymru (gweler atodiad 2).
21. O ystyried pwynt 9. uchod ymhellach, un o broblemau pennaf Plaid Cymru yw i gael ymgeiswyr o *gwbl*, boed yn fenyw neu wryw. Mae 1,271 o seddi cyngor yng Nghymru, a mae Plaid Cymru oddeutu 700 o ymgeiswyr yn brin o'r cyfanswm.
22. Dydy rheolau sefydlog presennol y Blaid ddim wedi arwain at gynnydd sylweddol o fenywod yn sefyll mewn etholiadau llywodraeth leol, nac o gael eu hethol. Mae'n rhesymegol felly i ofyn a fydde newid trefniadaeth yn llywodraeth leol yn fodd i sicrhau gwell gynrychiolaeth o ran rhyw mewn llywodraeth leol. Byddaf yn gofyn i Bwyllgor Gwaith y Blaid ystyried y mater yma yn eu cyfarfod fis Ionawr 2019; mae angen cymeradwyaeth y Pwyllgor Gwaith a Chyngor Cenedlaethol y Blaid i newid y rheolau sefydlog.

DIWEDD

⁶ <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Does-Local-Government-Work-for-Women-Interim-Report-April-2017-Fawcett-Society.pdf> t. 22

Atodiad 1

Cynghorwyr Plaid Cymru fesul awdurdod lleol; 18 Hydref 2018

Awdurdod lleol	Dynion	Menywod	Du, Asiaidd neu o leiafrif ethnig (tybiedig)
Abertawe	-	-	-
Blaenau Gwent	-	-	-
Bro Morgannwg	3	1	-
Caerdydd	1	1	1
Caerfyrddin	26	11	-
Caerffili	15	3	-
Casnewydd	-	-	-
Castell Nedd Port Talbot	10	5	-
Ceredigion	17	3	-
Conwy	7	1	1
Dinbych	8	1	-
Fflint	-	-	-
Gwynedd	30	11	-
Merthyr Tudful	-	-	-
Mynwy	-	-	-
Penfro	6	-	-
Penybont-ar-Ogwr	3	-	-
Powys	2	-	-
Rhondda Cynon Taf	7	10	-
Torfaen	-	-	-
Wrecsam	1	2	-
Ynys Môn	11	3	-
Cyfanswm	147	52	2
Canran (%)	73.9	26.1	1.0

Atodiad 2

Geiriad cynnig a basiwyd gan Gynhadledd Flynyddol Plaid Cymru 2018

Cynnig i'r Gynhadledd Flynyddol 2018: Cynrychiolaeth Merched

Pwyllgor Gwaith Cenedlaethol

Noda'r Gynhadledd:

Y cynnig a basiwyd yng Nghynhadledd Genedlaethol 2017, *Cynrychiolaeth Gyfartal*, yn benodol yr agweddau sy'n ymwneud â chynyddu cynrychiolaeth menywod mewn etholiadau y mae'r Blaid yn eu sefyll ynddynt.

Noda'r Gynhadledd ymhellach:

Camau dilynol gan y Blaid i annog mwy o gynrychiolaeth gan ferched, gan gynnwys trafodaethau polisi yng Nghynhadledd Wanwyn 2018.

Penderfyna'r Gynhadledd i gymryd camau pellach i gynyddu cynrychiolaeth menywod mewn etholiadau cenedlaethol, gan gynnwys:

1. Creu swydd newydd ar y Pwyllgor Gwaith Cenedlaethol o Gyfarwyddydd Cyfleoedd Cyfartal
2. Gosod targed o ddyblu nifer y menywod ar y Gofrestr Genedlaethol
 - a. Penodi'r Cyfarwyddydd Cyfleoedd Cyfartal (neu, os nad oes Cyfarwyddydd Cyfleoedd Cyfartal, aelod arall o'r Pwyllgor Gwaith) i arwain y gwaith hwn
 - b. Gofyn i bob etholaeth nodi 3 menyw y gellir gofyn iddynt fynd ar y Gofrestr Genedlaethol
3. Gweithredu rhaglen hyfforddi gan Grŵp y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, tebyg i'r un sy'n cael ei rhedeg eisoes gan Grŵp San Steffan. Caiff menywod ac aelodau o unrhyw leiafrifoedd ethnig a dangynrychiolir eu targedu yn benodol a chael cynnig lle.
4. Gweithredu rhaglen fentora gan bawb yng Ngrŵp y Cynulliad, gan sicrhau fod pob AC yn mentora o leiaf ddau aelod (un ohonynt yn fenyw) o'r Gofrestr Genedlaethol a rhoi adroddiad blynyddol i'r Pwyllgor Gwaith ar y gweithgareddau a wnaed ganddynt.
5. Cynnal adolygiad o'r broses ymgeisio i fod ar y Gofrestr Genedlaethol, gan ofyn yn benodol i fenywod ar y gofrestr am eu profiad o ymgeisio. Hefyd, i holi menywod sydd wedi gofyn am gael eu tynnu oddi ar y gofrestr pam y gwnaethant y penderfyniad hwnnw ac am eu hawgrymiadau ynghylch unrhyw welliannau posib.
6. Mabwysiadu polisi o efeillio Etholaethau Targed, neu Ardaloedd Heddlu yn achos etholiadau Comisinwyr Heddlu a Throsedd, fel lle bo un yn dewis menyw fod yn rhaid i'r llall ddewis dyn a vice versa.

