

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE: 28 November 2022

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

DIVERSE COUNCIL DECLARATION – ACTION PLAN

Reason for this Report

1. To consider a draft action plan for the delivery of the Diverse Council declaration approved by Council on 27 January 2022

Background

2. At a special meeting of the Welsh Local Government Association Council in April 2021, a report entitled Diversity in Democracy was considered. This was a culmination of the work of a WLGA cross-party working group which built on the action plans and ambitions of councils and partners. The report included an 'outline' Declaration to:
 - Provide a clear, public commitment to improving diversity;
 - Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all;
 - Consider staggering council meeting times and agreeing recess periods to support councillors with other commitments.
3. A report relating to the Diverse Councils was considered by the Democratic Services Committee at its meeting on 19 July 2021. The Committee report identified that the Council already has the ability to meet some of the proposed requirements of the Welsh Local Government Association draft declaration.
4. Some of the intentions of the Welsh Local Government Association Council in its letter fell within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee and the support provided by the Democratic Services Team.
5. Many of the intentions contained within the letter were not within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee and therefore it would be for Council and the political groups who are hoping to be represented on the Council in the future, to consider how they could support Cardiff to become a Diverse Council.
6. Following initial consideration of the WLGA report the Democratic Services Committee identified some of the individuals, committees and political bodies which may have a role within their scope of responsibility to undertake activities and actions to support any commitment made by Cardiff Council. The Chair of the Democratic Services Committee sent a letter to relevant Council Member and officers seeking support for the Diverse Council Declaration.

7. A Diverse Council Declaration attached at **Appendix A** was approved by Council on 27 January 2022.

Issues

8. The Diverse Council Declaration approved by Council categorised activities into three key areas:
 - a. Broaden Local Democratic Representation
 - b. Support involvement with local decision-making
 - c. Support Councillors to discharge their responsibilities effectively
 - d. Develop a 5-year action plan to delivery our Diverse Council commitment
9. The proposed draft action plan at **Appendix B** has been developed and is scheduled to provide positive outcomes the Local Government Elections in 2027. The plan identifies the progress that has been made since the approval of the Diverse Council Declaration by Council in January. In preparation for future Local Government Elections the action plan is intended to build upon this progress and set an ambitious standard for future years.
10. The action plan will require liaison and engagement with a range of stakeholders including the Welsh Government, the stakeholders and supporting organisations of the Diverse 50/50 campaign and other equalities organisation via the Council's Equalities team
11. The draft action plan is expected to dovetail with the development of the Council's Participation Strategy to reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to support its diverse communities and be seen at the forefront of improving the diversity of Cardiff Council and as an exemplar for the whole of Wales.

Legal Implications

12. In considering this matter, the Council must have regard to its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). This means the Council must give due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, gender reassignment, sex, race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or belief – including lack of belief.
13. The Council also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage ('the Socio-Economic Duty' imposed under section 1 of the Equality Act 2010). In considering this, the Council must take into account the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers (WG42004 A More Equal Wales The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010 (gov.wales) and must be able to demonstrate how it has discharged its duty.
14. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report. Legal advice will be provided, as necessary, in respect of any specific actions to be taken to support the Council's commitment to become a Diverse Council.

Financial Implications

15. There are no direct financial implications from this report. The resources necessary for the delivery of the action plan including any financial provision will be met from the Democratic and Members Services budgets and reserves, with the agreement of the Director of Governance and Legal Services.
16. All costs of the activities and services support are to be monitored and contained within the respective funding sources and budgets, and any new costs will require an identified source of funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. The Democratic Services Committee is recommended to:
 - a. Note the content of the report and appendices.
 - b. identify any suitable additional actions for inclusion in the draft Diverse Council Declaration Action Plan subject to delivery being possible within existing resources.
 - c. recommend the submission of the draft Diverse Council Declaration Action Plan for approval to Council

GP JONES
HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
22 November 2022

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix A - Diverse Council Declaration
Appendix B – Diverse Council – Draft Action plan

Background Papers:

[Diverse Council Report](#) - Democratic Services Committee dated [19 July 2021](#)

[Diverse Council Declaration](#) report to Council dates 27 January 2022