

Diverse Councils Declaration

Minutes of Full Council 13 December 2023

RESOLVED: That this Council commits to being a Diverse Council. We agree to:

- A. Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy.
- B. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
- C. Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the next local elections. Including:
 - (i) Appoint Diversity Ambassadors for each political group on the council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
 - (ii) Encourage and enable people from under-represented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing as official candidates.
 - (iii) Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups
 - (iv) Ensure that all members and candidates complete a candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
 - (v) Set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the next local elections
- D. Work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and/or Charter Plus.

- E. Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for councillors by:
 - (i) providing access to counselling services for all councillors having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors.
 - (ii) taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.

- F. Provide flexibility in council business by:
 - (i) regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
 - (ii) encouraging and supporting remote attendance at meetings
 - (iii) agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments.

- G. Ensure that all members feel they are able to take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.

- H. Ensure that the council adopts a parental leave policy setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.

- I. Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.