

DLG 10

Ymchwiliad i amrywiaeth ym maes llywodraeth leol

Inquiry into diversity in local government

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Sir Powys

Response from: Powys County Council

1. To understand the importance of diversity among local councillors, including the effect on public engagement, debate and decision making.

- Politics concentrates on minorities rather than on majorities e.g. white working class people.
- How do politicians represent the majority as the reputation of parties is not enhanced as politics does not deliver for majorities.
- The Chamber is currently very middle class, self employed. Working classes are not represented.

2. To understand key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections.

- There is a responsibility for political parties to select candidates from more diverse lists.
- Difficult in rural communities to get people to stand for roles in communities e.g. village hall committees, community councils.
- People are wrapped up in their own lives and not interested in other things.
- People do not get involved / associate themselves with their own communities and only some people get involved.
- Little support provided to community councils.
- Issue for Powys geographically e.g. evening meetings may be easier in other smaller geographical counties rather than in larger geographical areas such as Powys.
- Employment Rights Act 1996 – Paragraph 4 effectively limits the amount of time which employers may permit an employee to undertake duties as a councillor. Councillors in Powys have cited instances where their employer will only allow time to attend Full Council meetings and the councillor has to take annual leave to attend committee meetings or training sessions.
- Additional facilities provided by the Council such as a crèche facilities to encourage young mothers or fathers to become councillors.
- Travel time to meetings particularly in large rural areas, and a need for a greater use of technology.

3. To explore areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government.

- Webcasting of meetings may make the role of councillor more attractive in terms of the types of subjects discussed at meetings etc.

4. To explore the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers.