

## Diversity in Democracy Programme – Action Plan

Requirement	Blaenau Gwent Action	Lead/s	Status
<p><b>Increase engagement with the public and support communication and awareness to potential candidates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to raise awareness of the role and activities of the Council</li> <li>• to provide clarity about how the public can better inform local decision making</li> <li>• building greater community cohesion through a greater presence at community events</li> <li>• creating and building upon community networks</li> </ul>	<p>1. Promote national marketing materials on becoming a Councillor including communication and awareness, training and development, remuneration, safe and flexible work and targeted support on the Council's website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a Councillor website <a href="https://www.beacouncillor.wales/">https://www.beacouncillor.wales/</a></li> <li>• WLGA online Councillors Guide to be developed for Councillors for the 2022 elections.</li> <li>• National Competency framework for elected members is now being developed prior to the 2022</li> <li>• LGA have produced a tool to enable women, parents and carers to become councillors <a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/twenty-first-century-councils">https://www.local.gov.uk/twenty-first-century-councils</a></li> </ul>	Election Team Communications	<b>Complete</b>
	<p>2. Promote national marketing materials on becoming a Councillor and how to vote with local engagement forums (Citizens Panel, BG Youth Network and Youth Forum, 50+ Forum, Democracy Box)</p>	Engagement Team	<b>Complete</b>
	<p>3. Develop Public Participation Strategy Scheme (for compliance with duty under the 2021 Act). Encouraging people to participate in decision making and promoting awareness of how to become a Member, what membership entails, promoting / facilitating processes.</p>	Engagement Team Democratic Team Election Team Communications	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to be undertaken to develop a Participation and Engagement Strategy</li> </ul>
	<p>4. Recommend for Political Groups to identify Diversity Champions.</p>	Group Leaders	<b>Complete</b>
	<p>5. Develop a BG election plan in line with any regional or national approaches</p>	Election Team	<b>Complete</b>
	<p>6. Dissemination and promotion of Welsh Government guidance / materials / educational resources for 16 and 17 year olds regarding Democracy in Wales.</p>	Engagement Team Education	<b>Complete</b>
	<p>7. Publication of Council's Constitution on the Council's website.</p>	Monitoring Officer	<b>Complete</b>
	<p>8. Development of a Constitution guide and inclusion on the website (a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).</p>	Monitoring Officer	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guide is to be included on the Council website</li> </ul>
	<p>9. Improve awareness of opportunities to participate – promote the options available via local groups, the website and various social media platforms.</p>	Communications Democratic Team Engagement Team	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic section of the Council website</li> <li>• Work to be undertaken as part of the Council's Participation and</li> </ul>

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			Engagement Strategy to consider how best to raise awareness of how to participate.
	10. Provide opportunities to engage on specific topics – include forward work programmes on the Council’s Website, promote ways to engage, promote that meetings are available online.	Communications Democratic Team Engagement Team	<p><b>In progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward work programmes included on the Council’s website and advertised in the local press annually</li> <li>• Democratic section of the Council website</li> <li>• Work to be undertaken as part of the Council’s Participation and Engagement Strategy to consider how best to provide opportunities for the public to engage on topics.</li> </ul>
	11. Include on the website and social media platforms the decisions being made by Committees.	Communications Democratic Team Engagement Team	<p><b>In progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting recordings and papers are included on the website.</li> <li>• Work to be undertaken as part of the Council’s Participation and Engagement Strategy to consider how best to inform the public of the decisions being made by Committees.</li> </ul>
	12. Work more closely with the Youth Forum to create more opportunities for young people to feed into decision making and improve the feedback loop to young people who participate	Engagement Team Democratic Team	<p><b>In progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Person represented on People Scrutiny.</li> <li>• Forward work programmes are shared with the Youth Forum</li> <li>• Presiding member has attended the Youth Forum and was involved in the inauguration of the Youth Mayor. Presiding Member meeting with the schools.</li> <li>• Engage Youth Forum in future for them to highlight the areas that they feel they would like to be included</li> </ul>

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			with regards to the forward work programmes.
	13. Respond to the WG Race Equality Action Plan Consultation	Democratic Team Engagement Team	<b>Complete</b>
Provide a <b>comprehensive training and awareness programme</b> available through a variety of routes available for members to support them in their role.	14. Undertake a review of the Member Development Strategy identifying areas and development available for Members.	Democratic Team	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Development Programme has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council</li> <li>• The Member Development Programme and Induction Programmes are linked to forward work programmes.</li> </ul>
	15. Review areas of training and development which can be made available online, core set of training materials which can be used for all Members.	Democratic Team	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National e Learning modules freely available via the NHS learning@wales website</li> <li>• Included as part of induction programme.</li> <li>• Included within the members library.</li> </ul>
	16. Development of the Members Induction Programme	Democratic Team	<b>Complete</b>
	17. Provide the opportunity for mentoring / shadowing for newly Elected Members.	Democratic Team	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring Process has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council.</li> </ul>
	18. Review the Members Competency Framework.	Democratic Team	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competency Framework has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council.</li> </ul>
	19. Undertake Personal Development Reviews for Senior Salary Holders and offer to non SRAs.	Democratic Team	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDR Process has been reviewed and is to be approved at Council.</li> </ul>
	20. Promoting the WLGA's online "Councillor Guide" for the 2022 elections and the suite of National e-learning modules specifically developed for Members and freely available.	Democratic Team	<b>Completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic copies available</li> <li>• Found within Member Library</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included within Induction Programme Handbook</li> </ul>
Promote <b>health and safety</b> with Members including, lone working, providing access to counselling services, safety and wellbeing while performing their role and taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment by members including through social networks.	21. Promote, as part of the Member Induction Programme, that members undertake health and safety training, lone working training, cyber security and social media training.	Democratic Team Health and Safety Communications	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All listed training provided as part of the Induction Programme</li> <li>Online Councillors guide for handling intimidation <a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-handling-intimidation">https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-handling-intimidation</a></li> </ul>
	22. Publish official addresses on council website rather than personal addresses for Members (where requested).	Communications Team	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed following the election with the GO as the main address.</li> </ul>
	23. Include in the Members library the WLGA’s advice and support service to individual Members who receive online abuse.	Democratic Team	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information included in the member’s library as well as a number of other documents.</li> </ul>
	24. Include in the Members library the “Personal Safety of Councillors” which has been developed by Swansea Council and the Welsh Local Government Association.	Democratic Team	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information included in the member’s library as well as a number of other documents.</li> </ul>
Agrees that councils should <b>set targets</b> to be representative of the communities they serve at the next elections	25. Undertake a diversity and inclusion survey with Members which will provide a benchmark for future elections and allow the feedback to be reviewed to support / barriers that may have been experienced by a Member during their term of office.	Elections Team Democratic Team	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A local exit survey can be undertaken for outgoing members.</li> <li>The WLGA undertook an exit survey in 2022, for Blaenau Gwent, 10 members stood down and 1 member completed the survey.</li> <li>There is a role for the political groups to promote diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>Work to promote the role of an elected member will be undertaken throughout the political cycle.</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis will be undertaken to understand the diversity of the community following the release of the Census 2021.</li> </ul>
	26. Share survey feedback with Members.	Elections Team Democratic Team	<b>In progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with the above action.</li> </ul>
Maximise opportunities for Members to work in ways that enable them to achieve a <b>work / life balance</b> which protects their <b>welfare and wellbeing</b> and allows them to manage any caring / dependency relationships.	27. Agree at AGM to have an August recess and for no formal meetings during school holidays. This is done every year.	Members	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council has approved for August recess for a number of years.</li> <li>Council has agreed for meetings to not be scheduled during school holidays unless urgent</li> </ul>
	28. Provide flexibility in council business by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking a review of meeting times each year with each committee at the first meeting of each cycle, including the option to stagger meeting times</li> <li>Encourage members, officers, public and press to attend meetings remotely.</li> <li>Promote job-sharing by executive leaders and other office holders.</li> </ul>	Members Democratic Team Organisational Development Communications	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timing of meeting survey undertaken annually and meetings scheduled as per the survey findings.</li> <li>Hybrid meetings offered</li> <li>Council has approved a multi location meeting policy</li> <li>Information is included within the Constitution.</li> <li>Well-being leaflet for members distributed</li> <li>Well-being meetings put in place for members</li> </ul>
	29. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the remunerations that are available to Members on the Council website and to candidates standing for Election</li> <li>Promote family absence provisions.</li> <li>Promote the IRPW Contribution Towards Costs of Care and Personal Assistance</li> <li>Encourage all Members to claim any necessary allowances or expenses incurred.</li> </ul>	Organisational Development	<b>Complete</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remuneration information is reported to the relevant committees and then published online.</li> <li>Information is provided on the provisions available to members and promoted as part of the Report of the IRPW.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the Welsh Government's and IRPW's commitment to explore Resettlement grants or 'parachute payments' payments for Members who lose their seats at election. <i>Note – this action was previously not supported by the Council however, as this is to be determined by the IRPW it is to remain for information purposes.</i></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information has been included in the Members Well-being leaflet</li> </ul>
	<p>30. Hold a Member awareness raising session, as part of the induction process on members remuneration and allowances</p>		<p><b>Complete</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaken by OD at the orientation day.</li> </ul>