

DLG 17

Ymchwiliad i amrywiaeth ym maes llywodraeth leol

Inquiry into diversity in local government

Ymateb gan: Cllr Jackie Charlton

Y Cyngorydd Sir ar gyfer Llangatwg

Response from: Cllr Jackie Charlton

County Councillor for Llangattock

#### Terms of Reference

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

It is crucial to understand the barriers that are experienced if you have a disability when engaging in public life. Disability often brings with it lack of confidence and fear of seeming weak or lacking in skills and ability to participate.

As a profoundly deaf County Councillor, elected with an understanding that I am profoundly deaf, the biggest challenge was being confident about my disability and the ability to overcome communication issues. It requires a level of working together which is ongoing and time consuming.

This support must be considered when encouraging participation for all.

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

Barriers are very often based on perceptions, understanding individual needs and developing strategies in partnership, it won't work otherwise.

Local authorities should be able to assist with problem solving and have remedies in place which not only support a more diverse pool of candidates but also supports a more diverse population. When remedies become mainstream delivery then barriers are automatically addressed.

However, there are individual needs too so good training and clear lines of responsibility (who will do what, when and how) is crucially important.

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

There are many examples and I would like to put up Powys County Council Democratic Services team as a great example in how to encourage and support a County Councillor and making it possible for the wider population to interact and participate.

Example:-

Use of good loop systems which are fully supported by one member of staff who understands the system and is able to share and support how the loop works, spend time getting it right and enable a reserved space for people to use so that it does work.

There have been other challenges to getting loop systems to work in all areas, not always able to overcome issues but keep working to find the remedy is so encouraging.

Helping members of the public to understand and work with the loop system.

Understanding the issue of translating Welsh when someone wearing a hearing aid cannot hear through a headset. Working with Welsh Government to find a way of getting subtitles across the chamber and on podcast. Helps those who don't speak Welsh to see translation and for those who cannot hear through headset to see subtitles. This is a work in progress but it is so encouraging to see commitment from Members and Staff to make it happen.

Welsh speakers very thoughtful and will speak in Welsh and the paraphrase in English where appropriate. Shows how barriers can be broken down with a little thought and consideration.

To explore the potential impact of the proposals in the Welsh

See above

Government's Green Paper, Strengthening Local Government to increasing diversity in Council chambers

I have not had an opportunity to look and address the Green Paper.

Very happy to do so and would be pleased to give evidence if so required.