



WLGA Response Local Government and Housing Additional Information

WLGA representatives agreed to provide more information on the extent job sharing is being utilised by local authorities.

Following the committee hearing on the 15th, the WLGA has written to Heads of Democratic services. The following authorities are using job shares within the council's executive.

- Cardiff Council (2 Shared portfolios; Social Services and Tackling Poverty, Equality and Public Health)
- Newport City Council (1 Shared Portfolio; Social Services)
- Swansea Council (1 Shared Portfolio; Community)
- Powys (1 Shared Portfolio; Future Generations)
- Flintshire (1 Shared Portfolio: Deputy Leader)

Where job sharing within the executive has been used, feedback has been generally positive. However some issues have been raised, such as the need to ensure job-sharing members of the executive are aligned when voting within Cabinet.

It has also noted that for smaller councils, job sharing can place an increased burden on scrutiny committees, given that members of the executive cannot also be members of scrutiny committees. This has been highlighted as a particular challenge given the enhanced role of scrutiny following the commencement of the Local Government and Elections Act.

WLGA representatives agreed to provide additional detail on the desk-based review of diversity across local authorities undertaken by the WLGA following the local government election in 2022.

Please note that a spreadsheet outlining data of internal research exercise conducted by WLGA following the elections.

If you have further questions relating to this exercise, please contact Joseph Lewis.

The Committee agreed to write to seek the witnesses views on guidance, training and support for councillors to deal with online intimidation, harassment and abuse.

Working in partnership with the LGA, NILGA and COSLA, the WLGA has been involved with a programme of work entitled 'Civility in Public Life', which is primarily aimed at:

- articulating good standards for anyone engaging in public and political discourse
- understand the scale and impact of intimidation and abusive behaviour on our membership organisations, and develop recommendations for achieving positive debate and public decision-making on a local level



- to support our members and all democratically elected local representatives in addressing intimidation and abuse, so they deliver the best on behalf of their communities

The WLGA continues to work across the four nations to deliver a coordinated response on this issue, and has coproduced a number of shared handbook to support councillors in how to deal with online abuse and harassment. In addition to this, the WLGA updated its range of councillor handbooks, and also developed a suite of e-learning modules which included modules on Social Media Awareness, these have been used by councils to complement their own member induction programmes.

Through the WLGA, the 22 leaders agreed to adopt a Fair Campaigns Pledge ahead of the 2022 local elections which was adopted and implemented by political group leaders locally. The Fair Campaigns pledges commits candidates to running a fair and respectful election campaign which is based on positive campaigning and merit, rather than personal attacks and smears against individuals.

Feedback from WLGA officer networks suggests that while the pledge represents a positive step forward, the efficacy of this campaign remains unclear, this may be owing to the non-binding nature of the pledge, but also because of candidates needing further guidance on implementing the pledge in practice.

Delivery of the ambitions of the pledge was also made more challenging by the high number of independent candidates at local elections, with pledges being organised through political parties, and that a councillor's code of conduct is not applicable to candidates who have not yet been elected.

The WLGA also facilitates meetings of the Standards Committee Chairs Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for Chairs of Standards Committees to discuss members conduct issues and standards of behaviour across Wales.

