

Birmingham City Council

City Council

5 December 2023



Subject: Motions for Debate from Individual Members
Report of: Marie Rosenthal, Interim Monitoring Officer and City Solicitor
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential: N/A

1 Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 To consider the following Motions of which notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules (section B4.4 G of the Constitution).

2 Notices of Motion

A. Councillors Nicky Brennan and Rinkal Shergill have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

“This council notes:

Councillors represent their community and it is important that they reflect the diversity within their communities, particularly those with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The work of the Co-Operative Party in developing a Declaration for councils aimed at increasing diversity in local government.

The steps taken to encourage people from historically under-represented groups to stand for council, such as bringing in paid maternity and paternity leave for councillors.

Everyone’s Battle Everyone’s Business sets out the Council’s vision for a city council that better reflects our city’s diversity.

This council believes:

Diversity in representation makes for good decision making.

This council resolves:

To adopt The Co-Operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration to increase diversity in our local government:

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:
 - Encourage political groups 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.
 - Encourage political groups to set 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."

B. Councillors Alex Yip and Meirion Jenkins have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

"This Council notes that on becoming Leader, the Leader said he was "going to be absolutely open and transparent and honest".

This Council also notes that:

- The Leader said he was 'surprised' to have the equal pay figures brought to his attention in June.
- The Leader, along with the former Leader and Deputy Leader, received an email on 3 Feb, ahead of the budget, setting out figures of an Equal Pay Liability of up to £800m.
- The Leader said he was not aware a s114 notice would be issued before he went on holiday.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance said that extensive legal advice was sought ahead of the 2017 bin dispute settlement and there was no equal pay risk.
- No Cabinet Member raised any concerns on risks faced by the council about equal pay during the 2023 budget debate.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said that the Oracle Programme had been subject to 'intense cabinet member oversight'.

- The Auditors have reported key officers being excluded from meetings on equal pay.
- The Auditors have reported Senior politicians complaining about officers taking notes in meetings and sharing these with auditors despite their legal obligation to do so.
- The Leader failed to fully answer nearly one-third of the written questions (7 out of 22) put to him at November's Council meeting.

This Council believes that transparency is the best disinfectant and calls on the Executive to ensure its actions match its words.

This Council further calls on the Standards Committee to consider appropriate sanctions for any councillor shown to have knowingly misled the Council chamber.”