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## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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### **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE SURVEYS**

#### **Reason for this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Democratic Services Committee on the outcome of the Demographic Profile survey, also known as the Diversity survey undertaken following the Election in 2022 and to provide a comparison with a similar survey undertaken in the 2017- 2022 administration prior to the election.

#### **Background**

2. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 1, Chapter 2, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/part/1/chapter/2> requires local authorities to appoint a Democratic Services Committee to oversee the Democratic Services functions of the Council, ensure that the work is adequately resourced and report to the full Council accordingly. The Democratic Services functions include Members' Services, Committee Services and Scrutiny Services, but not Cabinet Support Services.
3. As part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, local authorities are required to conduct a standardised survey of councillors and candidates for election to the office of councillor in their areas. The survey is to include both county and town and community councillors and candidates and asks a prescribed set of questions
4. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in collaboration with Local Authorities agreed that the provision of this survey would be undertaken by the Local Government Data Unit on behalf of Local Authorities in Wales with the response data being provided to each Local Authority and the WLGA. Historically, the responses to this survey have not provided the level of detail required to accurately identify the demographic profile of the Council representation nor any support which should be considered to the serving elected members.
5. To identify the baseline demographics of the Elected Members of Cardiff Council and to determine whether its representation reflected the diversity of the population of Cardiff, a survey was undertaken with Elected Members in July 2021. The outcomes of this survey were reported to the Committee on 24 Jan 2022. The committee was also informed of the intention to repeat the survey following the Local Government Elections later that year. The repeated survey would enable a comparison to be undertaken to determine if the representation reasonably reflected the population of Cardiff.

6. The survey was comprised of a number of questions relating to a range of factors including protected characteristics. The questions mirrored the Council's demographic questionnaire which officers were requested to complete when they then joined the Authority.
7. Following the 2021 Census, some data has been released which has enabled some comparison between the outcomes of the surveys undertaken by Members and the details of the residents of Cardiff.

### **Issues**

8. The surveys were initially circulated via email which contained a link to an online survey portal. Responses could be provided from a Personal Computer or a smartphone. Hard copy surveys were also made available for completion. The surveys were open for approximately a 3-month period with various channels being used to encourage completion of the survey.
9. In 2021, the 75 Elected Members of the Council were invited to complete the survey and 66 responses (85%) were received. In 2022 a total 59 (74.7%) Elected Members completed the Diversity survey.
10. Whilst the level of responses was high these totals were lower than anticipated. The factors preventing a higher level of responses to the survey may include: the timing of the survey, the number of surveys that Elected Members were being requested to undertake, the similarity of the survey to previous surveys, the use of technology or other factors which prevented a significant number of members not responding to the survey needs to be understood. This will allow a higher level of Elected Members to be encouraged to respond to subsequent surveys.

### Key Findings

11. The full details of the Demographic Profile surveys and the relevant data from the 2021 census is shown at **Appendix A**. The following are the key findings from the surveys:
  - a. Gender  
There was an increase of 10% in female respondents from 25 (38%) to 28 (48%) which if this was reflected by the total of Elected Members would indicate that the representation of female was only 3% less than the total number of females identified in Cardiff by the 2021 Census.
  - b. Age  
The current administration has seen a reduction of 10% of Elected Members over 65 from a total of 21 or 32% in 2021 to 13 (22%) in 2022.
  - c. Marital Status

More than half of Elected Members in the current administration (32 or 58%) are married which is a reduction of 6% in the previous one (42 or 64%).

There was a higher level of Members in this administration who declared that they are:

- co-habiting (8 or 14%) or living together with their partner compared to Elected Members in previous administration.
- either single (10 or 17%) or separated or divorced (5 or 9%) compared to those in the previous administration.

d. Ethnic Group

More than three quarters of Elected Members who completed the survey (79% in 2017 and 78% in 2022) are mainly from a White British background which reasonably reflects the census data.

The proportion of Elected Members in 2022 (16%) from a minority background is lower when compared to the current proportion of BAME population (21%) who live in Cardiff.

e. Religion

The survey identified an increase from 44% in 2017 to 48% in 2022 in the number of Elected Members who did not regard themselves as belonging to any particular religion.

Of those Elected Members who identified themselves with a particular faith, the largest number and proportion consider themselves to have Christian beliefs.

A much lower proportion of Elected Members confirmed that they are Muslim (6 and 7%), with Hindu, Sikh and other faiths (2%) with Jewish representation increasing in 2022 to 2%.

f. Disability

The majority of Elected Members (83% in 2017 and 2022) confirmed that they do not have a disability. This is higher than the census data which indicated that 74.4% of Cardiff residents consider themselves “Not disabled under the Equality Act with no long term physical or mental health conditions.”

A much lower proportion (17%) of Members indicated that they have some form of disability.

g. Sexual Orientation

The majority of Members in the current (86%) and previous administrations (82%) confirmed that they are ‘Heterosexual or straight’.

In both periods, around 10% indicated that they are ‘Bisexual’.

A much lower proportion (<3%) stated that they were ‘Gay’, and those (1) in each period who ‘Prefer not to Say’.

h. Employment

A substantial proportion of Elected Members are either working full time or part-time. In current administration two thirds (66%) are working, with as many as (42%) working full time and nearly a quarter (24%) working part time.

The survey identified that there had been a reduction of 9% of Elected Members who considered themselves as “Wholly retired from work” from 23% in 2017 to 14% during this current administration.

i. Housing Tenure

The vast majority (84%) of Elected Members in the current and previous administration own the house they live in.

No less than half (50% in 2017 and 54% in 2022) have a mortgage while around a third (34% in 2017 and 32% in 2022) confirm that their dwellings are “Owned outright”.

A much lower proportion (8% in 2017 compared to 5% in 2022) indicated that they live in rented accommodation.

j. Children at Home

The results above show that around two thirds of Elected Members in the previous (68%) and current (64%) administration do not have children living at home.

A smaller proportion of Elected Members (< 20%) during both administrations have young children under 16 living at home.

k. Caring Responsibilities

In the previous administration as many as a third (33%) had caring responsibilities but this had reduced to 19% in the current administration who are taking on this role. This number is still considered a fairly substantial proportion of the total.

l. Welshness

The majority of Elected Members in the current and previous administration consider themselves as Welsh.

m. Welsh Language

The majority of Members cited English as their first language (86% in 2017 and 81% in 2022).

In this current administration there is a higher number and proportion of Elected Members whose first language is Welsh (10%) and other languages (9%)

n. Welsh Language skills

There are more Elected Members in this current administration (46%) who have degree of Welsh language skills (basic to fluent skills).

The total proportion of Elected Members who indicated that they are Welsh learners is lower in this current administration (22%) compared to the previous (30%) one.

The number of Members not able to speak Welsh has reduced by 3% from 35% in the previous administration to 32% in the current one.

12. Given the outcomes of the surveys shown above and the comparative data listed in **Appendix A**, the Committee is requested to identify any concerns or actions that can be undertaken within the remit of the Committee to address or improve future outcomes.

### Future Surveys

13. With the targeted nature of these Demographic Profile surveys, it is unlikely that a similar one will be undertaken during this administration. Any changes to the demographics would be identified in other Elected Member surveys all of which would include a diversity section.
14. Other Elected Members surveys have been undertaken with the content comprising elements to meet the requirements of the Democratic Services Committee and Standards and Ethics Committee in a single survey. Many of the questions in these surveys were a virtual duplicate of the questions asked previously.
15. The surveys were also undertaken on an Annual or Bi-annual basis which, whilst providing some usual information did not always achieve any noticeable difference in the outcomes. The provision of the surveys and the time taken to collect the responses requires a high level of resources to administer and assess. This also creates some confusion and survey overload for Elected Members.
16. The Standards and Ethics Committee has requested a review of the questions of future surveys within their remit and it is proposed that the questions relating to Democratic Services Committee also be reviewed.
17. It is proposed that a survey to support the remits of both the Democratic Services Committee and the Standards and Ethics Committee be developed for delivery early in 2024.

### **Financial Implications**

18. Any costs from Democratic Services activities and services support are to be monitored and contained within the existing Democratic Services funding sources and budgets.

### **Legal Implications**

19. Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 provides for the strengthening of local democracy and Chapter 1 of that Part concerns the promoting and supporting of membership of local authorities. Sections 1 to 3 make provision for a survey of councillors and candidates for election as councillors ('the Local Election Survey'). The questions and form of the survey are prescribed in regulations and the Welsh Government has issued statutory guidance for Councils on carrying out the surveys.

The statutory guidance notes that ‘the rationale behind a survey is that it would reveal the characteristics of those standing for election and those who get elected to local government at the normal elections (not by-elections). In order to allow for changes in the profile of candidates and councillors to be tracked over time, the survey must be repeated after each ordinary election (section 1 of the Measure). The purpose of the survey is to ascertain the effectiveness of policies aimed at widening participation in local government over time’. The statutory guidance also notes that individual authorities may arrange for the Local Government Data Unit to carry out the Local Election Survey on behalf of all 22 local authorities.

20. As noted in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this report, the 2022 survey which is the subject of this report is a separate survey, carried out voluntarily by the Council, over and above the arrangements made for the statutory Local Election Survey.
21. In considering this matter, the Democratic Services Committee should have regard to the statutory guidance on the exercise of its functions.
22. There are no other direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

23. The Democratic Services Committee is requested to:
  - a. Note the information set out in the report and Appendix A.
  - b. identify any concerns or actions that can be undertaken within the remit of the Committee to address or improve future outcomes.
  - c. Approve that a review of the questions of future surveys within the remit of the Democratic Services Committee be undertaken.
  - d. Approve that a survey to support the remits of both the Democratic Services Committee and the Standards and Ethics Committee be developed for delivery early in 2024.

**GARY JONES**  
**HEAD of DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**  
31 Jan 2023

Appendix A: Demographic Profile Survey – Comparative Data 2017 -2022

Background Papers:

[Activities and Service Support](#) report to Democratic Services Committee dated 24 Jan 2022.

Welsh Government Statutory Guidance, ‘The Local Election Survey’, January 2017  
[Microsoft Word - MA\(L\)MD 5370 16 Statutory Guidance Doc 3.doc \(gov.wales\)](#)

Welsh Government, Guidance for Principal Councils, Consultation draft: [Guidance for principal councils | GOV.WALES](#)