



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2022

FAIR & RESPECTFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At the Council meeting held on the [9th February 2022](#) Members agreed to delegate responsibility for confirming the contents of the Fair & Respectful Election Campaign Pledge to the Democratic Services Committee.
- 1.2 Council made a commitment to support the Fair and Respectful Election Campaign Pledge which will form an integral part of the Council's Election material for successful candidates.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
 - (i) Members confirm the wording of an RCT specific Fair & Respectful Election Campaign Pledge; and
 - (ii) The Fair & Respectful Election Campaign pledge forms an integral part of the material provided to successfully nominated candidates and is subsequently promoted by the Council throughout the 2022 election period.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Council meeting, Members endorsed and adopted the Member's Memorandum of Understanding, developed by the Democratic Services Committee, which will support the ambitions of the Council to promote diversity in democracy, promote high standards of behaviour and mutual respect

between Members and play an integral part of the Council's 'Become a Councillor' activities.

- 3.2 Council also agreed to delegate responsibility to the Democratic Services Committee to draw up a pledge which will be supported by Full Council to conduct a Fair and Respectful Election Campaign in the 2022 local elections.

4. FAIR & RESPECTFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGN PLEDGE

- 4.1 At a meeting of the WLGA Executive Board, held on Friday 28th January, the 22 Welsh Council Leaders agreed to make a joint statement calling on all Councillors and candidates at May's local elections to commit to a fair and respectful election campaign. A copy of this statement is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2 This statement of principle, supported by all political groups, seeks to build upon the positive work being undertaken under the umbrella of the 'diversity and democracy work' and would complement the principles outlined in the proposed MOU.
- 4.3 Members of this Council have made a commitment to support such a statement, which would seek to ensure, as far as is possible, all candidates participate in a fair election campaign, which is based upon a positive approach to campaigning, rather than personal attacks upon individuals.
- 4.4 Members agreed to delegate responsibility for confirming the contents of such a commitment, which best suit the circumstances and personal commitments of this Council's members, to the Democratic Services Committee. It was also proposed that an invitation would be extended to Group Leaders, or their nominated representatives, to attend and contribute to the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The work of the Democratic Services Committee Diversity working group looks to improve the equality and diversity across the County Borough and within the local democracy setting. The more representative of society and diverse our Councillors are the better understanding they will have of the needs of the local community and therefore are better equipped at carrying out their duties and responsibilities

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Encouraging diversity within democracy includes promotion of all languages. The Council has positively promoted and supported bilingual engagement at Council meetings and provision of Committee materials.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Council – 9th February 2022

7.2 Democratic Services Committee – 3rd March 2022 (in consultation with Group Leaders or their representatives)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 None

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 outlines a number of duties placed on Local Authorities in respect of the diversity agenda.

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The work of a Councillor is fundamental to the Council's Corporate plan, as Councillors are the mouthpiece for the communities that they serve.

10.2 Ensuring that there are greater opportunities for a more diverse democracy across RCT links to the Wellbeing of Future Generations goals of a more equal Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Trying to achieve a diverse culture is challenging and the Democratic Services Committee working group have, in a short period of time, already identified potential barriers that may dissuade members of the public to stand as a candidate for election.

11.2 As a Council we need to ensure that any perceived barriers are eradicated and instead celebrate and promote the rewarding experiences of becoming a Councillor.

11.3 Ensuring Members have a clear understanding of their roles and behaviour in and outside of the Council Chamber is paramount to ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment for all.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES