

Agenda – Local Government and Housing Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 5

Meeting date: 15 June 2023

Meeting time: 08.45

For further information contact:

Manon George

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddHousing@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting (08.45 – 09.00)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 Diversity in Local Government – Evidence Session 1

(09.00 – 10.00)

(Pages 1 – 28)

Councillor Lis Burnett – Leader, Vale of Glamorgan Council

Councillor Nia Wyn Jeffreys – Deputy Leader, Gwynedd Council

Joseph Lewis – Improvement Officer, WLGA

Paul Egan – Deputy Chief Officer, One Voice Wales

3 Diversity in Local Government – Evidence Session 2

(10.05 – 11.00)

(Pages 29 – 47)

Jess Blair – Director, ERS Cymru

Dr Nia Thomas – Research and Campaigns Officer, ERS Cymru

Dr Stefanie Reher – University of Strathclyde

Break (11.00 – 11.10)

4 Diversity in Local Government – Evidence Session 3

(11.10 – 12.10)

(Pages 48 – 67)

Catherine Fookes – Director, Women’s Equality Network (WEN) Wales

Natasha Davies – Head of Policy, Public Affairs and Research, Chwarae Teg



Chris Dunn – Chief Executive Officer, Diverse Cymru

Professor Uzo Iwobi – Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Race Council
Cymru

Megan Thomas – Policy and Research Officer, Disability Wales

5 Papers to note

(Page 68)

5.1 Letter from the Finance Committee to the Minister for Finance and Local Government – Non-Domestic Rating Bill LCM

(Pages 69 – 70)

5.2 Letter from Minister for Finance and Local Government to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee – Non-Domestic Rating Bill LCM

(Pages 71 – 73)

5.3 Letter from Minister for Finance and Local Government to the Finance Committee – Non-Domestic Rating Bill LCM

(Page 74)

5.4 Letter from Minister for Finance and Local Government – Local Authority Leisure and Library Services

(Page 75)

5.5 Local Authority Leisure and Library Services – Additional information from the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism following the evidence session on 24 May

(Pages 76 – 78)

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

7 Non-Domestic Rating Bill LCM – Consideration of draft report

(Pages 79 – 86)

8 Diversity in Local Government – Consideration of evidence and summary of engagement

(Pages 87 – 97)

Document is Restricted



WLGA Response Local Government and Housing Committee Inquiry Response

To assess progress made to improve diversity in local government since passing the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 and any tangible impact on candidates standing for election.

A review conducted by the WLGA following the local elections suggested that the gender split of serving councillors in Wales is now 64% male, to 36% female.

While this is still somewhat off gender parity, it does indicate a general shift towards achieving more equal representation across both sexes in local government. Positively, two councils in Wales, Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan, have for the first time now reached parity levels of 50%+ female councillors.

Further evidence of this trend can be seen within the number of female cabinet members, which has in nominal terms, risen over 20% from the final year of the last election cycle, to the first year of the current cycle.

The total number of female cabinet members across Wales (71 or 36%) is equivalent to the proportion of female councillors overall.

Conversely, over the same period a slight drop in the proportion of female leaders can also be noted (6 to 4), but with an increase in the number of female deputy leaders (8 to 12).

It should be noted that while local government is making progress in terms of gender representation, the picture for local government across other protected characteristics is less clear. Equality monitoring information for elected members is not evenly collected at local authority level.

It is difficult to evaluate whether any increases or improvements to diversity among candidates and elected councillors relate directly to the implementation of the Local Government and Elections Act (2021) specifically. However as has been noted in previous submissions to the committee, the WLGA has been supportive of the changes introduced through the act.



Number of female councillors and cabinet member

	Councillors	No. of Women Cllrs	% Women Cllrs
Blaenau Gwent	33	10	30.03%
Bridgend	51	14	27.40%
Caerphilly	69	26	37.68%
Cardiff	79	33	41.77%
Carmarthenshire	75	25	33.33%
Ceredigion	38	9	23.68%
Conwy	55	23	41.80%
Denbighshire	48	20	41.66%
Flintshire	67	24	35.80%
Gwynedd	69	24	34.78%
Merthyr	30	8	26.66%
Monmouthshire	46	24	52.17%
Neath Port Talbot	60	23	38.33%
Newport	51	16	31.37%
Pembrokeshire	60	13	21.66%
Powys	68	22	32.35%
RCT	75	35	46.66%
Swansea	75	31	41.33%
Torfaen	40	17	42.50%
Vale	54	27	50.00%
Wrexham	56	15	26.78%
Ynys Mon	34	9	26.47%
Total	1233	448	36.33%

2021-22	New Term
No of Women Cabinet Members	No of Women Cabinet Members
2	2
2	2
2	4
3	5
4	3
3	1
4	4
1	5
1	1
2	4
2	3
4	5
3	3
3	5
2	2
5	3
4	4
2	4
4	4
3	4
2	1
1	2
59	71

Table outlining profile of councillors by sex following 2022 Local Government elections.



To consider the progress in implementing the recommendations in the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's 2019 report on diversity in local government.¹

Recommendation 2: We recommend that the Welsh Government works with the Welsh Local Government Association to identify three local authority areas to trial the use of video communication methods to facilitate participation by remote attendance at council meetings.

The Covid pandemic precipitated a huge shift to remote working and multi-location meetings, however three years after the start of the pandemic, councils across Wales continue to use this approach for meetings and are satisfying the requirements set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021². The speed and extent to which local government has adopted a culture of remote working has been very fast and the same speed of adoption would likely not have been possible without the unique and immediate circumstances created by the pandemic.

While this quick and sudden shift was not without challenges, feedback from councils suggests that these have now largely been resolved. Since the local elections the WLGA, and many local councils, have considered how digital literacy, and remote meeting management are incorporated into councillor inductions, and this will continue to be iteratively improved.

Recommendation 6 We recommend that the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association start work on a positive campaign to increase diversity among candidates standing for local government elections by summer 2019.

Ahead of the local elections in 2022, the WLGA brought together a cross party working group of councillors to make recommendations. This included councils making Diversity Declarations and the WLGA establishing a new "Be a Councillor" website and new councillors guide website. [Be a Councillor. Be the Change – WLGA](#)

Where support has been available through networks such as WEN, the WLGA has promoted this with councils to encourage take-up. Similarly, the WLGA has worked with these networks to encourage greater support to promote diversity.

The WLGA continues to raise awareness of the value of EDI across all aspects of local government, through the development of guidance, training, partnership working, and sector-led support, to encourage greater understanding and diversity.

Recommendation 9: We recommend that the Welsh Government, in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association and the Electoral

¹ [Diversity in local government \(senedd.wales\)](#)

² [21-18-local-government-and-elections-wales-act-2021.pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#)



Commission, urgently addresses deficiencies in guidance for elected representatives, candidates and prospective candidates on what does and does not constitute acceptable behaviour on social media.

Working in partnership with the LGA, NILGA and COSLA, the WLGA has been involved with a programme of work entitled “Civility in Public Life”, which is primarily aimed at:

- articulating good standards for anyone engaging in public and political discourse
- understand the scale and impact of intimidation and abusive behaviour on our membership organisations, and develop recommendations for achieving positive debate and public decision-making on a local level
- to support our members and all democratically elected local representatives in addressing intimidation and abuse, so they deliver the best on behalf of their communities

The WLGA continues to work across the four nations to deliver a coordinated response on this issue, and has coproduced a number of shared handbook to support councillors in how to deal with online abuse and harassment. In addition to this, the WLGA updated its range of councillor handbooks, and also developed a suite of e-learning modules which included modules on Social Media Awareness, these have been used by councils to complement their own member induction programmes.

Through the WLGA, the 22 leaders agreed to adopt a Fair Campaigns Pledge ahead of the 2022 local elections which was adopted and implemented by political group leaders locally. The Fair Campaigns pledges commits candidates to running a fair and respectful election campaign which is based on positive campaigning and merit, rather than personal attacks and smears against individuals.

Feedback from WLGA officer networks suggests that while the pledge represents a positive step forward, the efficacy of this campaign remains unclear, this may be owing to the non-binding nature of the pledge, but also because of candidates needing further guidance on implementing the pledge in practice.

Delivery of the ambitions of the pledge was also made more challenging by the high number of independent candidates at local elections, with pledges being organised through political parties, and that a councillor’s code of conduct is not applicable to candidates who have not yet been elected.

Recommendation 10: We recommend that the Welsh Government and local authorities review the robustness of support mechanisms for members



experiencing online abuse, harassment or bullying and implement changes to strengthen this support.

Prior to the elections, the WLGA's Improvement Team reviewed and updated its councillor handbooks and guides, these included;

- Personal safety for councillors
- Councillors guide to handling intimidation
- Councillors guide to social media
- Social media and online abuse

This review process was co-produced with the LGA with reference to local authority democratic services teams.

The Improvement Team also developed a suite of e-learning modules which included both modules on Social Media Awareness, these have been used by councils to complement their own member induction programmes.

Some councils held seminars for councillors, and invited representatives from the WLGA to discuss and sign-post to national resources, along with representatives from the local police force to discuss local support.

Recommendation 13: We recommend that the Welsh Government encourage local authorities to adopt a consistent approach to reporting on the care allowance claimed by councillors, by reporting this on a collective basis per allowance rather than detailing each allowance claimed by individual members.

In March 2021 the WLGA's council agreed to encourage all councillors to claim any necessary allowances or expenses that they might incur. This included care allowance claimed by councillors.

To explore research and analysis being undertaken by the Welsh Government, partner bodies and others on the diversity of candidates and outcomes following the 2022 local elections.

The Local Government Candidates Survey is a helpful tool in determining a broad picture of where local councils are in terms of candidate diversity, however the low response rate to this survey is a challenge.

Encouraging councils to collect comprehensive equalities monitoring information when councillors are onboarded, and passing this information through to Welsh Government may ensure a more accurate understanding of diversity across local



government. This may be further supported by enactment of Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010.

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

As outlined above, prior to the election all 22 local council leaders agreed to support a Fair Campaigns Pledge ahead of the local elections. This was adopted and implemented by political groups and leaders locally. The Fair Campaigns pledges commits candidates to running a fair and respectful election campaign which is based on positive campaigning and merit, rather than personal attacks and smears against individuals.

Feedback from WLGA officer networks suggests that while the declaration represents a positive step forward, the efficacy of this campaign remains unclear, and candidates would benefit from clearer practical guidance. Delivery of the ambitions of the pledge was also made more challenging by the high number of independent candidates at a local level.

Some councils exploring locally how they can develop a programme of support for female councillors. This will be monitored and considered in the wider context of sector led support. As well as working to ensure a gender balanced executive, the Vale of Glamorgan have also taken proactive steps to engage some of their youngest members as chairs/vice chairs on committees such as scrutiny.

Following the enactment of the Local Government and Elections Act (2021), the WLGA supported local councils in their recruitment of lay persons to their Governance and Audit Committees. It was hoped that new flexibility around remote meetings would enable councils to access a broader range of lay members. However feedback from officers suggests that diversity of lay members remains relatively low, and that many lay members appear on a number of committees across a number of different councils, suggesting that further work is required to ensure all groups across society understand the role they could play in supporting council governance.



Local Government and Housing Committee inquiry into diversity in local government
Response from ERS Cymru
June 2023

We welcome the Local Government and Housing Committee's inquiry into diversity in local government. This is an ongoing area of concern for ERS Cymru. We note that this has been an area considered by the previous Senedd via the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's report into Diversity in Local Government in 2019. We believe that there has been limited progress in terms of diversity in local government since then and look forward to this committee's further consideration of how local government can be much more reflective of the people it represents.

