

Report sponsor: Head of Democratic Services
Report author: Democratic Services Officer

Gender Representation Task Group Report

Purpose

- 1.1 A request for the Corporate Scrutiny Review Board to receive reports from a task group to consider gender representation arose from a motion to Council on 20 September 2017. This motion requested a group be formed to look at the representation of females in elected roles. The motion was agreed, and two meetings of the group took place.
- 1.2 It was later suggested that the remit of the group be extended to cover representation of gender as a whole across the Council. It was suggested that the task group report to the Corporate Scrutiny Review Board.
- 1.3 The remit of the Gender Representation Task Group is to look at the representation of gender as a whole across the Council with the intention of increasing the diversity of elected representatives within the Council. This would enable a better representation of the diversity of the population of the City of Derby and would encourage more participation in the democratic process. A further aim would be to encourage creation of policies and procedures of the Council which better reflect the diversity of its officers and councillors.
- 1.4 This report sets out recommendations that the Gender Representation Task Group believe will fulfil the Group's task of increasing the diversity of elected representatives.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To recommend to Council that Derby City Council should aspire to achieve equal gender representation when filling Chair/Vice-chair positions; and that all reasonable steps must be taken to achieve this.
- 2.2 To recommend to Council that the Dependent Carers' Allowance be raised, and that Derby City Council recognise the importance of a Dependant Carers' Allowance and encourages members to use this.
- 2.3 To recommend to Council that a programme be introduced to encourage more women to stand for all Political Parties.

- 2.4 To recommend to Council that the Basic Allowance should be increased to match the annual salary of people earning minimum wage and working 25 hours a week (as referenced in the Fawcett Society report). The basic allowance would therefore be raised to £11,336. This should be indexed to increase in line with the national minimum wage. This would encourage more women to stand for election and would also allow for other expenses to be reduced or phased out.
- 2.5 To recommend that Council writes to the Government to recommend that pensions for councillors be reintroduced.
- 2.6 To recommend to Council that a Parental and Carers Leave Policy for councillors be implemented.

Reason

- 3.1 A request for the Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board to receive reports from a task group to consider gender representation arose from a motion to Council on 20 September 2017.
- 3.2 The recommendations contained within this report are the recommendations of the Gender Representation Task Group and are not officer recommendations. The Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board may choose to carry, amend, or reject these recommendations as they wish.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The Gender Representation Task Group believe that in order to increase the diversity of elected representatives at Derby City Council action is required. The Gender Representation Task Group believe that the recommendations set out in this report are necessary in order to increase the diversity councillors at Derby City Council.

- 4.2 A 2017 report of the Local Government Commission by the Fawcett Society made the following findings:

“Bringing other elements of the support on offer to councillors into line with the usual expectations of professional roles would enable a more diverse group of people to consider standing for election. With councillors spending an increasing amount of time on their roles – up to 25 hours per week in 2013 compared with 22 hours in 2004-2010 – and with their roles changing and expanding, this is an urgent necessity.

The financial considerations around being a councillor do not fall equally on men and women. Women councillors were slightly more likely in our survey data to say that councillor allowances being too low was a barrier for them (59 percent compared with 50 percent for men). We know from the Local Government Association’s census that women councillors are more likely to work part-time, which is typically lower-paid; and if they are employed, they are less likely to be in managerial or executive, or technical or professional roles.

When this picture is coupled with the well-documented pensions gap between women and men, a clear case is made that the removal of local government pensions, alongside other financial considerations facing councillors, is a gendered issue.”

- 4.3 A comparison of Basic Allowances between Derby City Council and other upper tier authorities in the East Midlands shows that Derby City Council’s Basic Allowance (£10,076) falls significantly below the average Basic Allowance payment.

Authority	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham City	Lincolnshire	Leicestershire	Leicester City	Derbyshire	Mean Average	Median Average
Basic Allowance	£14,613	£12,485	£10,792	£11,124	£10,146	£10,896	£11,676	£11,010

- 4.4 The Gender Representation Task Group believe that it is important to clarify that other expenses, such as travel and accommodation, could be reduced or phased out if the Basic Allowance is increased.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 None.

Other options

- 6.1 None.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 Increasing the Basic Allowance to match the annual salary of workers earning minimum wage and working 25 hours a week (as referenced in the Fawcett Society report) would result in an increase in the Basic Allowance paid to all councillors of around £1,260 per councillor per annum.

Legal implications

- 8.1 None.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None.

Other significant implications

- 10.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director	Emily Feenan	25/02/2021
Report sponsor	Alex Hough	25/02/2021
Other		

Background papers:	Fawcett Society - Does Local Government Work for Women? https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0de4f7f0-d1a0-4e63-94c7-5e69081caa5f
List of appendices:	