

John Griffiths AM,
Chair of Communities, Equality and
Local Government Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
CARDIFF, CF99 1NA

Dear Chair,

Consultation on diversity in local government

Following your letter requesting evidence regarding the above consultation, please note the information regarding Ceredigion, below. We have circulated the survey online among all our Councillors and I trust they will respond individually. In this respect, you held a Focus Group in Ceredigion on 19 July, 2018 to gather the opinion of a representation of the Elected Members; 3 Members of Ceredigion County Council attended this event along with Members from Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

Equalities Data for the Elected Members of Ceredigion County Council

- 42 Elected Members.
- 5 women and 37 men.
- 3 women sit on the Council's Cabinet, including the Leader.
- 37 Members speak Welsh fluently – 3 are learning Welsh – and they have the opportunity to speak Welsh or English in the Chamber according to their preferred language.
- None of the Councillors have stated that they have a disability that hinders their ability to fulfil day-to-day activities.
- There is no Councillor from any other ethnic background. This also reflects the demographic situation in Ceredigion – in the 2011 Census, 97.7% of the population was white/British.
- 31 of the elected members are over 55 years old.
- In the last local election 24 women stood as candidates – only 5 were elected.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Cewch ateb Cymraeg i bob gohebiaeth Gymraeg ac ateb Saesneg i bob gohebiaeth Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and correspondence in English will be answered in English. Corresponding in Welsh will not involve any delay.

Some obstacles to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates

- Young people have noted that the salary of an Elected Member is low therefore one must hold another job to support the pay.
- To fulfil the work of an Elected Member one must work part-time or share a job – these jobs are not easy to find.
- Some employers refuse to release their staff to allow them to carry out their duties as Councillors.
- Being a Councillor is sometimes considered to be a negative, career-wise.
- A Councillor's salary is based on 3 days' work a week, but this is not realistic. Attending every committee meeting, without mentioning work in the constituency, takes more than 3 days.
- Women in particular have noted that it's difficult to work as a Councillor and fulfil any care responsibilities (caring for young children, children after school hours or for elderly parents). Ceredigion County Council offers to reimburse care costs however, as yet, no councillor has taken advantage of this offer.

Good practice that could help to increase diversity in local government

- Ceredigion County Council offers a comprehensive training programme to Councillors.
- The Council has agreed not to disclose how much a Councillor, individually, has claimed to reimburse their care costs – the Council will only disclose the total for the Councillors as a whole.
- Meeting times are reviewed twice during each administration term – the vast majority have stated that the morning is the most convenient time for meetings. In a rural area such as Ceredigion, the Councillors have a lot of demands in the evenings. In this regard, the Members attend local schools' Governing Body meetings and town and community council meetings in their role as Local Member.

I hope the information above will be of use to your inquiry. If you would like to receive more information please do not hesitate to contact.

Yours sincerely,

