

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL - DRAFT DIVERSITY PLEDGE

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council recognises that Diversity within Local Government creates an inclusive environment, accepting of every individual's differences, enabling all Councillors to achieve their full potential and as a result, allowing Council services to reach their fullest potential for the benefit of its residents. As a Council we therefore commit to being a Diverse Council.

We agree to

- Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy through the work, policies and services we provide.
- Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct as reflected in the Members Memorandum of Understanding
- Encourage the continuation of the 'Member Equalities Champion' role within the Leaders Cabinet.
- Encourage representation from under-represented groups in high profile, high influence leadership roles within the Council whenever possible.
- Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the 2022 local elections, which shall include:
 - a) The appointment of Diversity Champions for each political group on the council to work with each other and the local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups.
 - b) Encourage and enable people from underrepresented 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
 - c) Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups, including work with the Council's Community Development Officer and wider team, to promote the role of a Councillor with the 3rd sector and voluntary groups within the County Borough.
 - d) The updating of the Council website to ensure that it displays relevant information, including details surrounding remuneration and support provisions available to assist any future candidate in standing for election.
 - e) The taking forward of a Council video promoting the role of a Councillor and providing information surrounding support available to Elected Members
 - f) Promotion of the role of a Councillor at Council Job and Career Fairs.
 - g) A commitment to ensuring that all members and candidates complete the Welsh Government candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
 - h) To take forward improved equality monitoring of Members

- i) Working with Diversity Champions to encourage each political group to set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the 2022 local elections
 - j) The development and promotion of new ways of working for members, including the provision of hybrid meeting opportunities and eLearning platforms which will assist and encourage all candidates and those from underrepresented groups to stand for office.
- Continue working towards the standards for member support and development set out in the *Wales Charter for Member Support and Development*.
- Continue to demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for Councillors by:
 - a) providing access to counselling services for all councillors through the Councils Occupational Health Service and Cari Wellbeing Service;
 - b) Promoting the general open-door policy for Members to contact the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer for any concerns
 - c) having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors and ensuring that all Members are aware of the safety provisions in place for Members through the Council Business Unit in partnership with the Community Safety Partnership and South Wales Police;
 - d) taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment by members including such harassment through social networks, and to assist Members with the production of infographics to illustrate acceptable behaviour and flyers to provide to constituents advising them of how they can contact Members going forward.
 - e) Providing training and learning opportunities to support Members in undertaking their role.
 - f) Surveying Members annually on the support arrangements available to allow the Council to review and address any improvements that could be taken forward to further support Members in their role.

To continue to provide flexibility with the undertaking of Council Business by

- Continuing the 'Annual Survey of Members' to review the commencement time of Council Meetings, which is reported to the Annual General Meeting.
- Continuing to promote and support the hybrid meeting arrangements taken forward by the Council to allow Members and Officers flexibility in attending meetings physically at Council Offices or through the virtual meeting platform.
- Continuing the agreed practice of providing recess periods during school holidays to support councillors with caring or work commitments.
- Promoting the welsh language provision available to all Members at Council meetings
- Sufficient provision of ICT equipment and support to allow a Member to undertake their role effectively.
- Encourage all members 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.

- Encourage Members to discuss reasonable adjustments to assist them in undertaking their role.
- Encourage the take up of provisions available to Members in respect of broadband allowances and mobile phone provision to assist Members in undertaking their role.

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