

Statement by Cllrs Rayment and Brett to the Cabinet on 2nd December 2015

We should all be concerned by the disparity between the composition of the Council and the composition of the general public in B&NES, in terms of the representations within such characteristics as: gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic class, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

We believe that both the Council and political parties should be committed to ensuring that the Council is as representative of the public as possible.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that the working of the Council does not prohibit the involvement of anyone based on gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic class, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Political parties should strive to ensure that their selection processes take into account the diversity of its local population and that they actively seek to promote involvement of underrepresented people.

We request that the Cabinet approves the formation of an all party working group to investigate ways in which the Council could become more accessible and representative of the local population.

The all party working group will have one representative from each of the political groupings.

The group will, with the assistance of officers, carry out an anonymised diversity audit of the Council, taking into account the characteristics outlined above and local demographics.

The group will consider existing evidence and input from others and will produce for the consideration of Cabinet or Council as appropriate:

- a) recommendations for how the Council could be made more accessible;
- b) a voluntary charter for political parties in B&NES to sign up to, which does not infringe on any of their constitutions, to express their support for making the Council representative of the public and with practical steps that will help to achieve this.