

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

27th November 2023

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services- Mr Craig Griffiths.

Matter for Decision:

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group on Diversity in Democracy.

Purpose of the Report

To propose that the Democratic Services Committee establish a Task and Finish Group in respect of updating the Council's Diversity in Democracy Action Plan.

Background

Members will be aware that the WLGA embarked on an ambitious Diversity and Democracy Programme to ensure council chambers are more representative of their communities following local elections in May 2022. As part of this at a meeting of the WLGA on the 5th March 2021, the WLGA Council agreed:

- a. to encourage all political parties, through the WLGA Political Groups, to commit to proactive and coordinated activities to improve diversity in local government democracy;
- b. a formal position calling for the introduction of resettlement grants for all councillors and senior salary holders;

- c. to encourage all councillors to claim any necessary allowances or expenses;
- d. to encourage a declaration by July 2021 from councils in Wales, on becoming 'Diverse Councils'; to:
 - i. Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
 - ii. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
 - iii. Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
 - iv. Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.
- e. that councils should set targets to be representative of the communities they serve at the next elections;
- f. to support the use of voluntary quotas for Welsh local elections; and
- g. the WLGA reviews the impact of voluntary quotas following the next local elections.

Accordingly, in light of paragraph 6(d) above, in the Council meeting held on May 26th 2021, members formerly declared that the Council will:

- Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
- Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
- Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments; and
- Set out an action plan of activity ahead of the 2022 local elections.

In order to establish the best way to implement these requirements, Democratic Services Committee were tasked to consider the same as part of their consideration of the Member Induction Programme for 2022.

In response to the task set out in the WLGA requirements and instructed at Council, a Diversity in Democracy Action Plan of activity ahead of the 2022 elections was approved.

Work has been continuous and ongoing to deliver the commitments set out, and the majority of actions in the original action plan (as attached at Appendix 1) have been completed or are ongoing.

Proposal:

It is proposed that a Task and Finish Group of the Democratic Services Committee be established to focus on developing the next phase of Diversity in Democracy for the Council, considering national developments and local priorities.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impacts

No impact.

Risk Management

No impact.

Legal Powers

There are no specific legal powers relating to this report.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no specific impacts for valley communities arising from this report.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Democratic Services Committee approve the establishment of a Task and Finish Group of the Democratic Services Committee to focus on developing the next phase of Diversity in Democracy for the Council, considering national developments and local priorities.

Reason for report

To approve the creation of a Task and Finish Group in relation to Diversity in Democracy.

Appendices:

Appendix 1- Diversity in Democracy Action Plan 2022

Officer Contacts

Craig Griffiths – Head of Legal and Democratic Services

e-mail: c.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk

Stacy Curran- Democratic Services Manager

Email: s.curran@npt.gov.uk