

MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE	19 NOVEMBER, 2019
SUBJECT	DIVERSITY SUB-GROUP
PURPOSE	To submit an update on the work of the Diversity sub-group to Committee members and request observations on the draft work programme.
RECOMMENDATION	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note the above information b. Submit any observations on the work programme.
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BACKGROUND

1. The 'Diversity in Democracy' sub-group was specifically established to attempt to create circumstances for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing for election to become a Councillor.
2. The Group has established a 'Terms of Reference' for its work - it can be viewed in **Appendix A**. The Terms of Reference explain the background, purpose and membership.

UPDATE OF THE GROUP'S WORK

3. The sub-group has recommenced work over recent months and is pleased to welcome new members to the group. Progress has been made in three specific areas: raising awareness of unconscious bias, undertaking a pilot event to increase awareness of democracy arrangements among young people, and establishing a further work programme.
4. Unconscious Bias - The report from the Organisational Learning and Development Team notes the success of the "unconscious bias" training, which arose originally as a request from the Democratic Services Committee. Raising greater awareness of the unconscious bias we all have opens the door to enable us to do something about the situation and improve circumstances for everyone.
5. Raising awareness of democracy arrangements among young people - A group of 85 young people from six primary schools in the Dyffryn Nantlle catchment area visited the Council Chamber in July this year. The purpose of the session was to try to raise the children's awareness of the Council's democracy arrangements. They experienced

a discussion in the Chamber and were given an opportunity to question some Councillors on different topics.

6. The visit was a success and the children benefited from the experience. The sub-group has discussed the lessons learnt from that first event and has considered the best way to hold a similar event in future.
7. Work Programme - the group has also discussed the future work programme and many suggestions have been included. See below a table of the main points of the work programme:

YOUNG PEOPLE

Raising awareness of democracy arrangements among young people

Hold and trial one or two other events with young people such as:

- Consider arranging a discussion session with a group of young people on a specific field and use the opportunity to explain how they could influence things (i.e. by means of the democracy arrangements) as they discuss the subject. A suggestion was made to collaborate with officers from the Environment department in order to arrange a discussion on a specific subject (e.g. litter/climate/dog fouling/plastics)
- Contact the Youth Service to discuss events to promote democracy
- Consider proposing an item on events to promote diversity in democracy to a meeting of Gwynedd Governors

DISABLED PEOPLE

Understanding the barriers

- One member of the sub-group wishes to discuss the barriers to becoming a Councillor at the next meeting of the Meirionnydd access group and to report back to the group. By gaining an understanding of these barriers, it will be possible to see what the Council can do to help

THE THREE TARGET GROUPS

Considerations to practical arrangements

- Hold discussions with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales on the impact of the current allowance level to Councillors and the fact that it is not sufficiently high to promote diversity
- Ask the Panel to investigate the impact on benefits as allowances are increased.
- Investigate the work of Welsh Government in terms of employers releasing staff to attend meetings and report back to the sub-group

Further research work

- Investigate the work of Welsh Government to ensure an update on the national mentoring project and report back to the sub-group
- Re-visit research work undertaken by the group on barriers that have been identified by members, and contact Councillors to ask them why they decided to stand in the first place. Use the output of this work as foundation for a further work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

8. Members of the Committee are asked to:
 - a. note the above information
 - b. Submit any observations on the work programme.

**Terms of Reference
Diversity in Democracy
(Sub-group of the Democratic Services Committee)**

1. Project group name: Diversity in Democracy

2. Purpose:

The Council's Democratic Services Committee has recognised for some time that the Membership of Gwynedd Council's Elected Members does not reflect the society it represents. Specifically, there is an inconsistency between the proportion of elected members and the proportion of the population in the following fields:

- Women
- Young People
- Disabled People

In addition, Gwynedd Council's Equality Plan 2016-2020 has identified a specific Objective (Objective 3) which aims to "Create circumstances for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing for election as an elected member". It is likely that this objective will also be prioritised for the 2020-2024 plan.

The Group was originally established to review arrangements when considering the 2017 elections. The purpose of the Group is to try to create the right conditions for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing for election as an elected member.

The original work focused on:

- Identifying existing barriers that prevented individuals from standing for local government elections
- Share information on a wider scale on how to stand and what this entails (a specific section was created on the website to answer questions in a clear and simple manner, and a video was created to explain the role of a Councillor and the work of the Council).
- Post a series of messages via social media to raise the awareness of elections among Gwynedd residents and the need for more people from diverse backgrounds to stand
- Hold a series of open evenings to answer questions from prospective candidates as they consider standing

Furthermore, the group (under the guidance of the Democratic Services Committee) has:

- held a series of training sessions "to raise awareness of unconscious bias" among Elected Members

- piloted arrangements to hold sessions for primary school pupils to get a taste of democracy by visiting the Council Chamber

3. The Group's Objectives:

The Group will continue to contribute to the endeavours to promote greater diversity from diverse backgrounds to stand in Local Government elections. Therefore, to this end, there will be a need to

- Draw up an action plan in an attempt to respond to the three priority fields

4. The Group's Constitution

The Group consists of members from the Democratic Services Committee as follows:

Councillors:

Anne Lloyd Jones

Dewi Owen (Chair of the sub-group)

Cai Larsen

Annwen Daniels

Eryl Jones-Williams

Dewi Wyn Roberts

Mair Rowlands

Officers:

Sion Gwynfryn Williams (or member of the team)

Vera Jones

Sion M Owen

5. Operational arrangements of the Group

- The project Group will be chaired by Councillor Dewi Owen, Chair of the Group
- Group meetings will be held as required, by means of the video conferencing provision
- Group members are given an opportunity to add items for discussion on the agenda before each meeting
- Action points are noted and circulated following each meeting.