

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council **DATE:** 26th January, 2023

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

MOTION SUBMITTED TO COUNCIL UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 14

The following motion has been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14:-

Gender equality and broadening representation in local political life.

(Moved by Councillor Akram, seconded by Councillor Kaur)

“This Council notes:

Recently published data from the 2021 census reveals that 51% of Slough’s population is female, yet following the 2022 round of elections in England, only 41% of local Councillors across the country are women and women’s representation in local government lags behind that of men, despite several initiatives that have narrowed this gap. Unless further steps are taken to achieve change, 50:50 representation is not expected until 2065.

This Council believes that the 2023 all-out Borough elections in Slough present a distinct opportunity for all local political parties/groups to broaden representation in their pools of candidates and to take further steps to help the Council achieve gender parity among its cohort of Councillors elected at this May’s poll.

Slough Borough Council therefore agrees that the Chief Executive:

1. Will organise a meeting of the Leaders of the Political Groups on Slough Borough Council to discuss the LGA’s ‘21st Century Councils’ toolkit (aimed at improving representation from under-represented groups) with the aim of identifying whether any particular barriers exist in the Council’s practices and policies that could be removed or reduced to encourage under-represented sections of our community to consider becoming Councillors, and focusing primarily on practical steps the council could take to attain gender equality among its elected representatives – reporting back to a meeting of full Council in advance of the May 2023 elections (there is a full Council meeting on 28th March 2023).

2. Will undertake a review of what steps other councils who have widened representation have taken to achieve that, with findings reported back to members as above and recommendations implemented where possible - to ensure that going forward we have a Council that truly represents the community of Slough.

3. Will write to the recognised political parties within Slough Borough who fielded candidates at the last round of local elections in the Borough, advising them of the support that is available to them from the LGA and its political groups and sending the parties information about the LGA's 'be a Councillor campaign.'"