

## **BRIEFING NOTE**

### **MOTION: Diversity**

*This council notes:*

- Councillors represent their community and it is important that they reflect the diversity within their communities, particularly those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).
- The work of the Cooperative Party in developing a Declaration for councils aimed at increasing diversity in local government.

*This council believes:*

- Diversity in representation makes for good decision making.

*This council resolves:*

- To adopt The Co-operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration (below) to increase diversity in our local government:

### **The Co-operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration**

This Council commits to being a Diverse Council. We agree to:

1. Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy.
2. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
3. Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the next local elections. Including:
  - Appoint Diversity Ambassadors for each political group on the council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
  - Encourage and enable people from under-represented 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.
  - Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups
  - Ensure that all members and candidates complete a candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
  - Set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the next local elections
4. Work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and/or Charter Plus.

5. Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for councillors by:
  - providing access to counselling services for all councillors having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors.
  - taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.
6. Provide flexibility in council business by:
  - regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
  - encouraging and supporting remote attendance at meetings
  - agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments.
7. Ensure that 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.
8. Ensure that the council adopts a parental leave policy setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.
9. Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.

**PROPOSERS:**

Councillors Parr and Ainscough.

**OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE**

The requirements of adopting the declaration are wide ranging. If all aspects were to be adopted, this would require work from political groups on the Council, Council Officers and the Independent Remuneration Panel.

If the motion is supported, the resource implications would need to be quantified fully and brought back to Council. To do this, Officers recommend referral to Council Business Committee. That Committee, supported by officers, can then determine the resource implications and report the findings back to Council.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

Adoption of the motion clearly has an associated cost implication for the Council which is likely to be significant and has not yet been quantified. Members should be mindful of the potential resourcing requirement both to determine the full cost of the proposal and refer to Council Business Committee and then to subsequently implement it.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments.