

MEETING	Democratic Services Committee
DATE	26 October 2017
TITLE OF THE REPORT	Data update (diversity)
PURPOSE	To submit an update to the Committee in accordance with the request at the last meeting of the Committee.
RECOMMENDATION	To receive the Committee's observations
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1. The first meeting of the Democratic Services Committee, after the elections, was held on 11 July 2017 when background data was presented to the Committee members as context to the Committee's role. Lengthy discussions ensued on the day and a request was made for some additional information and data to be presented at the subsequent meeting.
2. The impact of the work of the diversity sub-group was discussed, which had been established and had been very active in the previous council term. While noting that it is very difficult to prove the impact of the group's work when looking at the election results statistics, there was acknowledgment of the developmental work undertaken by them (e.g. videos explaining the role of Councillors and the Council's services, development of awareness raising sessions etc.).
3. The committee members requested information about the numbers who had stood for election in 2012 compared with 2017. An analysis is provided in the following data.

	2012	2017
Women who stood for election	35	39
Unopposed seats	19	21

		Arfon	Dwyfor	Meirion	Total
2012	women who stood for election (by area)	17	9	9	35
	seats (by area)	34	20	21	75
	Unopposed seats (by area)	7	3	9	19
	Unopposed seats as a percentage of all seats (by area)	21%	15%	43%	25%
2017	women who stood for election (by area)	13	14	12	39
	seats (by area)	34	20	21	75
	Unopposed seats (by area)	7	5	9	21
	Unopposed seats as a percentage of all seats (by area)	21%	25%	43%	28%

- It is seen that the number of women who stood in the elections has increased by four between 2012 and 2017.
- By area, the number of women who stood has reduced in the Arfon area, but has increased slightly in the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas.
- A small increase was seen in the number of unopposed seats in the Gwynedd Council elections between 2012 and 2017. For members' information, it is noted that the number of seats is very likely to reduce by the next Local Government elections in 2022 as a result of the Boundary Commission's work.

4. At the last meeting, several of the possible reasons for the fact that the number of women who choose to stand in local government elections remains low. The final report of the Local Government commission by the Fawcett Society (published in July 2017) has looked at a number of different factors in relation to diversity. It is a critical report which notes that the rate of change seems to be particularly slow and that there will be no consistency in equality within local government until 2065.
5. In addition, at the end of the last council term, the Local Government Data Unit undertook a survey of elected members who chose not to stand for re-election in 2017 and those members who were unsuccessful in the election. The purpose of the survey was to seek to ensure a better understanding of the drivers for and barriers to being elected members.
6. The Council has received a report back from the Local Government Data Unit on what was reported by former Gwynedd members. As only a small number of former members responded to the survey, we cannot share the messages from those responses as it would be possible to identify the individuals. However, it should be noted that the responses have been generally positive about the support provided to the members and the spirit of collaboration between members of different groups within Gwynedd Council.
7. An analysis of the main lessons for Wales as a whole is currently being prepared; however, the main messages which have been shared in draft form at present are as follows:
 - The vast majority of members reported a generally positive experience from their role as councillors, describing that they feel that they have made a difference to their communities and appreciated the support and development provided to them by their local authority.
 - Some members stood down due to dissatisfaction or disillusionment, with the majority standing down to retire or due to changes in their personal circumstances.
 - Many members noted considerable time and personal commitment to the role, which was a particular challenge to those who were in employment.
 - The majority of members described some frustration with the role and identified where improvements could be made in the level of support and/or how councils or political groups work.
 - Some members noted particular negative experiences of some aspects of the role.
 - Considerable experience has been lost across Wales in general as most of the people who responded to the survey had served for at least two terms before standing down.

- The survey noted that there is an opportunity to change the age profile of council chambers, which historically have been dominated by retired people over 60 years old.

It is suggested that a further report containing this information is submitted to the next meeting of the committee.

8. The Committee's observations on the above are invited.