

“Local Councillors should reflect the views of the communities and its people, if all of them are white men I would find it challenging to believe the importance issues of gender equality (for example) are given due regard.” WEN Wales member

1. About the Women's Equality Network Wales:

- 1.1 WEN Wales is a representative women's network¹ and human rights organisation working to influence policy-making and empower women to achieve equal status in corporate and civil life. Our charitable objectives are to promote equality and human rights with specific reference to women and gender equality in Wales.
- 1.2 WEN Wales surveyed our members on the Committee's terms of reference. Of the 53 members whose feedback informs this response, 12% have run for local council and been elected; 15% have run for local council and been not elected; 46% have never thought about running for local council; and 27% have never run but might in the future.
- 1.3 WEN Wales strongly believes in equal leadership in Wales in terms of gender and other forms of diversity at all levels of politics and that a strong democracy closely reflects its electorate. Our Welsh local councils and both the National Assembly and Welsh Government should be as rich and diverse as the people of Wales. If we do not recognise or identify barriers to diversity, we cannot challenge them and make change for the better. WEN Wales welcomes this inquiry and the opportunity that it offers to transform Local Government in Wales so that it is more diverse and representative of local communities.

2. Understanding the importance of diversity among local councillors, including the effect on public engagement, debate and decision making

“No one who wishes to stand for public office should be barred or discouraged from doing so because of their characteristics, nor economic or social circumstances.” WEN Wales member

- 2.1 In 2018, it is simply not acceptable that local government politics is predominantly 'pale, male and stale'.² The recent Electoral Reform Society Cymru (ERS Cymru) report *New Voices* has highlighted that "piecemeal approaches to fixing diversity at council level clearly haven't worked" and suggests that "without quotas applied to diversity, progress will continue to be glacial".³ Research suggests that Wales is behind England in progress too – one report states that at the current pace, it will take 82 years (compared to 48 years in England) for gender parity to be achieved at local government level.⁴ While Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru have taken positive action for Assembly election candidates, direct positive action has not been taken at a local level, resulting in only marginal increases in percentages of women councillors.⁵ Clearly intervention is needed.
- 2.2 In Wales in the 2017 county council elections, 30% of all candidates were women, with 33% of wards having no women candidates at all, and just 349 (28%) of those elected are women.⁶ The

¹ Over 1000 individual members and organisational members, including women's rights and allied organisations from across the third sector, academia, international and national NGOs.

² Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/latest-news-and-research/publications/new-voices-how-welsh-politics-can-begin-to-reflect-wales/>, July 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Final Report of the Local Government Commission', <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f>, July 2017.

⁵ Stirbu, Larner & McAllister, 'Pitiful Progress: Women councillors in Wales after the 2017 local elections', <https://medium.com/athena-talks/pitiful-progress-women-councillors-in-wales-after-the-2017-local-elections-edbf39258c7>, 2017.

⁶ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

percentage of women elected mirrors that of the percentage of candidates, therefore access to candidacy remains a key driver in terms of gender parity in elected office.⁷