Where we are: Assessing progress and the current data available

There has only been one local government election in Wales since the passing of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act in 2021. It is therefore still early to be making an assessment on the success of this legislation. Nevertheless, we can comment on the diversity of representation after the 2022 local elections and contrast it with figures from the local elections in 2017 to see what progress has been made. This is largely limited to analysis of gender representation, where ERS Cymru worked with others to gather this data using anecdotal methods and assumptions, which are unlikely to be 100% accurate and highlights the need for proper mechanisms to be in place for the collation and publication of data. The gender balance of candidates increased from 29.7% female candidates in 2017 to 33.6% female candidates in 2022. While this shows progress, our estimates indicated that, at this rate, gender parity for council candidates won't be reached until the middle of the century. Of those candidates then elected, we estimated that 36% were female councillors, up from 28% in 2017. Again, while this increase is progress towards gender parity in elected councillors, at current rates it would still take another decade to reach parity.

Arguably, the biggest measurable representation successes seen in 2022 were two councils in Wales, Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan, reaching gender parity for the first time with a 50:50 gender split in elected councillors. However, while progress is clearly being made in some geographic areas, others still fall far behind. For example, Ceredigion has the lowest gender representation in Wales with approximately 18% female councillors and across Wales 10 of the 22 councils have 1/3 or fewer female councillors. Only four of the 22 Welsh councils (18%) have a female leader, indicating a lack of diversity and representation in these leadership posts. Full breakdowns of candidate and councillor gender

representation by council area and political party can be found in Tables 1- 4 at the end of this submission.

The progress seen in both Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan can be attributed to positive action, on a whole council level and party level respectively. Prior to the election, Monmouthshire set a target to reach gender parity, with the then leader working with all other parties to ensure a cross party commitment.¹ This meant all parties sought to ensure much greater numbers of female candidates in the run up to the election and the success of this target demonstrates that this kind of positive action can be really effective. The first by-election in Monmouthshire has now seen the number of women councillors increase again to be the first local authority in Wales with a majority of female councillors.²

One other factor that led to gender parity in these two local authorities was the success of the Labour party in both areas, however this is more pertinent for the Vale of Glamorgan where no formal motion to agree a cross party target had occurred. Overall in Wales, the Labour party had the highest number of female candidates (41%) of all of the larger parties (parties fielding over 250 candidates). In Monmouthshire, following the election there are 21 Welsh Labour councillors within the council's 46 seats and approximately 11 of these Labour seats are held by women (52%). In the Vale of Glamorgan Welsh Labour hold 25 of the 54 seats and approximately 18 of these Labour seats are held by women (72%).

There is a positive correlation between the number of female councillors in a local authority and the number of female cabinet members, meaning that increased representation does tend to go hand in hand with increased ability to influence decision making. One of the driving forces behind diversifying local government, and ensuring that the councillors elected broadly represent the demographics of the populations they serve, is to have better policy outcomes for everyone in those populations. So this link between representation at a council and cabinet level is crucial in realising those policy outcomes.

As we stated in our report Time For Change - The Welsh Local Elections and the Case for STV,³ the number of elected councillors with other protected characteristics such as race, disability and representation from the LGBTQ+ community is likely to be low, although we lack the data to be able to accurately highlight any disparities. In the 2022 report of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform a recommendation was made to place a legislative requirement on a "devolved Welsh Authority to collect and prominently publish anonymised candidate diversity data".⁴ This recommendation is now being taken forward by Welsh Government,⁵ and we advocate for this requirement to apply to local election candidates as well as Senedd election candidates, as we discuss later in this response.

¹ <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2021/06/monmouthshire-first-council-in-wales-to-commit-to-gender-parity/>

² <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/23066889.welsh-conservative-rachel-buckler-wins-devauden-by-election/>

³ <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/the-2022-welsh-local-elections-and-the-case-for-stv/>

⁴ <https://senedd.wales/media/5mta1oyk/cr-ld15130-e.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-senedd-reform-0>

Reflecting on the progress since the 2019 report on diversity in local government

In terms of the progress being made in implementing the recommendations of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's report on diversity in local government we have considered some of these below.

Job sharing (recommendations 3 and 4)

There are examples of job-sharing for cabinet members in local authorities beyond Swansea after the last local elections in 2022. Monmouthshire County Council had its first ever job share between two individuals for the cabinet post of Equalities and Engagement with Cllr Catherine Fookes and Cllr Angela Sandles sharing the role.⁶ This has recently returned to a single cabinet post when Cllr Fookes stepped down to focus on their general election candidacy,⁷ but nevertheless is an example of job-sharing beyond Swansea Council for the past year. Powys County Council also hosts a job-share for the Cabinet Member for Future Generations post between Cllr Susan McNicholas and Cllr Sandra Davies.⁸ These two councils join Swansea Council who first implemented job-sharing in executive positions in 2017 with one job-shared role, increasing to two job-shares in 2018.⁹ After the 2022 local elections Swansea continues to have a job-share in its cabinet with the Community Cabinet post being shared between Cllr Hayley Gwilliam and Cllr Cyril Anderson.¹⁰

A positive campaign to increase diversity (recommendation 6)

We welcome the Democracy in Diversity programme from the WLGA and work undertaken by the working group co-chaired by Mary Sherwood and Cllr Susan Ellsmore in the years between the 2017 and 2022 local elections. The WLGA reported that the diversity of councillors prior to the 2022 local elections indicated that 'councillors are generally male, white and older than the average man or woman on the street', with just 28% of councillors in Wales being women, 11% having a disability and 1.8% being from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.¹¹ Our data suggests that the representation of women in local government has increased eight percentage points after the 2022 local elections to 36%, however we lack the data to measure any changes in representation of people with disabilities or those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

More needs to be done to continue increasing the diversity among candidates standing for local government elections to ensure that by 2027 our elected councillors are truly representative of their communities. Despite positive progress being made, especially with regards to representation of women, we know that this representation is far from being reflective of the wider Welsh community, where according to 2021 census data for Wales

⁶ <https://www.abergavennychronicle.com/news/mcc-sees-first-job-sharing-cabinet-members-570304>

⁷ <https://www.monmouthshirebeacon.co.uk/news/its-been-an-honour-says-outgoing-cabinet-member-615723>

⁸ <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12751/New-Cabinet-announced>

⁹

<https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s90308/Additional%20information%20from%20Councillor%20Mary%20Sherwood%20and%20Councillor%20June%20Burtonshaw%20on%20job-sharing.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/16367/Councils-new-Cabinet-announced>

¹¹ <https://www.wlga.wales/promoting-diversity-among-councillors>

women make up 51.1% of the population, people with disabilities make up 21.6% of the population, and people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds make up 4.7% of the population.¹² Therefore it is easy to see that there is still a considerable gap between the demographics of our councillors and the communities they represent.

Abuse and harassment (recommendation 10)

Sadly, the harassment and abuse of both candidates and councillors continues to be a big issue in Wales. The Electoral Commission found that 40% of candidates in the 2022 Welsh local elections experienced intimidation, with most abuse being verbal or experienced online and from members of the public or anonymous sources.¹³ Despite the WLGA and all 22 council leaders' efforts to call on all councillors and candidates to commit to a fair and respectful election campaign,¹⁴ the level of harassment and abuse experienced by candidates remains alarmingly high.

Mentoring programmes (recommendation 15)

We're pleased to see organisations working together and collaborating on programmes like Equal Power Equal Voice.¹⁵ Mentoring programmes can provide a key route to increasing awareness of positions in public office and build confidence in individuals to stand as candidates.

Citizenship education (recommendation 17)

The new school curriculum for Wales failed to include specific objectives around political education, although democracy and political education arguably play a part in ensuring pupils are 'ethical, informed citizens who understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights' under the four purposes.¹⁶ However this ambiguity means that pupils at different schools are likely to have different learning outcomes with regards to democracy and political education.

Research by the Electoral Commission found that 'while 77% of parents think it's important that children learn the basics about politics, voting and democracy at school, just 22% think the current information their children get on these topics is sufficient'.¹⁷ In England, just 1% of teachers 'feel prepared to teach politics' according to a report by Shout Out UK,¹⁸ with the situation likely to be very similar in Wales. Teacher training to increase confidence in this area is key if we are to have an informed electorate in the next generation.

¹² https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report?compare=W92000004

¹³ <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/media-centre/urgent-action-needed-prevent-abuse-and-intimidation-candidates-elections>

¹⁴ <https://www.wlga.wales/joint-statement-by-the-22-council-leaders-in-wales-fair-and-respectful-election-campaign>

¹⁵ <https://wenwales.org.uk/connect/mentoring/>

¹⁶ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/developing-a-vision-for-curriculum-design/#curriculum-design-and-the-four-purposes>

¹⁷ <https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2022/09/help-young-people-to-understand-the-impact-of-their-vote-and-they-will-use-it/>

¹⁸ https://www.shoutoutuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/REPORT_souk2021_view_v8-1.pdf

The Welsh Government's Democratic Engagement Grant is supporting projects to increase political understanding (some of them pan-Wales).¹⁹ While we are hugely supportive of this, it is not guaranteed that every young person will benefit from the scheme and it should be seen as complementary to good standard citizenship education for every young person rather than a replacement.

National Mock elections (recommendation 18)

We were very pleased to see the Children's Commissioner's Office take this recommendation forward with Project Vote.²⁰ This was run alongside both the 2021 Senedd election and the 2022 local elections in Wales, providing 14 and 15 year olds with the chance to vote in their own mock election.

Access to Elected Office fund (recommendation 19)

We were pleased to see the establishment of an Access to Elected Office fund in Wales to assist individuals with disabilities to run for the Senedd elections in 2021 and the local elections in 2022. This fund intended to level the playing field and provide support for additional impairment related costs that can be a barrier to participation in politics. We also welcome the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution's statement in May that he is planning to 'legislate to ensure that a fund is available for future elections'.²¹

Diversity data (recommendation 21)

To measure progress on diversity we need accurate and reliable data on diversity. Wales, and the wider UK, are severely lacking in proper mechanisms for the collation and publication of diversity data. As we discuss in the final section of our response as part of Senedd Reform, the collection of data for Senedd elections is currently being discussed in relation to legislation, this should also include local elections in Wales.²²

Where improvements can be made

Our response so far has focussed on the limited progress to date in improving diversity in local government and reflecting on both the 2019 report of the previous Senedd and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This section of our response will look at where improvements can be made.

Job share

The increase in uptake of job-sharing in executive positions to more councils across Wales is welcomed, however, there are still many councils with no job-sharing positions in their cabinets. After the 2022 local elections job-sharing accounted for just 1.6% of the 190 cabinet positions (3 job-shares) across the 22 Local Authorities; this has now decreased to

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.wales/funding-for-projects-to-open-up-democracy-to-underrepresented-groups>

²⁰ <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/project-vote-resources-2021-2022/>

²¹ <https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13344#A79708>

²² <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-senedd-reform-0>

1.1% (2 job-shares) after the changes to the Monmouthshire County Council cabinet in May of this year. Clearly there is a long way to go before job-sharing in executive positions across councils in Wales is commonplace and the Welsh Government should look at what support it can provide to further promote job-sharing in these roles.

Recommendation 15 in ERS Cymru's New Voices report advocates for job-sharing to be made a possibility for all politicians across the different levels of government, including local government.²³

Quotas and wider measures to increase diversity

Legislative quotas to improve representation are being actively discussed due to the Welsh Government's plans to legislate on them as part of the Senedd Reform package.²⁴ We very much welcome these developments. However, there has been little discussion of quotas in terms of local government in Wales, where diversity and gender parity are lagging further behind than in the Senedd.

We would like to see the Committee consider whether quotas could be introduced in Welsh local elections to increase the speed at which we reach gender parity. There was discussion on improving the representation of people with protected characteristics within the Senedd's Special Purpose Committee report.²⁵ While the Special Purpose Committee did not extend its recommendation on quotas to protected characteristics other than gender, they did recommend the following:

"There is need for further work to be undertaken within the Senedd, to look in detail at both legislative and non-legislative ways in which greater diversity in the Senedd can be achieved across a wider range of protected characteristics. We anticipate that a relevant committee will determine how this can best be given further consideration".²⁶

We would echo this recommendation and would suggest that it should extend to increasing representation in local government in Wales as well as in the Senedd. We would hope that as part of this inquiry the Local Government and Housing Committee can look in detail at ways in which greater diversity in local government can be achieved across a wider range of protected characteristics.

The Committee should also consider how plans around the publication by political parties of diversity and inclusion strategies, as announced by the First Minister in a written statement in relation to Senedd reform, can be extended to local government too.²⁷ Parties have a key role to play in increasing representation in our local councils and they should face up to their responsibilities on this.

²³ <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/#sub-section-2>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-senedd-reform-0>

²⁵ <https://senedd.wales/media/5mta1oyk/cr-ld15130-e.pdf>

²⁶ <https://senedd.wales/media/5mta1oyk/cr-ld15130-e.pdf>, page 51.

²⁷ <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-senedd-reform-0>

Diversity data

As we have mentioned in this response, the lack of data on diversity is a serious issue in terms of being able to measure progress made and identify specific areas where interventions are needed. While we have gathered some data on candidates and elected representatives, as we have explained, that data is limited to analysis of gender representation, where ERS Cymru worked with others to gather this data using anecdotal methods and assumptions, which are unlikely to be 100% accurate. This highlights the need for proper mechanisms to be in place for the collation and publication of data.

Given the Welsh Government are currently considering legislating on the collection and publication of data on candidates seeking to be elected to the Senedd as part of plans to reform the Senedd,²⁸ we strongly believe that this should be extended to candidates for local elections in Wales.

Access to Elected Office Fund

We know that some groups face particular barriers to standing for elected office and some have extra costs associated with standing. We were pleased to see the Access to Elected Office Fund in place for the 2021 and 2022 elections for disabled candidates and welcome the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution's statement in May that he is planning to 'legislate to ensure that a fund is available for future elections'.²⁹ We would also call for the fund to be widened to include other under-represented groups and assist with costs towards the specific barriers that they face, this could include, but is not limited to, people from the LGBTQ+ community, people from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds (the global majority), people with caring responsibilities, such as childcare, and people on low incomes.

National Mock Elections

We believe that the Children's' Commissioner's Office should continue to run Project Vote,³⁰ and the Committee should seek to assess whether the Commissioner's Office requires support from the Welsh Government in the delivery of further national mock elections. Consideration should be given to the number of schools taking part. As many schools as possible should be supported to do this, to ensure that there is no postcode lottery on who gets a chance to participate.

Moving to the Single Transferable Vote (STV)

While ERS Cymru welcomes the opportunity provided by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for councils to choose to move to the fairer and more representative Single Transferable Vote electoral system, we maintain our position that the change in electoral system should have been applied across the board and not on a voluntary basis, as was done in Scotland.

²⁸ <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-senedd-reform-0>

²⁹ <https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13344#A79708>

³⁰ <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/project-vote-resources-2021-2022/>

Data from the 2022 local elections in Wales highlighted how the current First Past The Post voting system perpetuates a lack of diversity in local government through the dominance of single member wards and continued high levels of uncontested seats. There were 246 wards (32.3%) where only a single gender was standing (i.e., only all male or all female candidates) at the 2022 local elections. Of these 246 wards 83% were in single member wards, and there was a significant gender bias with over 200 wards in Wales estimated as only having male candidates standing contrasted with just 30 estimated as only having female candidates standing.

Of the 74 uncontested seats in the 2022 local elections, over 97% of them were in single member wards. Additionally, these uncontested seats were also gender biased with 77% having a male candidate standing compared with 23% having a female candidate standing.

A move to STV would reduce the number of wards with only a single gender of candidates standing through the introduction of multi-member wards across Wales. Multi-member wards are much more likely to provide a diversity of candidates for voters to pick from. At the last local elections in Wales there were no uncontested seats in wards with member sizes of 3 or above, and only 1% of 2-member wards were uncontested, compared with over 16% of single-member wards. Similarly, the proportion of wards with only a single gender of candidates reduced dramatically as ward size increased, in single-member wards over 47% had a single-gender candidate list, this decreased to just under 16% for two-member wards, and reduced again to 7% for 3 and 4-member wards, and 0% for the two 5-member wards in Wales.

Full details of uncontested seats and single gender wards can be seen in Tables 5 & 6 respectively.

Table 1: Breakdown of estimated male and female candidates by local authority for 2022 Welsh local elections

Council	Estimated male candidates	Estimated female candidates	Unknown	Total number of candidates	Estimated % of female candidates	Estimated number of all male wards	Estimated number of all female wards
Blaenau Gwent	48	21	0	69	30.43	3	0
Bridgend	103	56	0	159	35.22	4	1
Caerphilly	98	51	0	149	34.23	10	3
Cardiff	236	120	2	358	33.52	0	0
Carmarthenshire	124	60	0	184	32.61	15	4
Ceredigion	68	19	0	87	21.84	18	0
Conwy	95	56	0	151	37.09	6	0
Denbighshire	80	40	0	120	33.33	9	1
Flintshire	108	55	1	164	33.54	14	1
Gwynedd	84	41	0	125	32.80	34	10
Merthyr Tydfil	50	22	0	72	30.56	2	0
Monmouthshire	85	70	0	155	45.16	3	1
Neath Port Talbot	87	47	0	134	35.07	4	1
Newport	98	48	0	146	32.88	0	0
Pembrokeshire	96	29	1	126	23.02	36	4
Powys	125	53	1	179	29.61	24	3
Rhondda Cynon Taf	124	81	0	205	39.51	5	1

Swansea	132	77	2	211	36.49	2	0
Torfaen	62	26	0	88	29.55	4	0
Vale of Glamorgan	109	59	0	168	35.12	1	0
Wrexham	103	43	0	146	29.45	18	2
Ynys Mon	68	31	1	100	31.00	4	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>2183</i>	<i>1105</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>3296</i>	<i>33.53</i>	<i>216</i>	<i>32</i>

Table 2: Breakdown of estimated male and female candidates by political party for 2022 Welsh local elections

Party	Estimated male candidates	Estimated female candidates	Unknown	Total	% M	% F	% Ukn
Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Breakthrough Party	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Britain First	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Common Ground	43	25	1	69	62.32%	36.23%	1.45%
Communist Party	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Conservatives	469	197	4	670	70.00%	29.40%	0.60%
Freedom Alliance	2	8	0	10	20.00%	80.00%	0.00%
Green Party	61	53	1	115	53.04%	46.09%	0.87%
Gwlad	7	2	0	9	77.78%	22.22%	0.00%
Heritage Party	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Independents	531	182	0	713	74.47%	25.53%	0.00%
Labour	507	353	0	860	58.95%	41.05%	0.00%
Llantwit First Independents	2	2	0	4	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Liberal Democrats	193	90	1	284	67.96%	31.69%	0.35%
Newport Independents	5	5	0	10	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Plaid Cymru	297	158	0	455	65.27%	34.73%	0.00%
Propel	31	18	0	49	63.27%	36.73%	0.00%
Reform UK	3	0	1	4	75.00%	0.00%	25.00%
Social Democratic Party	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
The Official Independents	1	2	0	3	33.33%	66.67%	0.00%
The Sovereign Party	4	0	0	4	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Trade Union and Socialist Coalition	17	8	0	25	68.00%	32.00%	0.00%
Uplands Party	3	1	0	4	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%
Volt UK	1	0	0	1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Womens' Equality Party	0	1	0	1	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

Table 3: Breakdown of estimated male and female councillors by local authority for 2022 Welsh local elections

Council	Estimated male councillors	Estimated female councillors	Total number of councillors	Estimated % of male councillors	Estimated % of female councillors	Estimated % of female councillors in 2017
Blaenau Gwent	23	10	33	69.7%	30.3%	11.9%
Bridgend	37	14	51	72.5%	27.5%	31.5%
Caerphilly	44	25	69	63.8%	36.2%	26.0%
Cardiff	45	34	79	57.0%	43.0%	32.0%
Carmarthenshire	50	25	75	66.7%	33.3%	31.1%
Ceredigion	31	7	38	81.6%	18.4%	11.9%
Conwy	32	23	55	58.2%	41.8%	25.4%
Denbighshire	28	20	48	58.3%	41.7%	23.4%
Flintshire	43	24	67	64.2%	35.8%	25.7%
Gwynedd	45	24	69	65.2%	34.8%	23.0%
Merthyr Tydfil	22	8	30	73.3%	26.7%	12.1%
Monmouthshire	23	23	46	50.0%	50.0%	34.9%
Neath Port Talbot*	36	22	58	62.1%	37.9%	31.3%
Newport	35	16	51	68.6%	31.4%	32.0%
Pembrokeshire	47	13	60	78.3%	21.7%	13.3%
Powys	46	22	68	67.6%	32.4%	31.5%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	41	34	75	54.7%	45.3%	41.3%
Swansea	43	32	75	57.3%	42.7%	41.7%
Torfaen	23	17	40	57.5%	42.5%	36.4%

Vale of Glamorgan	27	27	54	50.0%	50.0%	36.2%
Wrexham	41	15	56	73.2%	26.8%	19.2%
Ynys Mon	27	8	35	77.1%	22.9%	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>789</i>	<i>443</i>	<i>1232</i>	<i>64.0%</i>	<i>36.0%</i>	<i>28.0%</i>

* The election in the Port Talbot 2-member ward in Neath Port Talbot was delayed due to the death of a candidate leaving 2 post-election vacancies and 1232 councillors elected rather than 1234. These have since been filled with two Labour councillors elected, one female and one male. This brings Neath Port Talbot's totals to 61.6% male councillors and 38.3% female councillors. The overall gender balance across Wales remains unchanged at 64.0% male councillors and 36.0% female councillors.

Table 4: Breakdown of estimated male and female councillors by political party for 2022 Welsh local elections

Party	Estimated male councillors	Estimated female councillors	Total councillors	% male councillors	% female councillors
Common Ground	1	1	2	50.0%	50.0%
Conservatives	79	32	111	71.2%	28.8%
Green Party	7	3	10	70.0%	30.0%
Independent (inc ind groups)	228	81	309	73.8%	26.2%
Labour	293	234	527	55.6%	44.4%
Liberal Democrats	45	24	69	65.2%	34.8%
Plaid Cymru	132	68	200	66.0%	34.0%
Uplands	3	1	4	75.0%	25.0%

<i>Total</i>	789	443	1232	64.0%	36.0%
--------------	-----	-----	------	-------	-------

Table 5: Breakdown of uncontested wards by ward size for 2022 Welsh local elections

Seats Per Ward	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Total Wards	430	210	106	14	2	762
Total uncontested wards	70	2	0	0	0	72
% uncontested wards	16.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%
Total Seats	430	420	318	56	10	1234
Total uncontested seats	70	4	0	0	0	74
% uncontested seats	16.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%

Table 6: Breakdown of single gender wards by ward size for 2022 Welsh local elections

Seats Per Ward	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
-----------------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	--------------

Total wards	430	210	106	14	2	762
Single gender wards	205	33	7	1	0	246
% Single gender wards	47.7%	15.7%	6.6%	7.1%	0.0%	32.3%
Total Seats	430	420	318	56	10	1234
Single gender seats	205	66	21	4	0	296
% single gender seats	47.7%	15.7%	6.6%	7.1%	0.0%	24.0%

Written evidence: Welsh Parliament inquiry into diversity in local government

Professor Elizabeth Evans,
Goldsmiths, University of London
Elizabeth.evans@gold.ac.uk

The below submission is based upon qualitative and quantitative analysis undertaken with Dr Stefanie Reher in relation to disability and political representation in the UK (2018-). We undertook an evaluation of the EnAble Fund on behalf of the UK Government Equalities Office (published in 2021) and have since continued to conduct research in this area.

1) Barriers to elected office for disabled people¹

Our research has identified several barriers faced by disabled people seeking to put themselves forward for elected office, these can broadly be categorised as (1) accessibility; (2) financial resourcing; and (3) ableist culture. We also note that these barriers are further exacerbated when disability intersects with gender, race and class.²

Accessibility: this can be divided into inaccessible buildings and inaccessible materials; many interviewees spoke to us about their experiences of local parties holding meetings in inaccessible venues (e.g. upstairs at a pub), in locations which were not accessible by public transport, or in buildings with no accessible toilets. Moreover, some disabled politicians reported that some local council meetings were held in rooms that were inaccessible for some disabled local councillors. Our interviewees also reported that materials were often not produced in accessible formats or were distributed at the last minute which meant that some people were not able to go through all the paperwork.

Financial resourcing: the sheer financial cost of standing for office was a deterrent for some interviewees. This is unsurprising given the relatively high number of disabled people in the UK who are economically disadvantaged. It also means that being disabled can aggravate inequality in access to politics due socio-economic background, and vice versa. Disabled candidates reported having to pay for the reasonable adjustments (RA) which the local parties stated they could not afford to cover, such as BSL interpreters or transport. The lack of predictability concerning the temporary nature of government funding schemes (e.g. the Access to Elected Office and the EnAble fund) made it difficult to plan ahead. Relatedly, partly due to parties' reliance on volunteers, the availability of RA or assistants at events was also often perceived as unreliable. Some interviewees opted out of meetings and events because they were embarrassed to ask local parties to provide funding for RA. Disabled candidates often had to rely on informal networks, which made them feel disempowered because they were reliant on other people's good will.

¹ Evans, E and Reher, S. 2022. 'Disability and Political Representation: Analysing the Obstacles to Elected Office' *International Political Science Review* 43(5): 698-712;

² Evans, Elizabeth and Stefanie Reher. 2023. 'Gender, Disability and Political Representation: Understanding the Experiences of Disabled Women', *European Journal of Politics and Gender*

Ableist culture: disabled people reported having to adapt themselves to a standard and idealised model of a politician. This was particularly relevant in relation to political campaigning where there is a high degree of pressure regarding ‘presenteeism’ (i.e. the idea that ‘real’ political campaigning is done through door to door canvassing rather over the phone), which excluded those with energy limiting conditions or particular mobility impairments. Interviewees also discussed how political parties were resistant to adapting their ‘one size fits all’ approach to political organising and campaigning. Survey experiments we have conducted to examine public attitudes to disabled candidates have revealed that people are not biased against disabled politicians, and yet disabled politicians report that they have been seen as ‘risky’ candidates or viewed as not being up to the job by parties. Some interviewees were deterred by the ableist culture at Westminster (e.g. the formal and aggressive style of debating).

2) Solutions to addressing the barriers

There are a number of strategies that can be used to help increase the number of elected disabled politicians, including: 1) funding; 2) job-share; 3) remote working; and 4) political parties doing more to be accessible and inclusive.

Putting yourself forward for elected office can be very expensive. It is also the case that disabled people are likely to incur additional costs because of their impairment. As such, additional **funding** should be introduced on a permanent basis to help support disabled people meet these additional costs.

For some disabled people who may have energy limiting conditions or for people who have periods during which they are sick or require rest, the idea of becoming a politician may be an impossible dream. The introduction of **job sharing**, where two people share a position, would make the idea of putting themselves forward for election a more realistic option. Any such arrangement would require a pair of individuals to come to a shared agreement so that they spoke as one, rather than two individuals with differing views; it is also true that anyone who sought out a job-share candidate would likely select to stand with someone with a similar ideological and political leaning. Our interviews with disabled candidates and politicians revealed overwhelming support for the idea of job-sharing.

In light of the changes in working as a result of COVID we have all become more used to **remote working**. Going forward, maintaining some sort of hybrid working practice would make politics more accessible for disabled people, for example through the use of remote voting, and virtual participation in some debates and committee hearings. The changes that were made as a result of COVID offer an opportunity to properly evaluate which aspects of hybrid working actually make for an enhanced deliberative process.

Finally, it is necessary that **political parties** take disabled people seriously and commit to ensuring that they are organising in an accessible and inclusive manner. This includes ensuring that the disabled members groups within each party is given a meaningful role in, for example, helping design inclusivity training sessions for local parties. It also includes that local parties actively anticipate any reasonable adjustments (in line with equalities legislation) so that disabled members aren’t expected to e.g. request accessible venues, which places an additional on disabled people and delays their participation and work.

3) Access to Elected Office Funds

Given the range of financial barriers facing disabled people who might wish to put themselves forward for elected office, establishing funding schemes to provide funding for the additional costs associated with being a disabled candidate is one important way in which to ensure disabled people can participate. Our evaluation of the UK Government's temporary EnAble Fund for elected office³, found that the additional funding was judged to be very important to disabled candidates.

While the survey data gathered from those who had been awarded funding did not allow us to draw a direct causal link between the allocation of funding and the number of disabled people elected, the research revealed:

- 92% felt that the EnAble Fund helped decrease the barriers they faced in the election process.
- 92% believed that the fund was 'extremely important' for increasing the number of disabled people in politics.
- Only 21% of respondents said that they could have "definitely" stood for election without the funding

In 2016, the Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland (AEOFS) launched a pilot project, supporting disabled people standing for selection and as nominated candidates in the 2017 local government elections. The AEOFS, which shared its aims with the Access Fund launched in England and Wales, was administered by Inclusion Scotland. The evaluation of the fund reported that two thirds of those who used it indicated that it "completely" or "mostly" removed the barriers they faced, with one third saying it removed some of them. The Scottish Government have extended the AEOFS and it continues to be in place.

Our forthcoming book⁴ draws on interviews with just over 80 disabled politicians and party activists, nearly all of whom mentioned the importance of having centrally allocated funding schemes to enable disabled people to put themselves forward for elected office. In order for funding schemes to be effective they should be established on a permanent basis and advertised well in advance of elections. It is also important that political parties understand how the funding works and to promote it to their members in order to reach as many people as possible. Similarly, it is important to ensure that disabled people who wish to be elected as Independents are also made aware of the funding schemes.

Funding schemes could also be particularly useful for those from low income backgrounds or those with caring responsibilities, given the gendered and racialised nature of income inequality it is also likely that women in particular would benefit from additional funding schemes.

4) Systemic approaches

There is little evidence from around the world that any countries, regions, or parties are using electoral systems to increase the number of disabled candidates. However, there are a few

³ Evans and Reher. 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barriers-to-elected-office-for-disabled-people/barriers-to-political-representation-disability-and-the-enable-fund#conclusions>

⁴ Evans and Reher. *Disability and Political Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

examples where systems have been used specifically for this purpose. For example, in Scotland the SNP recently adopted a rule whereby the two top places on the eight regional lists should be reserved for a Black and ethnic minority candidate or disabled candidate. Meanwhile, and further afield, several countries, predominantly in post-conflict societies, have reserved seats or quotas for disabled people in parliament, including Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia and Kenya.

Our research with disabled people has revealed that while there are some enthusiastic proponents of 'all-disabled shortlists' most people we have interviewed (N=83) expressed reservations about disabled quotas. Principally this objection was driven by concerns about how this would work in practice and in particular the wide range of different impairment types amongst disabled people – notably the distinction between visible and invisible impairments.

Papur 4/Paper 4
Agenda Item 4



To the Senedd Cymru's Local Government and Housing Committee who is undertaking an inquiry into diversity in local government.

Race Council Cymru (RCC) is delighted to be invited to share our views on the terms of reference. Please see RCC 's contributions in response to the aims of the inquiry for your consideration.

- 1. To assess progress made to improve diversity in local government since passing the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 and any tangible impact on candidates standing for election.**

Since passing the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) there have been several provisions aimed at increasing diversity within councils and enabling greater participation in local democracy. They include:

A duty on principal councils to encourage local people to participate in decision making, and a duty to prepare and publish a public participation strategy, developed in conjunction with communities.

This is set out in section 39 of the 2021 Act and is specifically intended to Increase the capability of local people to have a greater say over decisions that affect their communities and their everyday lives.

Effective public participation relies on there being a range of information available to the public which includes information about the following: the role of the council; how the council is structured; who represents them on the council and what has their contribution been; How decisions are made; How decisions are scrutinised; Key contacts within the council for general and specific issues; Short, Medium and Long term plans; Financial aspects of the Council; Key contact points. More transparency would help encourage new relationships and build trust between citizens and local authorities.

In 2020, the UK parliament commissioned ClearView Research, a Black-led research organisation, to carry out qualitative and quantitative research into Black people's views on whether their human rights are equally protected in the UK. Some findings from the polling were:

Over 60% of Black people in the UK do not believe their health is as equally protected by the NHS compared to white people. Women (78%) are substantially more likely than men (47%) to not believe that their health is equally protected by the NHS compared to white people.

The vast majority (85%) of Black people in the UK are not confident that they would be treated the same as a white person by the police. Black women (91%) are more likely than Black men (77%) not to feel they would be treated the same as a white person by the police.

When asked what actions they think could have a positive impact on how the human rights of Black people are protected, the top three actions selected by Black people were:

- i) More Black leaders in decision-making roles.
- ii) More equal education [opportunities] for Black people; and
- iii) People from outside of the Black community challenging unacceptable violations of Black people's human rights.

Source: CVR Insights, *The Black Community and Human Rights, September 2020* - <https://www.nhsbmenetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Black-Community-Human-Rights-Report.pdf>

In assessing the progress made to improve diversity in local government since passing the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021, it is essential to focus ever greater efforts on ensuring that we hear routinely from a diverse range of witnesses. These efforts should include a focus on ensuring that we hear directly from Black, Asian and minority ethnic people about their experiences in relation to the impact on candidates standing for election. This should include reflections on how to ensure issues of race and racism are tackled through action focussed work and have a regular focus on race equality through any inquiry work.

It is essential to use best endeavours to facilitate the recruitment of Black and minority ethnic staff into senior roles and report annually on progress. In a research briefing published on 30 September 2022, it was noted that three (5%) of the 60 Members of the Welsh Parliament are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the first woman of colour elected since the start of the devolution. Minority ethnic representation in local government is lower than the corresponding population in all countries of the United Kingdom. A 2019 audit by Operation Black Vote found that while councils in some local authorities, especially in London, closely reflected the local ethnic make-up, many others had no ethnic minority councillors at all.

Source: *Research Briefing - Ethnic diversity in politics and public life* - Published Friday, 30 September 2022: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01156/>

2. To consider the progress in implementing the recommendations in the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's 2019 report on diversity in local government.

There has been good progress in implementing the recommendations in the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committees' 2019 report on Diversity in local government however, there is still more that can be done to promote a culture of inclusion such as enacting Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 which makes provision for political parties to collect data on diversity of candidates. The 2011 Measure requires local authorities to conduct a survey of councillors and unsuccessful candidates following each election. The Measure specifies that the questions asked by a local authority as part of the survey may include information relating to gender, sexual orientation, language, race, age, disability, religion or belief, health, education and qualifications, employment and their work as a councillor. As it stands, there is not a duty on councillors or unsuccessful candidates to provide any of the information requested. Currently it is very difficult to measure the diversity of candidates, and to address the situation because the extent of the issue is not known.

There is also a lack of post-election pastoral care and mentoring support from political parties to candidates after losing their seat or failing to be elected. This lack of pastoral care seems to constitute a missed opportunity by the parties. On 'Electoral system and quotas', while some progress has been made in recent years, particularly in parliamentary and Assembly elections with quotas, twinning or all-women shortlists introduced, the limited success at local council level is still a matter of concern.

It would be useful to review the impact of the Access to Elected Office fund in Wales since the pilot as this could provide essential assistance to individuals who wish to stand for office but are prohibited by the financial costs. This would benefit disabled people and those from poorer backgrounds. In addition, there has been some progress in raising political awareness among young people with the advent of schemes like the Equal Power Equal Voice (EPEV) which is a partnership between Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Stonewall Cymru, Disability Wales, and Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team (EYST) which encourages young people to participate in public life through role modelling and lived experience sharing. We are concerned by the evidence we heard in relation to reductions in funding to youth services and the detrimental impact this has had on youth participation.

To encourage public participation in the Local government it is important to consider removal of the barriers for job sharing arrangements within the executive of principal councils. Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, and Powys have already taken the opportunity to use these provisions to increase diversity in their Cabinets.

Figures for local government revealed in Green Park's Local Government Leadership Report 2018, highlighted that in local authorities, levels of ethno-cultural diversity at the most senior levels are dismal. Black, Asian and minority ethnic CEOs represent just 3% of the heads of the UK's unitary authorities, county councils, district councils, metropolitan boroughs and London boroughs. Across the top 20 senior management positions in local government organisations, just 3.7% are held by Black, Asian and minority ethnic leaders, compared to 7% in the FTSE 100. In London, where 40% of

the population is non-white, only two out of 32 boroughs have a Black, Asian and minority ethnic CEO.

Source: <https://www.green-park.co.uk/insights/local-government-leadership-2018/>

3. To explore research and analysis being undertaken by the Welsh Government, partner bodies and others on the diversity of candidates and outcomes following the 2022 local elections.

There have been ambitious efforts undertaken by the Welsh Government, partner bodies and others on the diversity of candidates and outcomes following the 2022 local elections. With a special focus on:

- workforce diversity and inclusion
- inclusive strategies and policies
- collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data
- learning, development and progression
- health and wellbeing

A Diversity in Democracy programme has been agreed by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to ensure that council chambers in Wales are more representative of their communities following local elections in May 2022. WLGA's Council endorsed a series of significant recommendations from a cross-party working group, which included the use of voluntary quotas, local targets, and council declarations to become 'Diverse Councils'. They agreed to:

- Encourage all political parties, through the WLGA Political Groups, to commit to proactive and coordinated activities to improve diversity in local government democracy.
- Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity.

But despite best endeavours and Wales being home to a diverse mix of communities for over 200 years, racism and colonialism remain an ever-present part of Welsh life. And while 'diversity' has now become cool as organisations desperately reach for legitimacy in our multiracial and multicultural nation, there is still much that can be done.

Interaction with multiracial communities is currently treated as a tick box exercise. Too often all we see are disembodied Black, Asian or minority ethnic people in party political broadcasts and photo opportunities because of a desperate anxiety to appear "diverse" and interact with "diverse" populations. This is sadly particularly true about our Senedd which, despite celebrating 20 years of devolution, has never seen a Black, Asian or minority ethnic woman elected to sit in its parliament – despite being situated in one of the most diverse parts of Wales, Butetown, and near Riverside and Grangetown.

Participation is more than a photo opportunity, more than a tick box, it's a long-term institutional change that can't come from replicating the colonial-style engagement Black, Asian or minority ethnic people experience from political parties in Wales.

4. To examine schemes established to promote and enable greater diversity among those standing for election, including the Access to Elected Office Fund.

A key scheme established to promote and enable greater diversity among those standing for election was the delivery of the Access to Elected Office Fund for Wales. It was made available to assist disabled people standing for election in both the May 2021 Senedd and May 2022 local government elections. For the local government elections there were a series of short video clips developed, working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), One Voice Wales (OVW) and councils. These provided the opportunity for people with disabilities to speak about the challenges they face standing for election and working as a councillor, how they can help their communities, and the benefits of the fund. Managed by Disability Wales, the Fund received a total of 21 applications from candidates standing in Senedd, principal council and town and community council elections.

It is therefore promising that six of the individuals in receipt of support were successfully elected, all to community councils; however, an evaluation of the long term effects of the Fund will need to take place soon to inform future arrangements and ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' and is positively impacting disabled people and those from poorer backgrounds with intersecting protected characteristics for e.g. disabled people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds and young carers. There have also been recent schemes established to promote and enable greater diversity among those standing for election, including the Reverse mentoring scheme for the creative arts sector in Wales, where Black, Asian and ethnic minority mentees mentor senior leaders within the arts sector across Wales equipping them with the optics needed to enact real effective D&I changes in Recruitment, Marketing, community outreach etc.

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

Some areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government are around advocacy for pro-Black, Asian and ethnic minority legislation in the Senedd. Undoubtedly, the Senedd might be the jewel of Welsh democracy but to many, including many Black, Asian and ethnic minority people who feel forgotten by devolution, it is a sign of gentrification. We were promised a voice we have seldom received. Other key actions that would aid innovation is setting up grassroots discussion workshops where people can see elected representatives that they can relate to and represent their community.

Another example of innovative best practice is The Innovation in Democracy Programme – established by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) – which supported three local authorities; Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council; Greater Cambridge Partnership; and Test Valley Borough Council to involve residents in local decision-making through piloting citizens' assemblies.

Citizens' assemblies are one method of public participation that has received a lot of interest over the past 18 months. A citizens' assembly brings together people from all walks of life – selected randomly, but to be demographically representative – to consider a public issue in depth over multiple days and meetings. The assembly members hear evidence, question witnesses, and deliberate with one another, before reaching recommendations on what they think should be done.

The programme focuses on supporting local councils to use participatory and deliberative democracy, including citizens' assemblies, to involve residents in decisions that affect their lives.

Through speakers, unconference sessions and facilitated discussions citizens shared what worked well, what the challenges have been, and discussed next steps in this field. It is also important to highlight other exciting projects from around the UK and international experts about their cutting-edge exemplars from across the world.



References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-commission-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2019-to-2023/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2019-to-2023>

<https://www.hrzone.com/talent/acquisition/how-to-solve-the-diversity-crisis-in-local-government-leadership>

<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-diversity-democracy-update>

<https://www.publicsectorexecutive.com/articles/welsh-councils-commit-action-diversity>

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt5801/jtselect/jtrights/559/55905.htm>

<https://www.sigmaxweb.org/publicationsdocuments/41838063.pdf>

<https://involve.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/pioneering-innovation-practice/how-can-councils-engage-residents-tackle-local>

<https://blogs.fcdo.gov.uk/luanaseabra/2014/11/20/the-experience-of-being-black-in-the-uk-and-around-the-world/>



Consultation on Diversity in Local Government by the Local Government and Housing Committee

June 2023

WEN Wales campaigns for change in [six key areas](#) including diverse and equal representation. We strongly believe in democratic leadership that represents the full diversity of the electorate in terms of gender and other protected characteristics, including representation of women who experience intersecting discrimination, such as disabled women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic women and LGBTQ+ women.

At the local government level, we have seen some improvements since the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's inquiry on diversity in local government 2019 and the passing of the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021. But we are still a far cry from a local government that fully reflects the communities it serves.

Overall, [36% of councillors](#) returned by the 2022 elections were women, an increase of 8% from 2017. Results vary greatly across different local authorities. While Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan became the first councils to achieve gender balance, women are still seriously underrepresented in other local authorities, with women's representation being as low as 18% in Ceredigion. There is a scarcity of reliable data on other protected characteristics, including on women who experience intersecting discrimination.

Overall, there were some positive impacts of recent initiatives, including the Wales Local Government Association's (WLGA) [Diversity in Democracy](#) programme. The programme saw councils across Wales adopt diversity declarations and action plans ahead of the 2022 elections, with some like Monmouthshire committing to [a gender parity target](#). The permanent enshrinement of remote working in the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act](#) is another positive step that provides better access for women with caring responsibilities and disabled people. Yet, there is still much work left to do to ensure local authorities are representative of the communities they serve, not only in terms of gender but also for racialised, LGBTQ+ and disabled communities.

In terms of women's representation, results at the last election varied greatly [between different parties](#). Labour was leading the way with 44% of elected councillors being women, followed by the Liberal Democrats (35%), Plaid Cymru (34%), Conservatives (29%), Independents (26%) and the Green Party (25%). This shows that women's representation is highly dependent on the voluntary initiative of individual parties, such as Labour's use of all-women-shortlists. Such initiatives are crucial, and it is concerning that some parties still decide not to use them despite the abysmal underrepresentation of women and overall lack of diversity in their candidates. It clearly demonstrates that voluntary measures alone have failed to deliver diverse and equal representation and will be unable to ensure progress in a robust and long-term manner.

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

Quotas

We welcome the announcement from Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru on gender quotas as part of Senedd reform. Research shows that gender quotas are the [single most effective tool](#) for increasing women's representation, and we strongly encourage their consideration at the

local government level. Globally, [intersectionally embedded quotas](#) are emerging as best practice to ensure diverse representation across different protected characteristics and ultimately the Welsh Government should work towards these as the gold standard. Still, quotas alone are no silver bullet and need to be part of wider toolkit to address the different obstacles women and other underrepresented groups face in politics. Below, we outline several measures and supporting evidence on their impact on increasing diversity in political representation.

Job-sharing

Wider encouragement for job-sharing is imperative for helping more women and other marginalised groups into local politics. [Research by the Women's Equality Network Wales and Electoral Reform Society Cymru](#) reveals that job sharing is a key tool for improving diversity as it can lower barriers for women, disabled candidates, and other underrepresented groups facing barriers to election.

Executive job-sharing has already been successfully used in some council cabinets and encouraging its wider use by a range of elected members, not only women would have a big impact. Politicians with experience in job-sharing or diversity and equality have echoed these points, also suggesting that job-sharing can provide mentoring opportunities that enable candidates from underrepresented groups to progress into senior roles. In addition to job-share arrangements for executive or other senior roles, legislative options for the election of job-sharing candidates should be explored.

For constituents, job-sharing could deliver “two for the price of one” in terms of skills and experience and could enable members to retain better connections to their life outside the Senedd which can be relevant to scrutiny and representative work.

It is important that expectations around job-share working arrangements are communicated clearly across the Council environment. We have encountered reports of both job-sharing parties being expected to regularly attend the same meetings. Without these measures being understood and positively supported in a local authority's culture, there is a risk that people will be discouraged from using what they are fairly entitled to, as has been [previously reported](#) for claiming caring expenses.

Mentoring, coaching and support networks

Creating a pipeline of candidates from underrepresented groups is key to improving diversity in local government. Community and voluntary organisations are important pools of prospective talent.

There are several support and mentoring programmes. The flagship [Equal Power Equal Voice](#) (EPEV) is a 9-month mentoring programme to increase diversity of representation in public and political life in Wales. It is a partnership between the Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Stonewall Cymru, Disability Wales, and Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team (EYST) Wales. The programme is delivered through three primary strands: personalised one-to-one mentoring, training sessions and workshops, and peer-to-peer support. It provides a safe and supportive environment that successfully supports people from underrepresented groups towards realising their aspirations in the public and political spheres, including in local government. In 2022, out of nine mentees that stood for election, five were elected to local government in Wales.

In addition, [Chwarae Teg's LeadHerShip](#) day gives women aged between 16-22 the opportunity to shadow senior leaders in Wales and learn what life is like as a decision maker within Welsh Politics and the world of business. Fabian Women's Network also offers support, including a [mentoring and political education scheme](#), as do some Welsh Labour fora. The Conservatives' [Women2Win](#) scheme also successfully supports women candidates in public office. To attract and support candidates from diverse backgrounds, it is essential to expand and adequately resource schemes for mentoring, coaching & shadowing, both in the third sector and within political parties.

Access to elected office fund

During the 2021 Senedd elections and the 2022 local government elections, the [Access to Elected Office pilot scheme](#) provided support to disabled candidates with the additional impairment related costs that are a barrier to their participation in politics. Following the successful pilot, the Welsh Government is currently [exploring options](#) for expanding the scheme to other underrepresented groups who are facing barriers to elected office.

We know that people who experience intersecting discrimination tend to face more obstacles to elected office, including financial ones. We therefore strongly believe that the fund should be made permanent in legislation and that it should be expanded to other underrepresented groups, including through covering costs associated with a candidate's caring responsibilities for children and adults. Despite making up around 52% of the populations, women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of Welsh politics and we know that caring responsibilities and the associated costs are a major factor in this. Caring responsibilities are also a key-factor in women's socio-economic disadvantage and the resulting [financial barriers to elected office](#), as can be seen from the fact that, between 2017 and 2020, almost half (46%) of single parents (who are mainly women) lived in poverty – twice as high as the overall poverty rate in Wales.

The [Electoral Reform and Administration White Paper](#) proposed a parameter for the Fund to “provide support for candidates from underrepresented groups.” This, in our view, is too limited because it could suggest that there is only a problem as long as these groups are numerically underrepresented in Welsh politics. This is not the case. Caring responsibilities, for instance, may well continue to present a barrier to elected office even when women are no longer underrepresented in politics. Support should be available for the costs for caring responsibilities irrespectively of whether the main beneficiaries of it (women) are underrepresented or not. This is also the case for impairment-related expenses as these costs are needed to address barriers to equal access for disabled people, and many of these may continue to exist even when disabled people are no longer underrepresented.

As the Access to Elected Office Fund is expanded, the Welsh Government should clarify that underrepresentation is only a symptom of inequality and that the need for support candidates with overcoming barriers to elected office may remain even when these groups are numerically no longer underrepresented. To achieve this purpose, we believe that the design of the Fund and the overall Diversity in Democracy work should tie in with wider strategic equality plans, such as the [Gender Equality Action Plan](#), the [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#), the draft [LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#), and the [Locked Out report](#).

Online abuse

Abuse of women and candidates from other underrepresented groups is a key barrier to elected office and with the rising importance of social media, it is increasing. In line with the proposal in the Electoral Reform and Administration White Paper, we agree that robust evidence to understand the magnitude, form, severity and impact of abuse is a crucial step to effectively addressing it. To better understand the nature of abuse of candidates, the survey should also collect information on perpetrators, especially in terms of establishing whether perpetrators are mainly from the general public/electorate, or to what extent it may come from within political parties or competing candidates, as the means available to address these would be very different.

It is paramount that other measures to prevent and mitigate abuse are implemented immediately. Survey results should be seen as a resource to improve and tailor these measures, not as a precursor for introducing them as we need them urgently now.

Support and advice services need to be better signposted to candidates and women and other candidates with protected characteristics would benefit from free optional training on personal safety and online abuse. In addition, we believe that candidates who experience abuse would greatly benefit from access to an independent specialist advice service.

There is additional scope to address candidate abuse through strengthening complaint mechanisms and code of conduct procedures and through encouraging political parties to adopt zero-tolerance policies on harassment and abuse. Elected representatives should be held to the highest standards of behaviour in this regard and set a positive example for the electorate. Parties should also be encouraged to recognise their duty of care towards candidates through adopting measures to prevent abuse and to support candidates who experience abuse.

Overall, the approach to preventing and mitigating candidate abuse should tie in with the principles of the VAWDASV Act 2015 and the accompanying national strategy and should be informed by the experience of expert organisations such as Welsh Women's Aid, Bawso and Glitch UK.

Training

The nature of a local government representative's role justifies the need for mandatory training in a several areas necessary to fulfilling their responsibilities to a high standard. This includes matters relating to standards of conduct and equality and diversity, to ensure that those elected are able to fairly represent their constituency in all its diversity. This is especially important as women and other groups continue to be underrepresented in politics – as long as these groups do not have an equal voice in political decision-making, we need to ensure

that those who have a voice are trained and informed on the realities and experiences of people with different protected characteristics.

We propose that mandatory training should be provided in areas including:

- Code of conduct training
- Equality and diversity training including gender equality, race equality, disability rights, LGBTQ+ training, socio-economic duty and how to be a good ally
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) training and active bystander training

All training must be meaningful and equip councillors with the tools they need to understand, call out and address discrimination, harassment and abuse, and to spot signs of VAWDASV, and not be piecemeal or tokenistic. To ensure training is accessible to all councillors, it should be provided at different times compatible with professional or caring responsibilities.

Diversity data

Lack of reliable candidate diversity data is a barrier itself in challenging the lack of diversity within local government and makes it difficult to monitor progress. There is currently no requirement for parties to collect or publish information about the diversity of candidate, although they may do so on a voluntary basis. At the local government level, there is a requirement on local authorities in Wales to survey candidates within six months of local government elections, which currently includes questions about a candidate's sex, age, caring responsibilities, ethnic group, religion and sexual orientation. The Welsh Government must collate and publish the information within twelve months of a local government election.

In the most recent [Local Government Candidate Survey](#), response rates for different local authorities ranged between 1% and 40%, with an overall response rate of 12%. This makes it difficult to get an accurate picture of diverse representation across Wales. To improve data quality, the Welsh Government should work with local authorities to explore ways to improve response rates, including facilitating the sharing of best practice, and consider setting minimum targets.

Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

The Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform recommended that parties should adopt diversity and inclusion strategies:

“Recommendation 16: We recommend that Senedd reform legislation includes provisions that encourage each political party standing candidates in a Senedd election to prominently publish a diversity and inclusion strategy, setting out how it has sought to facilitate diversity within its candidates, at least six months prior to the scheduled Senedd election.”

We would strongly welcome the publication of a best practice guidance or toolkit, co-produced with relevant equality organisations and experts by experience, to provide political parties with orientation and support on what measures would be most effective as part of their diversity and inclusion strategies. We would envisage this guidance or toolkit to include the following:

- Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to sexism, racism, ablism, and discrimination against people from the LGBTQ+ community;
- Introduce quotas and targets;

- Have due regard to the diversity of their candidates lists representing all protected characteristics, including race/ethnic minority status, disability, age, sexuality and gender identity;
- Make use of All Women shortlists and reserved seats on shortlists for people with other protected characteristics (note that this is compatible with Equality Act for protected characteristics other than sex, as long as not all seats on the shortlist are reserved for a particular protected characteristic);
- Recognise a duty of care towards candidates through adopting measures to prevent abuse and to support candidates who experience abuse;
- Expand and adequately resource schemes for mentoring, coaching & shadowing;
- Ensure information on becoming a candidate is easily accessible and proactively encourage people from a diverse range of backgrounds and communities to apply;
- Promote and adequately resource professional support networks for women and people with other protected characteristics;
- Use anonymised recruitment and diverse selection panels.

While we recognise the importance of robust diversity and inclusion measures at a party-level, we note that there are a substantial number of Independent councillors in Wales. This means that relying on party-level initiatives alone will not adequately increase diversity in all Welsh local authorities and needs to be combined with the other measures outlined above.

Recommendations:

1. Introduce gender quotas for the 2027 local government elections in Wales and explore options for the introduction of intersectionally embedded quotas;
2. Introduce legislation that permits the election of job-sharing candidates in the next local government election;
3. Encourage executive job-sharing in local government to be used by a wide range of elected members, not only women, and ensure job-sharing arrangements are understood and supported within local authorities;
4. Support, expand and adequately resource schemes for mentoring, coaching and shadowing, including the Equal Power Equal Voice mentoring programme;
5. Enshrine the Access to Elected Office Fund in legislation with a commitment to appropriate long-term funding and expand the scheme to other underrepresented groups who are facing barriers to elected office, including through covering costs associated with caring responsibilities;
6. Improve the collection of data on magnitude, form, severity and impact of abuse of local government candidates;
7. Better signpost support and advice services, provide free optional training on personal safety and online abuse and an independent specialist advice service for candidates who experience abuse;
8. Strengthen complaint mechanisms and code of conduct procedures and adopt approaches to preventing and mitigating candidate abuse that align with the principles of the VAWDASV Act 2015 and are informed by specialist support organisations;
9. Introduce mandatory training for elected representatives on:
 - a. The code of conduct
 - b. Equality and diversity, including gender equality, race equality, disability rights, LGBTQ+ training, socio-economic duty and good allyship
 - c. Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) and active bystander training
10. Work with local authorities to improve the collection of candidate diversity data;

11. Publish a best practice guidance or toolkit to inform political parties' diversity and inclusion strategies, co-produced with relevant equality organisations and experts by experience;
12. Ensure that all work on diversity in local government recognises the root causes of underrepresentation by linking in with wider strategic equality plans, such as the Gender Equality Action Plan, the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, the draft LGBTQ+ Action Plan, and the *Locked Out* report.

About the Women's Equality Network (WEN) Wales: Our vision is of a Wales free from gender discrimination where all women and men have equal authority and opportunity to shape society and their own lives. We work with our vibrant coalition of organisational and individual members to transform society. Our work sits under three pillars. We will Connect, Campaign and Champion women so our vision is realised.

WEN Wales would like to thank the Senedd's Local Government and Housing Committee for the opportunity to contribute to their inquiry into diversity in local government.

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

Dr Jessica Laimann, Policy & Public Affairs Manager

jessica@wenwales.org.uk

Chwarae Teg submission to the Local Government and Housing Committee

Diversity in local government

June 2023

Introduction

Chwarae Teg is Wales' leading gender equality charity. We work to secure a fairer Wales where all women achieve and prosper, ensuring that women enjoy economic equality, are fairly represented in all walks of life and are no longer at risk of poverty, violence and exclusion.

We know that representation matters. Having diverse voices in the room means that different issues get discussed and that different perspectives are considered. Nowhere is this more important than in politics and public life, where decisions are taken that affect our day-to-day lives. Despite some improvement, women's representation in local government remains stubbornly low. There is a need to adopt a more well-rounded approach to supporting individuals from underrepresented groups to stand in local government elections.

Key messages

1. Improvements in diversity at the local government level remain stubbornly slow. Whilst the increase of women councillors at the most recent local government elections is welcome, this appears to have been more by accident than by design. The slow pace of improvement emphasises the need to re-examine all of the factors which influence an individual's decision to stand for election and what practical support is needed.
2. Data collection and reporting continues to be a major challenge in respect of diversity in local government. There are no robust data sets that provide an accurate picture of the diversity of those standing and those elected to local government in Wales. While there is a need for the UK Government to enact section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Government must look at what else it can do to ensure we have an accurate picture of the diversity of Wales' councillors.

Detailed Response

- 1. To assess progress made to improve diversity in local government since passing the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and any tangible impact on candidates standing for election.**
 - 1.1. While the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has brought in a number of changes to the way that local authorities are run and the administration of local

elections, it is still too early to see whether the Act has had a tangible impact on the diversity of candidates standing for local election.

- 1.2. Although the proportion of women elected to Wales' local authorities increased at elections in May 2022, it is not clear the extent to which this can be attributed to the 2021 Act.
 - 1.2.1. In May 2022, 36% of councillors elected were women compared to 28% in May 2018's local elections¹.
- 1.3. While the increase in women elected last year is welcome, we are still a long way from achieving gender parity in local government. Only two local authorities out have achieved gender parity – Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan. While both of these areas should be praised and examined for best practice, it's likely that the outcomes in these authorities can be attributed more to local factors and the actions of local political parties, than provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.4. A lack of reliable data makes evaluation of the impact of the 2021 Act on the diversity of candidates incredibly challenging.
 - 1.4.1. While the Welsh Government published the Local Government Candidates Survey: 2022² in March of this year, the response rate for the survey was low and as such does not show a fully-rounded picture of diversity in local government.
 - 1.4.2. Furthermore, as the survey is voluntary, response rates across Wales vary widely, with 40% of candidates in Merthyr Tydfil completing the survey compared to just 1% of candidates in Anglesey.³ This inevitably makes it challenging to have an accurate picture of diversity in local government.
 - 1.4.3. Further to the Local Government Candidates Survey, organisations such as ourselves have sought to compile a list of successful candidates following the May 2022 elections to determine the proportion of women councillors in Wales. This in an imperfect exercise, however, as it has been necessary to assume individual's gender based on their name.
 - 1.4.4. In order to evaluate the success of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 in diversifying local government, there is a need for data to be collected regularly and held centrally in order to have an accurate picture of diversity.
- 1.5. Additionally, while we were aware that Powys had made use of the 2021 Act's provision for job sharing amongst cabinet members⁴, we are unaware of the provisions being used in other local authorities. It would be helpful to have a central database

¹ Chwarae Teg (2023) *State of the Nation: Five Year Review*

² Welsh Government (2023) Local Government Candidates Survey: 2022 Available from: <https://www.gov.wales/local-government-candidates-survey-2022> [Accessed 2 May 2023]

³ Welsh Government (2023) Local Government Candidates Survey: 2022 Available from: <https://www.gov.wales/local-government-candidates-survey-2022> [Accessed 2 May 2023]

⁴ Powys County Council (2022) *New Cabinet announced* Available from: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12751/New-Cabinet-announced> [Accessed 25 May 2023]

where best practice can be shared to further encourage the use of job-share as a way of opening up leadership opportunities in local government, alongside wider work to encourage local government leaders to utilise provisions for job sharing to encourage greater diversity in cabinet.

2. To consider the progress in implementing the recommendations in the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee’s 2019 report on diversity in local government.

- 2.1. While it is clear that some of the Committee’s recommendations from 2019 have been implemented, it is hard to ascertain whether all have been implemented and how successful implementation has been.
- 2.2. For the purposes of evaluating the implementation of the Committee’s previous report, we have grouped relevant recommendations.

Remote attendance and use of technology

- 2.3. Most of the Committee’s recommendations in respect of attendance at formal council meetings and the use of technology were impacted by the Covid pandemic which required a fundamental shift in how local authorities conducted business.
- 2.4. We welcome provisions of the 2021 Act that require remote attendance at formal council meetings to be available to all elected representatives.
- 2.5. While these provisions are vital to ensuring that elected members can attend meetings remotely, there is also a need to address culture within local government to ensure that individuals who would prefer to attend remotely are empowered to make that choice and do not feel that they must attend in person.

Job-sharing

- 2.6. We welcome provisions within the 2021 Act to allow for job-sharing between executive members.
- 2.7. While we are aware of the initial example in Powys⁵, we are unclear the extent to which local authorities are making use of job-sharing as it is not readily listed by local authorities alongside their cabinet information. There is a need for Welsh Government and the WLGA to produce further guidance and support on the practicalities of job-sharing in local authorities to ensure that the provisions are utilised.
- 2.8. The Committee’s recommendations in respect of job-sharing between non-executive members has not been legislated for and we believe this to have been a missed opportunity to encourage more individuals to stand for elections to local government. We have previously called for job-sharing to be available for elected representatives to the Senedd⁶ and we would like to see this applied to Wales’ local authorities.

⁵ Powys County Council (2022) *New Cabinet announced* Available from: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12751/New-Cabinet-announced> [Accessed 25 May 2023]

⁶ Chwarae Teg (2021) *Manifesto for an Equal Wales*

Diversity of candidates

- 2.9. Evaluating the diversity of candidates who stood for election in 2022 is extremely difficult due to the continued unavailability of robust data on who is standing. The lack of any requirement to collect and publish data on the diversity of candidates makes addressing the underrepresentation of many groups within local government a consistent challenge.
- 2.10. While we welcome the Welsh Government's work through the Diversity in Democracy workstream, and the Welsh Local Government Association's "Be a Councillor. Be the Change", campaign, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these initiatives have impacted on the diversity of those standing for election. It would be helpful to have access to a comprehensive evaluation of both the WLGA campaign and broader diversity in democracy workstream.
- 2.11. Whilst Chwarae Teg has not been actively involved in the Access to Elected Office Fund that has assisted disabled candidates to run for elected office, we understand that the scheme has been successful in increasing the number of disabled candidates at the 2022 local elections.
- 2.12. Furthermore, in respect of the establishment of mentoring and leadership programmes to support those from underrepresented group to stand in local government elections, while we are aware of some programmes around entering public life more broadly, we are unclear of specific programmes to support women into local government.
- 2.13. There remains a need to enact section 106 of the Equality Act 2010. While this has not been progressed by the UK Government, it is incumbent on the Welsh Government, especially in the context of upcoming Senedd reform, to explore more fully what options are available to Welsh Ministers to mandate the publishing of diversity data on those standing for election.

Social Media

- 2.14. Abuse directed towards women in public life continues to be a major issue that deters other women from standing for election. This is especially the case for disabled women and women from an ethnic minority background.
 - 2.15. While work has been undertaken in respect of social media by the WLGA and Electoral Commission, many of the issues faced by those standing for election in respect of social media are beyond their remit.
 - 2.16. Work should be undertaken to see if there are more innovative and active ways to shield candidates from the levels of abuse they receive through social media.
- 3. To explore research and analysis being undertaken by the Welsh Government, partner bodies and others on the diversity of candidates and outcomes following the 2022 local elections.**

3.1. Other than work undertaken shortly after the local elections to ascertain the proportion of women elected, we are unaware of any other research or data on the diversity of local councillors.

4. To examine schemes established to promote and enable greater diversity among those standing for election, including the Access to Elected Office Fund.

4.1. Multiple factors influence whether an individual stands for election. It is therefore essential that all schemes and strategies to encourage greater diversity amongst those standing for election address these often overlapping factors.

4.2. Providing mentoring opportunities and developing a greater awareness of the roles of elected representatives are important ways to ensure that women are empowered to make informed decisions about whether they would like to stand for election.

4.3. It is also vital that political parties take action themselves to ensure that they are doing all that they can in order to guarantee that politics is an inclusive place for women. This means adopting policies and procedures to ensure that unacceptable behaviour is called out and acted upon.

4.4. There is a need for political parties in Wales to examine more closely their selection processes and to ensure that they are not inadvertently discriminating against individuals from certain groups, either due to the design or application of selection processes.

4.5. Additionally, financial security continues to be a major factor that influences an individual's decision of whether to run for election or not. There continues to be a gap in provision to support individuals with the costs associated with standing for election.

4.6. The reported success of the Access to Elected Office Fund relates both to the financial support and mentoring. Subsequently, additional work should be completed to determine whether the same model should also be utilised for other underrepresented groups such as women and those from an ethnic minority.

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

5.1. Despite the increase of women elected at the last local elections, we are concerned that much of this was by accident rather than design. Improving representation of underrepresented groups at all levels of government is the responsibility of multiple actors and cannot be achieved by government alone.

5.2. In some areas, such as Monmouthshire, concerted efforts by local parties to encourage and support more women candidates across the county saw it become one of the first authorities in Wales to achieve gender parity.

5.3. Additionally, we are pleased to see the general improvement in the number of women either leading local authorities or holding cabinet positions.

5.4. While we welcome initiatives such as the WLGA's "Be a Councillor. Be the Change" campaign, which raise awareness of what being a councillor entails, we believe that

there is scope to examine whether the role of being a councillor is designed in way that supports greater diversity. Further work should be done to explore whether more fundamental change is needed to ensure that local government is as inclusive as it can be.

5.4.1. Evaluations should explore whether there is a need for term limits, what additional support carers and parents need in order to balance being a councillor alongside caring responsibilities, and whether current remuneration is sufficient.

5.4.2. Available international evidence⁷ also reveals that gender quotas have been a key tool in increasing the representation of women at the local government level and should be seriously explored by Welsh Government.

5.5. In the context of the slow improvement in diversity withing Welsh politics, it essential to explore what additional levers rest with the Welsh Government to support positive action to be used more widely by political parties and political institutions to quicken the pace of change.

For more information please contact:

Natasha Davies
Head of Policy, Public Affairs & Research



Natasha.davies@chwaraeteg.com



07837 284695

Tomos Evans
Policy, Research & Public Affairs Officer



Tomos.Evans@chwaraeteg.com



07823 467466

Who are we?

Our vision is for a fairer Wales where all women can achieve and prosper. Our mission is to inspire, lead and deliver gender equality in Wales.

Chwarae Teg is committed to a Wales where all women are represented, empowered and able to prosper at all levels in the economy and public life regardless of their background or social status.

Chwarae Teg is registered charity. Charity number: 1084466 – FAIRPLAY (Workforce) Ltd.



⁷ UN Women (2021) *Women's Representation in Local Government: A Global Analysis* Available from: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Womens-representation-in-local-government-en.pdf> [Accessed 31 May 2023]

Agenda Item 5

Local Government and Housing Committee

15 June 2023 – papers to note cover sheet

Paper no.	Issue	From	Action point
Paper 7	Legislative Consent: Non-Domestic Rating Bill	Finance Committee	To note
Paper 8	Legislative Consent: Non-Domestic Rating Bill	Welsh Government – Minister for Finance and Local Government	To note
Paper 9	Legislative Consent: Non-Domestic Rating Bill	Welsh Government – Minister for Finance and Local Government	To note
Paper 10	Local Authority Leisure and Library Services	Welsh Government – Minister for Finance and Local Government	To note
Paper 11	Local Authority Leisure and Library Services	Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism	To note

Rebecca Evans MS

Minister for Finance and Local Government

26 May 2023

Dear Rebecca

The Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Non-Domestic Rating Bill

The Finance Committee considered the Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum for the Non-Domestic Rating Bill ('the memorandum') at our meeting on 24 May, alongside a letter issued by the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee ('LJC') on 18 May raising further questions about its content.

We share the concerns expressed by the LJC Committee in relation to the following areas:

The memorandum states, in relation to clause 13 and Part 4 of the Schedule to the Bill, that "the Welsh Government continues to engage with the UK Government" and "further discussions around these specific powers [are] anticipated throughout the passage of the Bill".

We reiterate calls made by the LJC Committee and ask for assurances that, if discussions with the UK Government result in amendments being made to the Bill which provide new delegated powers to the Welsh Ministers, a supplementary legislative consent memorandum will be laid before the Senedd. This would provide sufficient time for Senedd Committees to scrutinise any



Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

 SeneddCyllid@senedd.cymru

 0300 200 6565

Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

 SeneddFinance@senedd.wales

 0300 200 6565

changes made to the Bill and enable our committee to fully understand and consider the financial implications, if any, of such powers being delegated.

Secondly, paragraph 39 of the memorandum notes that clause 15(3)(d) of the Bill “alters the procedure for making regulations from made affirmative to draft affirmative”. As the letter from LJC makes clear, this regulation-making power was delegated to the Welsh Ministers through the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Like LJC, we are concerned that a UK Bill is being used to downgrade a scrutiny procedure for a delegated power which the Senedd itself only approved two years ago.

Given the impact this will have on the ability of Senedd Committees to scrutinise the full impact of these regulations, both financial and otherwise, we reiterate calls asking you to provide a thorough explanation as to why the changes introduced by clauses 15(3)(d) and 15(4) are being made.

In order to inform the Committee’s further consideration of the memorandum before the reporting deadline of 22 June, I would be grateful for a response by 9 June.

I am copying this letter to the Local Government and Housing Committee, the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee, and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Yours sincerely



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair of the Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government



Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/RE/0660/23

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Huw Irranca-Davies MS
Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Welsh Parliament

SeneddLJC@senedd.wales
Private.office@senedd.wales

01 June 2023

Dear Huw,

The Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Non-Domestic Rating Bill

I am writing in response to your letter of 18 May to fully inform the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee's consideration of the Memorandum on the Non-Domestic Rating Bill (the Bill), prior to reporting to the Senedd.

Question 1: At various places in the Memorandum (including paragraphs 4, 6, 7 and 63) you state that the Welsh Government has sought and requested provisions for Wales in the Bill. Can you confirm when collaborative discussions began with the UK Government and when provisions for Wales in the Bill were formally sought.

Discussions with the UK Government in relation to the Bill began in March 2022 and provisions for Wales (with the exception of those relating to the Digitalisation of Business Rates – see response to question 2a) were sought on 20 June 2022. At that stage, discussions were taking place in confidence and it was unclear if and when the Bill would be finalised and introduced.

Question 2: At paragraphs 45 to 47 of the Memorandum you note the delegation of powers in relation to clause 13 and Part 4 of the Schedule. You state that "There was insufficient time prior to the introduction of the Bill to reach firm agreement on the appropriate delegation of powers to Welsh Ministers". You also state that the Welsh Government continues to engage with the UK Government and "further discussions around these specific powers [are] anticipated throughout the passage of the Bill".