Penderfyna'r Gynhadledd wneud y newidiadau isod i'r Rheolau Sefydlog er mwyn gweithredu polisi gefeillio:

Dileu paragraff 2.3 o'r *Rheolau Sefydlog am Ddethol Ymgeiswyr i Etholiadau'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, San Steffan, Senedd Ewrop ac fel Comisiynwyr Heddlu a Throsedd* a rhoi yn ei le:

"2.3.1 Bydd y Pwyllgor Gwaith Cenedlaethol, ar argymhelliad y Pwyllgor Ymgyrchoedd Cenedlaethol neu yn absenoldeb Pwyllgor Ymgyrchoedd Cenedlaethol, y Cyfarwyddydd Etholiadau, yn pennu pa etholaethau fydd yn cael eu hystyried yn Etholaethau Targed Cynulliad.

2.3.2 Ar argymhelliad y Pwyllgor Ymgyrchoedd Cenedlaethol neu yn absenoldeb Pwyllgor Ymgyrchoedd Cenedlaethol, y Cyfarwyddydd Etholiadau, bydd y Pwyllgor Gwaith Cenedlaethol yn gefeillio etholaethau targed, fel y bydd nifer cyfartal o ymgeiswyr gwryw a benyw. Bydd y Pwyllgor Ymgyrchoedd Cenedlaethol, wrth wneud ei argymhelliad a chyhyd ag y mae'n bosib, yn gefeillio etholaethau o fewn yr un Rhanbarth Etholiadol y Cynulliad ac yn ystyried barn yr etholaethau lleol.

2.3.3 Bydd unrhyw etholaeth a enillwyd yn yr etholiad blaenorol yn cael ei heithrio o'r broses efeillio.

2.3.4 Unwaith i'r Pwyllgor Gwaith Cenedlaethol gwblhau'r broses o ddethol Etholaethau Targed a'r Broses Efeillio, bydd y Prif Weithredwr yn hysbysu pob aelod o'r Gofrestr Genedlaethol, Cadeiryddion ac Ysgrifenyddion Etholaethau ynglŷn â pha etholaethau sydd i'w Gefeillio.

2.3.5 Pan fo Etholaeth wedi agor enwebiadau, bydd y Prif Weithredwr, fel rhan o'r broses o hysbysu aelodau o'r Gofrestr Genedlaethol (Rheol Sefydlog 1.11) hefyd yn datgan a yw'r etholaeth yn Etholaeth Darged ai peidio ac yn nodi a ddylai ymgeiswyr fod yn wryw ynteu'n fenyw.

2.3.6 Bydd gan y Pwyllgor Gwaith Cenedlaethol yr hawl i wneud unrhyw amrywiadau i'r rheolau hyn a fydd yn ei farn ef yn angenrheidiol i hwyluso'r broses.

2.3.7 Yn achos etholiadau'r Comisiynwyr Heddlu a Throsedd, disodlir y gair Etholaeth (neu Etholaethau) ar gyfer Ardal (neu Ardaloedd) Heddlu yn rheolau sefydlog 2.3.1 – 2.3.6 uchod”

Papur 7 gan: Roger Pratt
Paper 7 from: Roger Pratt

Cyflwynwyd y datganiad hwn gan Roger Pratt. Mae'r datganiad yn adlewyrchu ei farn bersonol ef, ac nid yw, o reidrwydd, yn adlewyrchu safbwynt Plaid Geidwadol Cymru.

This statement was submitted by Roger Pratt. The statement reflects his personal views and not necessarily those of the Welsh Conservative Party.

“ I believe that the Conservative Party should do everything possible to encourage as wide a range of Candidates which is as representative as possible of the area it wishes to serve.

However I believe that ultimately it is the electorate to decide who is elected and that no artificial barriers should be imposed by any Government on who Political Parties put forward as Candidates for election.

In order to achieve a wider diversity of Candidates I believe that Parties should organise seminars, encourage people and actively talent spot.

I believe Candidates are put off by some of the aggressive language and abusive behaviour particularly on social media to which they can be subjected. I believe we need a code of practise which respects different points of view and does not attack Candidates on a personal basis.

I live in Monmouthshire where the Conservative Group gained overall control in May 2017. They gained 6 seats which net equated to 3 extra men and 3 extra women becoming Councillors. This means that 40% of the Conservative Group are now women. This is much better than the average ratio for Councils in Wales and provides a good start to improving the overall position.”

1. Introduction

The Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's Inquiry on Diversity in Local Government.

CWVYS is the independent representative body for the voluntary youth work sector in Wales and delivers against four main functions:

- National representation and strategic leadership for the voluntary youth sector (including brokerage, policy development, advocacy, shaping and influencing, strategic communications, raising the profile of voluntary youth services within Wales and internationally)
- Networking and regional partnership working (including brokering partnerships, regional representation, promoting the languages and cultures of Wales)
- Information sharing (including providing funding information and support, policy information, events)
- Promoting learning and good practice and facilitating research and evaluation (including good youth work practice and quality assurance, workforce development/training/accreditation, data collection and measuring social/economic impact)

We have entered into exciting times in terms of youth democracy, establishing firm foundations for future generations to be informed, educated and inspired by democratic participation.

The newly established Welsh Youth Parliament brings together 60 diverse young people aged 11 – 18 years of age, to democratically vote on issues that will be presented for national debate. Young people can already participate in local democracy through youth forums and school councils, which feed into the Youth Parliament.

The introduction of votes for 16 year olds in local council elections, and their imminent inclusion into national politics, creates exciting opportunities to further develop young peoples formal education.

Through a number of CWVYS member organisations including EYST, Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Wales, Youth Cymru and UpRising Cymru, young people are being engaged in a variety of projects and initiatives to help them understand political processes, to receive mentorship and develop as leaders, and to be able to exercise their right to vote effectively.

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

- 2.1. The commitment to increase diversity within leadership and government generates enthusiasm for fairer representation. We might argue that our elected members and democratic institutions in Wales are not presently reflective of the constituents or communities they represent with regards to gender, age, race, disability, sexual orientation, faith and language.
 - 2.2. The Electoral Reform Society (2018) report: 'New Voices: How Welsh politics can begin to reflect Wales', is positive in relation to gender i.e. that in both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Swansea, 42% of elected representatives are female. There are 1254 councillors in Wales, and just 349 female (28%). A number of local authorities remain 90% male, with two local authorities not having any female representation in their cabinet. So, although progress is being made, increasing the diversity of councillors appears to be a slow-moving process.
 - 2.3. Councillors are elected to represent their local community, as a privileged form of public service, seeking to make a difference to the quality of peoples' lives. When positive role models from diverse cultural and social circumstances step into leadership roles, they can inspire and empower others, generating interest and participation in democracy. They can facilitate a better understanding between constituents and members, be better able to evidence and champion the needs of communities and increase cohesion.
 - 2.4. A diverse mix of councillors can provide more grounded perspectives in debate, present more compelling arguments, and offer more precise scrutiny based upon authentic experiences. The dynamics of group decisions are greatly enhanced through alternative perspectives, experiences and skills, producing greater insight into community issues that lead to better solutions.
 - 2.5. It is equally, if not more important, for councillors to actively seek the views of a diverse range of constituents to inform their decision-making. Councillors are advocates and champions of local people. Those marginalised or isolated by their circumstances have a right to be heard, understood, and have their views taken forward with fairness and understanding, irrespective of whether elected members share similar characteristics.
3. **What are the key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections?**
- 3.1. The demands of the role are considerable, balancing the needs and interests of local residents, the council and their respective political parties. The rigid, formal council structures make it difficult to manage education or work commitments, with little flexibility for family, childcare or caring responsibilities. Local councillors need to be a representative of a range of socio-economic backgrounds, yet the commitments, financial risks and constraints would exclude many with low incomes from considering the role.
 - 3.2. The Electoral Reform Society (2018) recognised the institutional barriers to increasing

diversity and reported that councillors in Wales are 'predominantly male, straight, middle-aged and white'. By increasing the diversity of councillors, the assertion of white, male privilege will decrease, and reduce the number of positions in local government available to men. If increasing diversity is perceived as ostracizing or threatening, then some local councils may not provide an environment where newly elected representatives feel accepted, respected or are retained. An organisational culture of an established 'old boys club', may be pervasively resistant to change.

- 3.3. A tension exists where initiatives to increase diversity appear reactive or tokenistic, as opposed to a component of systemic change. As a recent example, we are aware of the experience of a highly accomplished, young female of colour who withdrew her attendance as a speaker at a 'diversity in politics' event, as she considered as demeaning to merit an opportunity based upon deficits in representative characteristics. A number of initiatives in the lead up to elections have been experienced as tokenistic, seemingly used as a means of achieving positive publicity.
- 3.4. Knowledge of local government is limited, although young people in Wales have a better understanding through school councils and youth forums. Local government websites provide a range of information about the council, but not how to become a councillor. It is not clear where appointments are advertised, what the application process is, remuneration, access and support available. Whilst it is the responsibility of the political parties to implement good practice in recruitment, it is also the responsibility of local authorities to inform communities effectively, and equitable to those who may wish to stand independently.
- 3.5. Councillors are facing increasing challenges, expected to manage the impact of our changing society, with concerns and uncertainty about the Welsh/UK economy after Brexit. With the reduction or loss of services that people valued, and roll out of welfare reform there is incredible strain on vulnerable groups and deprived communities, generating new social issues and mental health concerns affecting every generation. There are widespread expressions of hopelessness, frustration and anger at the perceived, and real injustices being experienced.
- 3.6. There are expectations for councillors with digital literacy skills to have an active presence on social media, which creates personal and professional anxieties. Social media has become a widely accepted tool to connect and engage with the public. However, meaningful online engagement takes consideration and time, and needs hyper vigilance to every comment or opinion expressed. Bullying can be as prominent a concern for adults as it is for children and young people, and can be particularly aggressive targeting public figures and officials, with public abuse described as a growing concern in the WLGA's 'Exit Survey' for councillors. The visibility of the role may deter people, not wishing to become a target for abuse, or subject their family and friends to negative attention.
- 3.7. Political figures throughout the UK are experiencing a particularly difficult relationship through the press and online information sharing, making the role

unappealing. Negative media attention can tarnish reputations, creating public reactions, and changing perceptions of political institutions by association. Whilst the conduct of some national media outlets should be brought into question, the conduct of political figures and institutions, are under constant scrutiny. There is a growing mistrust around the integrity of political institutions, codes of conduct and political representatives being found guilty of criminal activities. A number of high profile cases have revealed how official roles have been exploited to gain access to children and young people. Whilst these represent a small number of isolated occurrences in Wales, there are public expectations that issues of integrity will be addressed with transparency, accountability, and reform where necessary.

4. What areas of innovation and good practice may help increase diversity in local government?

- 4.1. Make the role of councillor visible and accessible as part of a long-term communication strategy to increase participation and diversity in democracy. Develop co-ordinated and consistent campaigns that can be communicated across sectors and networks, to ensure that potential community leaders are made aware of opportunities, and provided with adequate information. Local authorities already provide online information and could include resources such as the WLGA's 'Councillor Guides' that provide an understanding of the role, responsibilities and processes, presented in simple and concise terms. There are also resources provided through the Electoral Commission and One Voice Wales that could be utilised or adapted for universal audience. Identifying and celebrating positive role models whilst highlighting the impact they have made would be a worthwhile exercise.
- 4.2. Some local authorities are working successfully with political parties to increase representation whilst providing examples of good practice that can be shared throughout Wales. Training and development may be needed for local councils to support them with organisational and cultural change. With future plans to reduce local authorities, and the number of councillors, there will be opportunities to review roles and implement measures that ensure our elected representatives are representative of our diverse communities.
- 4.3. There is considerable cross sector learning to draw upon. There are a number of ways that youth forums, school councils and youth organisations could link with local councils, through role shadowing, mentoring and skill exchanges, providing with opportunities to learn from each other. Elected councillors could act as political mentors and young people could share their skills as digital natives. 1.1 million 11-18 year olds took part in the UK Youth Parliament 'Make your Mark' ballot to decide on the issues for debate: 54,000 from Wales and over 13,400 young people from Cardiff, making it one of the largest youth consultations of its kind in UK history. Youth Cymru have also recently developed resources to increase participation in civic life as part of 'We are 100' focussing on the suffragette movement.
- 4.4. Learn from previous mentoring schemes such as Operation Black Vote, Diversity in

Democracy, Chwarae Teg's 'LeadHerShip' programme, and new schemes such as EYST Wales 'Routes to Public Life' (supported by AMs, MPs and Chief Executives in the Third Sector) to establish an annual mentoring programme with local councils that includes placements for people from under-represented groups. Mentoring programmes can support people with advice and training to develop political skills. Role shadowing and council open days could be offered as introductory activities for people to consider the role before committing to the mentoring scheme or signing up as a candidate.

4.5. Develop engagement strategies to involve constituents in earlier stages of the decision making process, with a variety of ways to participate. Local councils are increasingly providing information online, yet there remain to be many individuals who feel digitally excluded, experiencing barriers related to poverty, capability or ability. Digital technology is a tool, but it is not inclusive, so in addition to online information and campaigns, engagement strategies could include: developing community ambassadors; developing a network of forums to consult with the community; as well as developing an online space for community debate linked to community events.

4.6. Westminster Government recently consulted on proposals to update the disqualification criteria for councillors and Mayors in line with modern sentencing practice and behaviours the public have a right to expect of the elected members that represent them. Where behaviour has led to a conviction or enforcement action resulting in: the notification requirements in the Sexual Offences Act 2003; a Sexual Risk Order; a Civil Injunction; a Criminal Behaviour Order they will seek to legislate to ensure that they are disqualified from standing for office. Councillors and mayors in Wales are not required to undertake enhanced DBS checks unless they have contact mainly with vulnerable groups, or frequently visit settings where they have the opportunity for contact with vulnerable groups. A Welsh Government commitment to safeguarding measures for children, young people and vulnerable adults through enhanced DBS checks, would greatly engender levels of public confidence and trust.

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

5.1. The intentions set out in the Welsh Government Green Paper 'Strengthening Local Government' provide an opportunity to reinvigorate local government. While it does not address diversity within local government directly, throughout the document there are solid statements surrounding the increase in support for councillors to undertake their role effectively and statements that councils will become more open, transparent and engage more citizens in their work.

5.2. There is recognition of the commitment required to be a councillor, with aims to ensure they are properly remunerated, respected and recognised for the work they do in their communities. Any review of should include whether flexibility could be extended to formal meeting structures, to make them more accessible.

5.3. The suggestion to increase the freedoms and powers of local government are mentioned a number of times throughout the green paper, and if this is achieved, it must not be at the expense of underrepresented groups or moves towards more diverse representation. However, with the potential creation of new merged authorities there are possibilities of establishing new practices: “Creating the new authorities provides an opportunity to reconfigure, redesign and transform service delivery across the range of local authority service areas”.

Kathryn Allen
Vice-President
CWVYS

Paper 9 gan: Grwp Prif Swyddogion Ieuenctid

Paper 9 from: Principle Youth Officers

Regarding the Terms of Reference I have struggled a bit with putting something into words to respond to the specific points as I am aware that the WLGA, which promotes and supports our work, has already made a submission on behalf of Local Authorities.

One of the key things that the Principle Youth Officers Group is supportive of is the extension of the vote to include 16 and 17 year olds which I understand that the enquiry will be looking at.

We are also involved in promoting and supporting the work of the Welsh Youth Parliament and see this as potentially a way to involve greater numbers of young people in the political process.

In addition as a sector we already do a great deal to support local Youth Councils and County level Youth Assembly's and other forums such as Junior Safeguarding Boards; I am aware that these types of opportunities can be the first steps into the world of adult politics.

Many of us are also usually involved within our respective LA areas on organising/running consultations with young people on a range of issues.

We can also play an important role locally in our contribution to the delivery of Personal and Social Education within the school curriculum.

I believe it's easier to talk to some of these issues which link to the enquiry than the specific points within the Terms of Reference which are covered on behalf of our employers by WLGA.



Paper 10 gan: Youth Cymru

Paper 10 from: Youth Cymru

Consultation on Diversity in Local Government

The Welsh Assembly Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee enquiry into diversity in local government is in progress and we welcome this opportunity to respond to this consultation; and iterate that Youth Cymru fundamentally supports the importance and necessity to ensure diversity amongst local councillors

Youth Cymru - Introduction

Youth Cymru is a national Welsh youth work charity with over 80 years experience of supporting youth work, young people and youth organisations in Wales. We seek to support and enable young people to become effective citizens through appropriate educational and developmental activities by providing them with access to innovative, creative and educative projects and programmes. We place youth participation at the heart of what we do and facilitate the involvement of young people in decisions making at all levels both within our organisation, other youth organisations and the communities in which they live. In all activities Youth Cymru promotes equality of opportunity and has due regard for the principles and purposes of youth work as enshrined in our history as a leading youth organisation in Wales and as set out in the Youth Work in Wales Principles and Purposes, the Youth Work Curriculum Strategy and in the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014 -2018. We work with due regard to the UNCRC and align our strategic goals with The Well Being and Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

We have extensive experience in the field of equalities in Wales with young people aged 11-25, working both directly in our projects and programmes and through our broad network of over 300 member organisations. Examples of our previous equalities field experience include an Erasmus+ funded project that



engaged with young people from across the UK and Ireland, bringing 30 of them together with parliamentarians from the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly. This is an example of good practice demonstrating the potential for decision makers to engage with young people at a high level of participation. By engaging in this structured dialogue project young people developed a series of policy calls including education, mental health, environment and Brexit, developed their understanding of political structures within their own nations and across UK and Ireland and were empowered to affect political change. The need for education in regard to policy and decision making at all levels led to our development of this project. They met with their respective parliamentarians face to face and we have continued to support these volunteers to remain engaged both in a second British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly project, being organised by our Partners UK Youth, and in a European Youth Forum Democracy Festival, YO! Fest. Additionally in 2017 we delivered work enabling young people to engage with a project that contributed to:

- Developing the capacity of civil society to influence reforms in pursuit of open government and sustainable development;
- Developing engagement between civil society and governments, in order to improve governance and sustainable development in Wales;
- Ensure wider participation in the open government civil society movement to progress the Well-being Goals in Wales.

This project consisted of a series of workshops delivered in diverse youth facing contexts across Wales enabling us to consult with young people and build our understanding of how to best support young people who face multiple barriers to enable them to begin to become more politically engaged, informed and active.

Additionally our Trans*Form project was central to the Welsh Government Transgender Action Plan. Our training and free online Trans*Form toolkit provides youth-facing organisations with best practice guidance on supporting trans young people and their duties under equality legislation. We were also the supporting organisation for the Campaign for a Welsh Youth Parliament and following the Welsh Government highly welcomed decisions to support a new Welsh Youth Parliament are a supporting organisation working with young people



who face barriers to engagement to participate in this new youth decision making structure.

This contextual practice experience and our linked established network of young people and youth work organisations has helped inform this response to this inquiry and we offer the following broad responses and thoughts in relation to these terms of reference.

To understand the importance of diversity among local councillors, including the effect on public engagement, debate and decision making.

Young participants who engaged with our Voices of the Future project included a cross section of young people who faced barriers to engagement and were marginalise in some way. Workshops were delivered to the following groups of young people:

- Swansea YMCA Hub group
- Swansea YMCA Good Vibes LGBT group
- Full Circle (young women and girls)
- Young police volunteers, Neath
- Gellideg Foundation, Merthyr Tydfil
- Swansea Young Adult Carers
- Young police volunteers, Swansea
- Young police volunteers, Port Talbot
- Children in Wales Young Wales event (attended by young people and youth forums from across Wales)
- Whizzkidz, Cardiff, Newport and Llanelli (x3)
- Cardiff Youth Service Early Intervention and Prevention (x3)

A young person who engaged with the project through Whizzkidz, highlighted how a lack of diversity in local councils and other decision making bodies can impact on aspirations, a sense of inclusion and feelings of acceptance. A lack of representation across all sectors of the community at council level led to one young person asking " Can

people in wheel chairs be politicians?" <http://youthcymru.org.uk/voices-of-the-future/>

This lack of representation and diversity was a theme throughout our work with young people highlighting the importance of diversity at all levels and how a lack of diverse representation can impact on engagement, debate and decision making. One young person voiced the disillusionment that many feel *"Sometimes it's pointless, they do consultations and nothing comes of it"* Some had previously taken part in consultations but there was a sense of frustration at the lack of transparency and the lack of clear and honest communication. This risks young people experiencing "consultation fatigue" and a feeling that they were not been listened to or taken seriously suggesting that much work to date to become more representative has been tokenistic and far from participatory.

Where youth representation is enabled through for example, youth forums located within statutory youth services, we see much good practice and examples of youth engagement with local councils; though arguable diversity remains an issue that youth services can only actively address with adequate resources. Young people with additional needs require specific support to enable them to engage with these structures. Ensuring the engagement of "harder to reach" young people requires youth work resources and any remaining existing "youth council/forum" structures face continual threats due to local authority budgetary cuts, leading to a decline in youth voices being heard, a reduction in diverse representation e.g. 18-25 year olds at councillor level and less young people engaging with local government.

As stated in the Estyn report to the Welsh Government young people have a right to high quality support through youth work. They need access to activities outside of formal education, in safe environments that open them up to new opportunities, help them make relationships, build friendships, and learn new skills. From time to time, they will also

need support that helps them to understand their life choices and make important decisions. Decision made at local council level impact hugely on the local services provided and have led to a patchwork, postcode lottery style of opportunity, which fundamentally prohibits diverse youth representation amongst local councillors. The structures that have been historically in place to enable youth representation and to "train and facilitate the skills to enable to engage in local government continue to be eroded due to local funding cuts to youth services and an absence of strategic direction from the Welsh Government that could "protect" the youth services needed to enable youth representation and increased diversity amongst local council.

Understand key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections

As afore mentioned we carried out consultation with young people as part of our Voices of the Future project. Additionally our young leaders group Llais Ifanc consulted with their peers as part of our BIPA (British Irish Parliamentarian Assembly Project)

Key themes identified include:

- Trust

Across the consultation, there was a shared lack of trust in politics, at a local and national level with young people telling us - "We're talked at, not listened to." Some participants felt that engagement with young people was often tokenistic or superficial, or that young people were not taken seriously, perhaps due to a perceived lack of life experience. This lack of trust will prove a barrier to engagement and inhibit a more diverse pool of candidates in the future.

"They don't care about young people, they think we don't have real life experience and only care about our phones, when I look after my mother and father and go to school! Tell me I don't have real life experience" - young carer

- Education

"Teach politics in schools. We want a say, but how can we if we're not even told?"

A theme we often returned to was a lack education in schools. For many of the young people we spoke to, politics was equated with voting. Therefore, for many young people under 18, they felt politics was not relevant to them given they were not yet old enough to vote. With the changes in relation to votes for 16 year old in local elections the need for education increases to ensure barriers are reduced. Young people have to start somewhere and the opportunities they have access to early on will ensure that going forward local councillors include young people making for a more diverse, inclusive and representative local council.

It is important that any education does not only focus on voter registration and the electoral process, but develops an understanding of democracy as an ongoing process and the various ways for young people (including those under the age of 18) to become involved.

Echoing the findings of the Electoral Reform Society's recent 'Missing Voices' report, there was confusion about devolution, with many young people being surprised that they had five Assembly Members representing them in addition to their Member of Parliament. They lacked an understanding of how and where decisions are made not understanding the role of local councillors nor of Assembly Members. This lack of knowledge represents a key barrier across the age group we represent 11-25 year olds.

- Digital Communication

Young people also told us they wanted information on digital and media literacy including how to identify fake news. This lack of

acknowledgment of the needs of a digital generation proves to be a barrier to increased diversity.

- Representation

"Young people's views need to be listened to. Speak to a wide range of young people."

A number of young people spoke about challenges around representation and the need to ensure that any consultation or engagement activities proactively reach a wide range of young people.

Representation is also important in terms of perception and aspiration - can we expect young people to be (or to aspire to be) what they cannot see?

- Accessibility

For young people who had previously voted, some raised concerns about the accessibility of elections and spoke about the barriers they had experienced. Recent research found that only 25% of visually impaired voters said the current system allowed them to vote independently, compromising anonymity (Royal Society for Blind Children, 2016). Young people told us that election literature in the post should be available in large print and that accessible resources were not always properly advertised in polling stations. Young people who required mobility support told of their struggles they face when trying to engage e.g. lack of support using public transport or accessing events etc.

- Transparency

Young people told us that they face barriers due to the language used e.g. the use of jargon and exclusivity in mainstream / adult political media (e.g. language such as ("focus group" "neutrality" etc.) Public meetings are not understandable so how are they public?

What needs to change?

Recommendations

One of the biggest recommendations was around visibility. Young people wanted decision makers to be more visible in the community, including coming into schools and youth clubs to speak to young people - "actually come to speak to young people". This could contribute to the needed culture change identified in the Welsh Government's Green Paper. There was overwhelming support for votes at 16 indicating that young people have an appetite to be involved in local government on many levels.

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

Youth Cymru fully supports the importance of exploring areas of innovation and good practice and recognises that the learning from this practice should and could increase diversity in local government. As a national youth work organisation our work with over 300 member organisation has given an overview of the good practice that is taking place across Wales to support young people in developing the capacity and knowledge to enable them to engage in politics at different levels.

The collating and sharing of these good practice examples could contribute to an approach that would aid an increase diversity in local government. For example we know that training for young people to enable their understanding of local decision making processes structure and how they can get involved is vital to ensure diverse representation particularly in light of the move towards votes at 16.

To explore the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers.

Youth Cymru is supportive of the Green Paper's acknowledgement of the need for Councillors to reflect the diversity of communities and support the proposal that cultural changes is necessary for this to happened. We would reiterate the importance of recognising and including young people meaningfully in this process of changes.



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<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Youth%20Support%20Services%20in%20Wales.pdf>

Agenda Item 5

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

5 December 2018 – papers to note cover sheet

Paper no.	Issue	From	Action point
ELGC(5)-34-18 Paper 11	Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Wales) Bill	Minister for Housing and Regeneration	Further information provided following the Stage 1 debate on the general principles of the Bill.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MAL/RE/0569/18

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

27 November 2018

Dear John,

I am writing further to the General Principles debate held in respect of the Renting Homes (Fees etc.) (Wales) Bill on 6 November. During the debate I confirmed that I would be writing to the Committee to outline my position on some of the matters raised by Assembly Members.

Throughout the scrutiny of the Bill, payments in default of a contract have been an issue of concern to Committee Members. I have confirmed my intention to develop guidance that will be used by agents and landlords dealing with the payments permitted by the Bill. I indicated that the guidance will be developed with the engagement and involvement of key stakeholders and arrangements are being developed to ensure this is the case. It is possible at this stage to give the Committee a broad indication of the scope of the guidance. I should highlight, however, that this represents current early thinking and a final version will be guided by contributions from stakeholders. I have attached an outline of the scope and content of guidance that I hope will assure the Committee of our intentions.

Recommendation 6 of the Committee's report called for an amendment to be made so that the Bill states that exit fees when terminating a standard occupation contract are prohibited. The Committee's report outlined some of the evidence I provided confirming that the Bill does prevent these fees from being charged. However, I recognise that there remains uncertainty and misunderstanding about this aspect of the Bill and my intention is to bring forward an amendment at Stage 3 to clarify this and to clarify which payments can be made at the end of a contract in line with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation 11 of the Committee's report called for the Welsh Government to give further consideration to taking a banded or tiered approach to the levels of penalty associated with a fixed penalty notice. Having carefully considered the implications of a banded fixed penalty notice, I do not consider a workable proposal is available that would improve the Bill. It is important to recognise that fixed penalty notices are only one part of the enforcement regime and that there are alternatives available to a local housing authority. This includes the option to bring proceedings immediately if an offence warranted this action. Any decision to do so is likely to be influenced by the actions and circumstances of an agent or landlord. This could mean that if a local housing authority deems that a fixed penalty notice is likely to be ineffective in relation to a specific case they could take the matter direct to court. If an offence is proven, there is no limit on the level of fine a court could choose to issue.

Developing a banded or tiered approach could pose a risk that a small number of agents or landlords, particularly those on the fringes of the sector, may attempt to undermine the approach through actions such as splitting a property portfolio, or claiming a lower income from properties so that a landlord or agent qualifies for a lesser penalty. Ultimately, Rent Smart Wales, on being made aware of a prosecution successfully brought, could decide to rescind or not renew the licence of an agent or landlord to operate in Wales, on the basis they are no longer fit to hold one.

I also wanted to confirm to the Committee that in line with recommendation 6 of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee's report that the Bill's privacy impact assessment has been published on the following webpage.

<https://gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/legislation/renting-homes-fees/?lang=en>

I trust that Committee Members will find this letter helpful in advance of the Committee session on 29 November.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio
Minister for Housing and Regeneration

Scope and structure of guidance in respect of permitted payments

1. Payments between Landlord and Agent

- A payment of money is permitted if it is payable by a landlord to a letting agent in respect of lettings work or property management work carried out by the agent on behalf of the landlord.

2. Rent and limits upon rent

- What constitutes rent
- What can be charged
- When can rent be raised

3. Holding Deposit

- Deadline for agreement and repayment
- Excess Holding Deposit
- Right to retention of Holding Deposit for providing false and misleading information

4. Security Deposit

- Tenancy Deposit Protection legislation
- Excess Security Deposit (if a limit is prescribed by regulations)

5. Payments in Default

- Definition of Payment in Default
 - Occurrences which may lead to a Payment in Default, such as:
 - *Late payment of rent*
 - *Missed appointments*
 - *Avoidable or purposeful damage to property*
 - *Replacement keys*
 - *Emergency call-out fees*
- How to write Payments in Default into a contract with a tenant
 - *Clarity about contract governing what can, and by default, can't be charged as a Payment in Default*
- How to charge Payments in Default when something goes wrong.
 - *When something goes wrong, how a landlord or agent should charge a Payment in Default*
 - *Landlords and agents should be mindful of personal circumstances of tenant before requiring a Payment in Default*
- Reasonable charges for Payments in Default.
 - *Payments in Default should be proportionate and take into consideration actual losses*