- 2.3 Diversity goes beyond gender inequality – yet the alarming dearth of diversity data of any kind, including gender, age, sexuality and ethnicity is a barrier itself in challenging the lack of diversity within local government. Much of the limited data that is available does not give a full picture because it relies on voluntary participation in surveys/interviews⁸ and therefore cannot reflect all councillors.
- 2.4 WEN Wales' members have highlighted the importance of diversity in local government. One respondent to our survey stated that *“local government is about understanding local people”* yet there is a broad perception that current councillors are *“not diverse at all”* as they are disproportionately white working/middle class middle-aged/old men and that often the limited number of women councillors are also white, often retired and of the same class as the male majority within the council. Many WEN Wales members highlighted that seat-blocking/incumbency was common (80% of councillors elected in Wales and England are incumbents⁹) and the Fawcett Society suggests that this disproportionately benefits men and acts as a significant barrier to change.¹⁰ Concerns were raised at the lack of women, young mothers, disabled people, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) councillors: one person stated that *“we only have two women councillors but five called David and no BME councillors.”*
- 2.5 When asked whether members felt that their councillors represented them. often the disparity between councillors and WEN Wales members' lived experiences was a barrier, another was a lack of engagement with the electorate and local community other than at election time. One respondent stated that *“There are some councillors who are good but my local ones don't really represent people like me. I don't feel like I could approach them and say 'Hey, I've got this issue that affects me as a young woman/mother.”*
- 2.6 A cohort of councillors and cabinet members who fail to represent their electorate create a barrier of service to communities as engagement is compromised. One member highlighted that if groups do not feel they are represented or understood by those in office then they cannot be held to account effectively. Many others pointed out that retired white men are less likely than a diverse mix of councillors to understand the lives of their communities in relation to issues that do not affect them – for example, one respondent stated that retired male councillors do not appreciate how hard things are for working people and have different or limited understandings of policy areas.
- 2.7 Professor Mary Beard goes further in her essay 'Women in Power': “A number of studies point to the role of women politicians in promoting legislation in women's interests (in childcare, for example, equal pay and domestic violence¹¹). A report from the Fawcett Society¹² recently suggested a link between the 50/50 balance between women and men in the Welsh Assembly and the number of times 'women's issues' were raised there. I certainly do not want to complain about childcare and the rest getting a fair airing but I am not sure that such things should continue to be perceived as 'women's issues'; nor am I sure that these are the main reasons we want more women in parliaments [and local government]. Those reasons are much more basic: it is flagrantly unjust to keep women out, by whatever unconscious means we do so; and we

⁷ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

⁸ Such as in the ERS Cymru's work and reports by the Fawcett Society.

⁹ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

¹⁰ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Final Report of the Local Government Commission, July 2017.

¹¹ *Coincidentally 'gendered issues' such as domestic violence, equal pay and childcare that act as barriers to women entering into politics at any level, as indicated by WEN Wales members.*

¹² Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Final Report of the Local Government Commission, July 2017.

simply cannot afford to do without women’s expertise, whether it is in technology, the economy or social care.”¹³

- 2.8 Effective accountability and scrutiny is not only a cornerstone of democracy, it enhances good policy and decision-making practices and effectively pays for itself.¹⁴ If public perception is that councillors are unapproachable or will have little understanding of the full breadth of the experiences of the communities they are seemingly representing, public engagement, debate and decision making are all compromised. Interventions are needed to remedy this issue and to increase communities’ understanding and respect for local politics by raising the standard of local councils and councillors themselves and their engagement.

“It is important to have a broad understanding of the bigger picture and not just make decisions based on their experience and interests. It is too easy to have a narrow outlook on life and if all Councillors have a similar background then decisions will be made that don’t reflect the needs of residents.” WEN Wales member

3. Understanding key barriers to attracting a more diverse pool of candidates for local government elections

“Culture and environment [within local government] can be very difficult and creates a barrier of transparency and openness to consider a position in public life. child care, non flexible job share role, bullying culture, lack of opportunity, class, race, gender and age can be barriers as diversity is not encouraged.” WEN Wales member

- 3.1 As in all employment areas of Wales, women face barriers to elected local government through maternity leave pressures, a lack of provision for those with childcare and caring responsibilities and due to outdated, non-flexible working systems, highlighted by both research¹⁵ in this area and WEN Wales member feedback of experienced or perceived barriers. One WEN member stated *“There are many barriers that face women and these need to be addressed by a strategy that is implemented and audited for compliance”*.
- 3.2 The Fawcett society has stated that at local government level BME women, disabled women, and younger women are underrepresented and experience significant discrimination.¹⁶ A WEN Wales member highlighted *“Age, gender, sexuality¹⁷, ethnicity”* as barriers. Another member also highlighted uncertainty around EU citizens’ status in Wales post-Brexit. While EU citizens can currently vote in local government elections, it is not clear whether these rights will be revoked and whether it will even be possible for EU nations to run in council elections.
- 3.3 **BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) candidates and elected councillors:** Many WEN Wales members highlighted the lack of BME councillors in their areas, yet accurate data is scarce:

¹³ Beard, Mary, ‘Women in Power’ in *Women and Power: A Manifesto*, Profile Books, 2017, pp.85-86

¹⁴ *While the Expert Panel’s report states that for Assembly Electoral Reform improvements in scrutiny of Welsh Government spending and policy decisions will reap significant dividends to the taxpayer, we believe that the same can be said at all levels of government, including Welsh local government:* McAllister, Laura. ‘A Parliament that works for Wales: the report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform’, <https://www.assembly.wales/NAfW%20Documents/About%20the%20Assembly%20section%20documents/Expert%20Panel%20on%20Assembly%20Electoral%20Reform/A%20Parliament%20that%20Works%20for%20Wales.pdf>, November 2017.

¹⁵ Fawcett Society, ‘Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission’, <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f>, April 2017.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *During the Committee’s inquiry, a councillor Graham Down’s homophobic slurs in emails to the chief executive (comparing homosexuality to paedophilia and describing homosexuality as ‘unnatural, perverted, immoral and wrong’) has been suspended. While this breached the code of conduct for Monmouthshire County council led to disciplinary action, it does little to encourage people who are not heterosexual from wanting to work as a local councillor.* <http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2018-08-15/councillor-who-described-homosexuality-as-unnatural-perverted-immoral-and-wrong-suspended/>

attempts to collect Welsh statistics through voluntary surveys confirms only the overwhelming majority of white British respondents without giving a clear picture of other ethnicities.¹⁸ Lack of diversity at local government can also lead to lack of diversity throughout all political institutions as local government can be a stepping stone to national politics – there may be more women Assembly Members (42% elected in 2016; 45% currently) but there has never been a BME woman Assembly Member.¹⁹

- 3.4 **Maternity, Childcare & Caring Responsibilities:** Councillors in Wales have the right to six months of maternity leave²⁰, which is not in line with the maternity leave allowance for employed women.²¹ It is not surprising that women councillors age 18-34 years old are the most underrepresented age group across England and Wales (note that maternity rights are far worse in England) with 3.5 times more men than women this category, compared to the largest age group for councillors – age 65-74 where men outnumber the women by two to one.²² Even then, 47% women councillors have clashes with caring commitments (compared to 26% man councillors), while childcare is an issue for 28% of women councillors (compared to 18% of men).²³
- 3.5 **Remunerations/Cost:** Several WEN Wales members highlighted that it is frowned upon for councillors to claim their full entitlement of remunerations, and that as the data is published, it can be used against councillors wishing to progress in their political careers by both their parities, other councillors and the public. This creates an environment where those who can afford to not take their entitlement are favoured, while some working mothers are impacted by childcare costs, costs of additional caring responsibilities, the gender pay gap and salary decreases as full-time employment is reduced once they are elected. This system favours the rich, retired, men that we already know dominate these spaces.
- 3.6 **Inflexible Eorking & Poor Use of IT/Technology:** For women on county councils one of the biggest challenges is travel – with over half finding the distances to meetings are an issue.²⁴ Wales is both a cosmopolitan and rural country – pan-Wales discussions in other sectors frequently use technology such as video conferencing and remote working to enable better engagement. The total lack of flexible, modern working is unnecessary and detrimental to the work of councillors, whose commuting time and travel expenses could be cut and converted into much more valuable work time through up-to-date work practices, in line with those that have been standard practice in a large number of Welsh work environments for years.
- 3.7 Many WEN Wales members also highlighted that both party and council meetings held in the evenings were difficult for candidates and councillors with children. ERS Cymru explore innovations such as the use of Skype, adjusting meeting times, allowing babies and children to come to meetings if necessary, and the importance of regularly consulting with councillors about times that work best for the majority at any one time²⁵ – of course, if councils continue to be dominated by retired men with fewer caring responsibilities, this is not an adequate solution. Job-sharing for candidates and councillors could make a huge difference; Swansea Council currently has job-sharing councillors²⁶. Wales needs consistent and fit-for-purpose policies for job-shares.

¹⁸ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

¹⁹ *During the first Cross Party Group on Women meeting in July 2018 Maria Mesa, CEO of Women Connect First highlighted one contributing factor that restricts BME women's advancements: English as a foreign language classes, designed to help non-native speakers integrate into society reach only a certain level, offers a standard of English that is not a high enough for graduates of these course to be able to seek public office or political appointment. This language-skill deficit means that even those with a rich diversity of knowledge and professional experience who could greatly contribute to local and national politics cannot access these positions of power, influence and representation.*

²⁰ The Family Absence of Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013.

²¹ Fawcett Society, 'Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission', April 2017.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

²⁶ Ibid. (New Voices)

- 3.8 **Sexist culture:** The Fawcett Society found that across Wales and England, 38% of women councillors overall experience sexist comments when engaging with their local parties. A third experience sexist comments in the council chamber. 10% of women councillors have experienced sexual harassment when interacting with their party.²⁷ 10% have reported sexual harassment from other councillors. Within the age category 35-44 years this is much higher with one fifth reported sexual harassment from their fellow councillors. When standing as a councillor, the Fawcett Society also found a gender difference between councillors identifying 'fear of violence' (13% of women; 8 % of men), or 'harassment or abuse from the electorate' (46% of women; 35% of men) as barriers. Even within the chamber, 44% of elected women councillors say they felt a lack of confidence in making their voice heard.²⁸ This must be stopped.
- 3.9 **Disability:** Across Wales and England, 19% of women councillors said they have a disability or long-term health condition (22% of men).²⁹ Disabled women councillors are also far more likely to experience multiple discrimination as both women and due to their disability.³⁰ Much more needs to be done to encourage disabled candidates to stand for local government, and several WEN Wales members have emphasised the need to redress that there are “no formal structures for adjustments for disabled people” as candidates or elected councillors, with the Fawcett Society calling on the government to reintroduce financial support to help disabled women with costs of candidature.³¹
- 3.10 **Old boy networks:** Almost half of women say a lack of access to informal networks is a barrier to them as councillors, compared with 36% of men.³² The Fawcett Society surmises that “there may be some truth in the claim that real power in town halls is often held outside official meetings in ‘old boys’ networks’, and this impacts particularly on women.”³³ This needs to be addressed.

4. **Exploring areas of innovation and good practice that may help increase diversity in local government**

“More funding should be made available for underrepresented groups to stand and quota should be introduced for all tiers of local government. Increasing diversity in local government will not happen by itself you must force it.” WEN Wales member

- 4.1 There are a substantial number of Independent councillors in Wales (unlike in England)³⁴, which means that relying on parties to make adjustments to increase diversity will not adequately increase diversity at local government.
- 4.2 Research shows that the ‘first past the post’ system itself is by its nature an unrepresentative system, and generally few women are elected that way.³⁵ Needless to say, the 50:50 record of gender parity at the National Assembly for Wales did not use this electoral system. A radical upheaval of the electoral system with inbuilt gender quotas³⁶, such as those recommended by the Electoral Reform Expert Panel for the National Assembly³⁷ could revolutionise local government. ERS Cymru states that while quotas are not a panacea in local government, we

²⁷ Fawcett Society, ‘Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission’, April 2017.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Stirbu, Larner & McAllister, ‘Pitiful Progress: Women councillors in Wales after the 2017 local elections, 2017.

³⁶ *Temporary gender quotas to address gender inequality are endorsed by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) under article 4: Temporary Special Measures. For more information on CEDAW by WEN Wales, please see: ‘All About CEDAW’ <http://www.wenwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/allaboutCEDAW-FINAL-1.pdf>.*

³⁷ McAllister, Laura. ‘A Parliament that works for Wales: the report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform’, November 2017.

must consider working hours and remunerations as well as how to tackle the sexism and abuse unearthed in their research.³⁸

- 4.3 80% of councillors elected in England and Wales in any one year are incumbents.³⁹ There were also 92 uncontested seats in 2017 – most of which were held by men.⁴⁰ Women and men are equally as likely to say their reasons for standing were: because someone asked them to, or because they were inspired by someone.⁴¹
- 4.4 Getting more women to stand and be selected for local government is key. Community and voluntary organisations are important pools of prospective female talent. That many women stand simply because they were asked is also an important reminder for political parties of how simple it can be to get more women into local government.⁴²
- 4.5 There are a number of support forums for women (perhaps serving as an answer to ‘old boys’ networks). At WEN Wales, we run a 9-month mentoring scheme, which includes around six full training days, to encourage women into political and public life. Similarly, Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) will soon launch a mentoring scheme to encourage young BME people into public life. Fabian Women’s Network also offers support, as do some Welsh Labour fora, encouraging women to stand through training and mentoring. Women Connect First also offer active citizenship courses for BME women and Chwarae Teg is recruiting for their *Shadow a Local Council Leader* scheme as part of a move to inspire future women leaders is also an important initiative. Many WEN Wales members stated that they simply were not aware of how to run for local government and information was scarce; these schemes try to redress that.
- 4.6 While each network and training scheme incrementally creates better conditions for improved diversity in Local Government, alone they are not enough and do not reach all 22 Local Authorities in Wales. Three Local Authorities in Wales still have below 15% women councillors (Ceredigion: 14%; Merthyr 12%; Wrexham 11%)⁴³. These should be targeted to push progress.
- 4.7 A far more radical, whole-systems-approach is needed. Equalities data must be effectively collected to demonstrate the complexity of the issue of the lack of diversity in local government. Only then can electoral reform models be mapped, quotas legislated for and women from all backgrounds encouraged and enabled – through the elimination of barriers and discrimination – to take their rightful place as influencers in the heart of their local communities as elected councillors.

“Diversity is important but the most important thing is for the councillors to represent the population they represent, to have similar values and standards. There are insufficient number of women in these roles.” WEN Wales member

WEN Wales Recommendations:

1. **Welsh Government should appoint a Cabinet Secretary for Women by 2021, with key responsibilities to ensure that women have an equal share of power at all levels of Welsh public and political life, including local government.**
2. **Welsh Government must develop a strategy and action plan in collaboration with BME women and charities working with BME communities to get more BME women into politics at all levels, into public life and employment, and offer advanced English as a foreign language classes for those women wishing to enter public and political life.**

³⁸ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

³⁹ Fawcett Society, ‘Does Local Government Work for Women? Interim Report for the Local Government Commission’, April 2017.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

3. **Maternity provisions for councillors should be at the same standard as it is for employed women, with equal shared-parental leave provisions. Affordable, wrap-around childcare needs to be available and support for carers, and childcare should be a claimable expense for candidates seeking election.**
4. **Consider the ERS Cymru's recommendations to appoint fewer councillors, full-time on an appropriate salary, ensuring that those who take their remuneration entitlements are not treated detrimentally by both parties, councillors and communities.**
5. **Update work place practices and use of technology to offer more flexible working for councillors and put in place consistent policies across Wales to enable job-sharing for councillors.**
6. **Better tackle the entrenched sexist culture within local government, holding perpetrators to account, updating Codes of Conduct if needed, ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place and that complains are dealt with appropriately so that the system is seen as worthwhile and trustworthy by victims of sexism, harassment and assault.**
7. **Councils must formalise structures for adjustments for disabled people and tackle discrimination against disabled people.**
8. **By 2021, gender quotas and diversity quotas for councillors with disabilities and BME councillors should be integrated into the electoral system so that all political parties put forward at least 50% women candidates to support and encourage gender-balanced representation in Wales.**
9. **Local Authorities should do all they can to encourage political parties to put forward candidates for all seats to increase candidacy rates in areas where seats are uncontested and actively encourage women, disabled people, young parents, the LGBT+ community and BME people to stand in local elections. A limit in the number of terms that a councillor can stand for should also be considered.**
10. **Full implementation of the Local Government recommendations of the ERS Cymru's New Voices report⁴⁴ (listed in appendix B)**

Deadline: 10th Sept. 18

Contact: SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

WEN Wales would like to thank the National Assembly for Wales' Equality, Local Government & Communities Committee for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry.

If you have any further comments or queries, please get in touch.

⁴⁴ Blair, Jess & Matias, Mat, *New Voices: How Welsh politicians can begin to reflect Wales*, ERS Cymru, July 2018.

Appendix A

WEN Wales, Women Connect First, Welsh Women's Aid and Chwarae Teg's 'Equality for Women and Girls in Wales: Our Manifesto'⁴⁵ recommendations for Local Government reform:

Over the next few years Welsh electoral reform could provide a crucial opportunity to make substantial changes to the gender balance within Welsh politics. International evidence shows that the most effective means of delivering political change is the implementation of positive action measures such as statutory quotas. Of the 33 countries with 30 per cent or more women in parliament today, 26 have quotas in place that helped to ensure this outcome.⁴⁶

Recommendations:

1. By 2021 Welsh Government should commit to long-term funding to increase the representation and active participation of BME, LGBTIQ+, disabled and working-class women in public and political life in Wales. Projects could be delivered in collaboration with the third sector and an *Access to Elected Office* fund should be set up and include measures to ensure that disabled women have equal opportunities to benefit from the fund.
2. By 2020 a commitment from all Welsh political parties to appoint a gender balanced cabinet if elected within Local Councils and Welsh Government.
3. By 2021 gender quotas integrated into the electoral system so that all political parties put forward at least 50% women candidates to support and encourage a gender-balanced politics in Wales.
4. Job sharing: candidates should be enabled to stand for election based on transparent job-sharing arrangements.
5. Compulsory publication regarding candidate diversity: the Assembly should request that the Secretary of State commences Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Welsh elections, or transfers the powers to do so to Welsh Ministers, so that information on the diversity of all candidates from all parties is openly available.
6. By 2025 all local authorities to introduce reasonable adjustments policies for disabled councillors.

⁴⁵ Some amendments have been adjusted for local government by WEN Wales and are not necessarily the joint view of Women Connect First, Welsh Women's Aid and Chwarae Teg. To read the full Manifesto document: Wharf, Hannah, 'Equality for Women & Girls in Wales: Our Manifesto', WEN Wales, Women Connect First, Welsh Women's Aid & Chwarae Teg, http://www.wenwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/LR_11509-WEN-Manifesto-20pp-A4-English.pdf, 2018.

⁴⁶ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2012/7/bringing-cedaw-to-life-the-committee-on-the-elimination-of-discrimination-against-women-turns-30>

ADDRESS

WEN Wales,
c/o Chwarae Teg,
Anchor Court, Keen Road,
Cardiff CF24 5JW

CONTACT

admin@wenwales.org.uk
wenwales.org.uk

INFO

Charity Number: 1145706
Company Number: 07891533



Appendix B

The Local Government recommendations of the Electoral Reform Society Cymru's New Voices⁴⁷ report

1. Recommendation 1

Welsh Government should introduce a 45% quota for women for each party at local government elections, meaning that at least 45% of their candidates should be female.

2. Recommendation 2

Measures should be put in place to encourage a broader range of candidates from ethnic minorities, age spread and those with disabilities alongside ways to monitor the development of this. As part of this each party should ask candidates to fill out an equalities monitoring form upon selection and every party should make the headline figures of their candidates public in a standardised format to allow the progress of parties to be compared fairly. Each local authority should then publish a complete report of their makeup after each election.

3. Recommendation 3

Council leaders should be held to account by Welsh Government if they fail to select councillors who are diverse for their leadership teams.

4. Recommendation 4

Welsh Government should commission a review into councillor remuneration, which should include an analysis of the potential for fewer councillors at a higher salary.

5. Recommendation 5

The UK Government should enact Section 106 of the Equality Act in time for the next General Election requiring all parties to publish equality data in a coherent and standardised format. At a Welsh level parties shouldn't wait for the next UK General Election and should collate this information for the next Assembly and local elections.