- a) Given the commentary we have highlighted in question 1 – that there appears to have been collaborative working on the Bill – please would you provide further clarity as to how and why there was "insufficient time prior to the introduction of the Bill to reach firm agreement on the appropriate delegation of powers to Welsh Ministers".***

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

When the engagement described in response to Question 1 took place, provisions relating to the Digitalisation of Business Rates (DBR) Programme were not part of the Bill content being developed. These provisions were developed during February and March 2023, shortly before introduction of the Bill. On 14 February, I wrote to the relevant Bill Ministers to request details of the provisions being developed and that consideration be given to extending them to Wales. Following a positive response and consideration of the detailed proposals, I formally sought provisions on 17 March and requested further discussion in relation to the relevant delegated powers. I recognised that it might not be possible to conclude those discussions prior to planned introduction of the Bill and a further exchange of letters with the Bill Ministers followed.

b) We note that the Bill is likely to complete its passage through the House of Commons by the end of May, after which it will proceed to consideration by the House of Lords. Should your discussions with the UK Government result in amendments being made to the Bill during Lords' consideration which provide new delegated powers to the Welsh Ministers, please would you confirm that you will lay the required supplementary legislative consent memorandum (containing full details of all relevant changes made to the Bill) in a timely fashion to allow Senedd Committees sufficient time to undertake their scrutiny.

I can confirm that our discussions with the UK Government on this matter concluded during the Bill's passage through the House of Commons. No amendments to the Bill are required as a result of those discussions. It is the Welsh Government's intention to support the Bill provisions extended to Wales in their entirety.

The powers delegated to the Commissioners of HMRC are limited. They do not need to be exercised to enable the legislative framework set out in the Bill to operate, and will only be used where a relevant administrative change to ensure the effective operation of the DBR programme by HMRC is considered necessary. Whilst any secondary legislation made under the delegated powers would alter the requirements placed on NDR ratepayers in Wales, it would also directly affect the functions conferred by the Bill on HMRC.

The Bill requires that the Commissioners of HMRC must consult the Welsh Ministers before making secondary legislation under the delegated powers and to the extent that it makes provision in relation to Wales. This approach will enable the aims of the DBR programme to be delivered and intended benefits realised in Wales. Only HMRC can deliver DBR for Wales, as the programme relies on the sharing and linking with information held by HMRC in relation to non-devolved taxes, as well as NDR.

I will lay a supplementary LCM to clarify the Welsh Government's position on this matter and address any amendments that are made to the Bill, in a timely manner.

Question 3: At paragraph 39 of the Memorandum you note that several provisions in clause 15 of the Bill apply in relation to Wales. In particular, you state that subsection 3(d) "alters the procedure for making regulations from made affirmative to draft affirmative". This regulation-making power, and the made affirmative scrutiny procedure attached to it, was delegated to the Welsh Ministers via the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. No detailed explanation is given as to why

you are using a UK Bill to change (by downgrading) a scrutiny procedure for a delegated power which the Senedd itself only approved two years ago. Please would you provide a thorough explanation as to why the changes introduced by clauses 15(3)(d) and 15(4) are being made.

The relevant regulation-making power allows Welsh Ministers to substitute the effect of the Consumer Prices Index on the setting of the non-domestic rating multiplier. This power has been exercised annually in recent years, to freeze the multiplier, as part of the package of support provided to ratepayers during the pandemic and subsequent economic pressures. As the related policy and funding decisions form part of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget, published in December each year, the timing constraints imposed by the existing procedures on the exercise of this power, including the interaction with the Senedd's consideration of the local government finance report, have proved themselves to present a practical challenge. In some years this has impacted negatively on the time available for Senedd scrutiny of the legislation, when the local government finance reports have been considered relatively soon after publication of the Draft Budget.

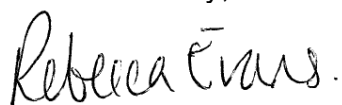
Clause 15(3)(d) removes the existing deadline (before the earlier of 1 March or the Senedd's approval of the local government finance report) for approval of the regulations by the Senedd and ensures that a draft of the regulations is scrutinised by the Senedd before it is made. I do not, therefore, consider that the change of procedure from made affirmative to draft affirmative amounts to a downgrading of scrutiny. If anything, in combination with the removal of unnecessary timing constraints, it will help to ensure that the Senedd has appropriate time for scrutiny of the regulations.

Clause 15(4) removes the existing restriction on when the multiplier can be calculated and confirmed for billing authorities. This will ensure that billing authorities and ratepayers in Wales can be provided with clarity as early as possible and are not disadvantaged compared to those in England due to procedural constraints which do not enhance (and may in some circumstances constrain) scrutiny.

Taken together, these changes will: ensure the Senedd has a consistent opportunity for scrutiny before regulations are made; and reduce the risk of delayed non-domestic rates billing, to the benefit of local authorities and ratepayers in Wales.

I am copying this letter to the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, and to the Local Government and Housing Committee, the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee, and the Finance Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Evans AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/RE/0660/23

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair of the Finance Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN
SeneddFinance@senedd.wales
Private.office@senedd.wales

02 June 2023

Dear Peredur,

The Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Non-Domestic Rating Bill

I am writing in response to your letter of 26 May about the Finance Committee's consideration of the Memorandum on the Non-Domestic Rating Bill (the Bill). I note your comments reflect the questions expressed by the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee in its letter of 18 May. I have since written to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee in answer to those questions. My response was copied to the Finance Committee (among others).

I am copying this letter to the Local Government and Housing Committee, the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee, and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government



Eich cyf/Your ref Public Libraries and Museums Act

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths MS
Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

6 June 2023

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter relating to the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act.

As you are aware, the Act requires local authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' service. However, the Act does not detail or define the nature of a 'comprehensive and efficient' service. Library services vary in nature across Wales, and it is the responsibility of individual local authorities to determine the arrangements for the delivery of their library service, taking into account the need of their local communities. It would not be appropriate for the Welsh Government to constrain the ability of a local authority to deliver a service based on local needs.

Since the introduction of the first framework of Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) in 2002, the Welsh Government has set out our expectations on local authorities in terms of their library provision. These frameworks were refreshed every three years, until the disruption caused by the pandemic. This approach has allowed us to monitor the level of provision, and also to support and encourage the development of new services in libraries.

A more closely defined description of a library service, enshrined in legislation, may impede the ability of local authorities to develop and innovate. For example, we are seeing local libraries developing 'Makerspaces'. It is unlikely that such facilities would have fallen into the definition of a library service even a few years ago. This flexibility is the reason I have not considered linking the policy framework to the legislation.

Yours sincerely,

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

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales
Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 5.5

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth

Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref LGH Cttee Actions - 24/05/23

John Griffiths MS

Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

12 June 2023

Dear John,

Many thanks for your email following my attendance at the Local Government and Housing Committee on Wednesday 23 May. You have asked for further information in three areas:

- the FAW's report on the social value of football in Wales;
- examples of where the Welsh Government has funded co-location of services; and
- any evaluation and/or evidence as to efficiency measures of different models for delivery of leisure and library services.

Social value of football in Wales:

The Football Association of Wales participated in a UEFA study in 2021 aimed at illustrating the benefits of football participation. The UEFA Strategic Return on Investment (SROI) Model was created to provide National Associations with a tool to understand and showcase the true economic and social value of football participation by assessing individuals' spending related to football, a report on the model developed can be accessed here [Microsoft Word - UEFA SROI Final Report- Final 22.4.21\[59\].docx \(knvb.nl\)](#).

As part of this programme the FAW undertook a survey in 2021 ('The Value of Football in Wales') asking individuals to share information on their football participation, annual spend on football and professional club support.

The figures reported from the survey, conducted in autumn 2021, show that football in Wales contributed £263m to the economy of Wales and this will rise to £267m by 2026 ([Football: Wales' grassroots game worth £550m, report says - BBC News](#)). The tool also enables associations to identify and report social and health prevention impact and this showed an £84m and £205m impact respectively in Wales. No report was published in relation to Wales.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Examples of where the Welsh Government has funded co-location of services:

In relation to the co-location of library services funding can be provided from across different areas of Government, particularly Local Government and Finance. Within my portfolio, you will be aware that we fund the Capital Transformation Grants Fund for local libraries, museums and archives services. Funding to support co-location of services has included:

Cardiff:

- **2023-24 £147,000 Amplifying Prevention and Support through Bibliotherapy.** This will provide bibliotherapy resources within local hospitals and patient centres to support patients in order to better manage their own health and wellbeing. Users will be able to access the books 24 hours a day using their library card and return them to either the machine or their local library. The addition of machines within these settings would mean that people who may not currently visit the library could access titles when health is at the forefront of their thinking as an inpatient or could take the title home with them.
- **2022-23 £80,000 Refurbishment of Cardiff Children's Library.** The children's library is located in Cardiff City Centre Hub. Since its refurbishment new child memberships have increased by 9%, event attendance has increased by 8%.

Conwy:

- **2018-19 £300,000 Conwy Cultural Centre.** This project saw the co-location of library and heritage services to improve collections management and access. It is a joint facility for a library, archive service and museum.

Gwynedd:

- **2019-21 £120,000 Neuadd Dwyfor.** Investment has supported providing a single service on a working model that will see the library team and theatre/cinema team support each other putting the user's needs at heart, and to enable the library to be open outside core staffing hours.

Neath Port Talbot

- **£6.5m Neath Town Centre.** Welsh Government funding has supported the redevelopment of a redundant site and has delivered a major leisure, wellbeing, and retail scheme in Neath town centre. The site includes a swimming pool, gym, retail floorspace, childcare and a library. The cost of the project was around £16m, with a £6.5m contribution from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns regeneration programme.

Swansea:

- **2024-2025 £300,000 Central Library @ the City Centre Community Hub.** Relocation of the Central Library as part of city centre regeneration plans for the co-location of library services as part of the wider City Centre Community Hub project for the transfer of a range of local authority services to the former BHS building, including the archive, Contact Centre, and Housing Options. Overall Welsh Government has invested c£5.8m in this c£11m project.

Pembrokeshire:

- **2018-2019 £120,000 Neyland Community Hub.** The library was part of a project to refit Neyland Athletics club into a community hub co-locating council services with library service supported by volunteers.

In addition, Pembrokeshire has also received the following through the Transforming Towns programme:

- **£2,060,688 South Quay Pembroke.** The first phase of this project will see the refurbishment of 5/6 Castle Terrace, the demolition and rebuild of number 6 Castle Terrace, landscape and public realm treatment and the connection of Northgate Street to the new café level and quay. The objective is to deliver a high-quality multi-use building supporting a library, community hub, Henry Tudor visitor centre and café. The Welsh Government has awarded £2,060,688, with a further £1,264,312 approved in principle. Full internal fit-out is anticipated to be complete by mid-March 2025.

Evaluation and/or evidence as to efficiency measures of different models for delivery of leisure and library services:

Models for delivery of leisure and library services vary across local authorities (LAs). It is up to the LA to determine which model best meets the need for their community. We are not aware of any specific evidence as to the efficiency of particular models within Wales. There are some case studies which highlight efficiencies of different service models in England. These include:

Evidence from [A new delivery model for Peterborough City Council's library service | Local Government Association](#) using OpenAccess+ reported 20% reduced costs and 50% increased access.

Libraries Unlimited in Devon is a Public Service Mutual. It achieved £1.5 million savings in its first two years [Case study: Libraries Unlimited \(formerly Devon Library Service\) \(mutualventures.co.uk\)](#)

The following identify some research into different models, but do not specifically comment on efficiency measures:

[Library case studies: different delivery models | Local Government Association](#)
[Libraries shaping the future: good practice toolkit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) section 3 has case studies of types of delivery models.

Yours sincerely,



Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted