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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 April 2018</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Legal &amp; Property Services</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>GM/LP/030/18</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Gerard Malone</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712710</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Women 50:50 Campaign – Taking Action on Women’s Under Representation</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 This report asks the Council to consider whether it wishes to support the Women 50:50 Campaign, the aim of which is to tackle women’s under representation in Scotland’s local Councils through (1) agreeing a motion of support and (2) using the “What Women Want” resource.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 A copy of the correspondence received from Councillor McCabe relative to the Campaign request is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Council at its meeting on 22 February 2018 decided that consideration of this request be continued to the April 2018 meeting to allow referral of this matter to the Women’s Forum and to give the campaign representatives an opportunity to address an All Members’ Briefing Meeting.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Council is asked to consider the request from the Women’s 50:50 Campaign.

**Gerard Malone**  
**Head of Legal & Property Services**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Following consideration at its February 2018 meeting, the Council decided that the request for support by the Women 50:50 Campaign be continued to the April 2018 meeting to allow referral of this matter to the Women's Forum and to give the campaign representatives an opportunity to address an All Members' Briefing.
- 4.2 The Women's Forum did not reach an agreed position on this matter.

## **5.0 ALL MEMBERS' BRIEFING**

- 5.1 The All Members' Briefing took place within the Municipal Buildings, Greenock on Wednesday 7 March 2018 and a presentation was given by the Chair and co-founder of the campaign, Talat Yaqoob. 12 Elected Members of the Council were in attendance and Ms Yaqoob described the background and purpose of the campaign and answered a wide range of questions during the course of Member discussion.
- 5.2 Ms Yaqoob described the "What Women Want" resource and made reference to the under-representation of women in Scottish politics and posed questions relative to the effect of decisions upon women and whether all women within the constituencies were being represented with regard to equalities and participation in decision-making. It is Ms Yaqoob's critical belief that step-change is necessary and that formal or legislative steps are required in order to provoke this. It is Ms Yaqoob's contention that the good work that has been undertaken across Scotland within politics is beneficial but that step-change measures are needed to accelerate the pace of change and to address the issues of under-representation of women within politics. Ms Yaqoob wishes the Council to support legislative change by formal provision of candidate quotas in order to achieve fair representation in early course. Further, this outreach work will have the advantage of engaging diverse groups from different backgrounds to participate also. A preferred motion has been provided by Ms Yaqoob and is contained within Appendix 1 and support is requested for this.
- 5.3 The All Members' Briefing had a discussion in depth with Ms Yaqoob and, it is fair to state, that in general terms there is wide-ranging support for the campaign's objectives. The issue of concern, as discussed with Members, is the effect of the legislative quotas that are a key part of the campaign. Again, it is fair to state that Members had general reservations about the imposition of legislative quotas giving potential rise to unfairness and unforeseen and indirect consequences for the electorate in their right to choose at the ballot box their preferred candidate, irrespective of gender.
- 5.4 The extent of party lists within localities and the exact provisions of a 50:50 gender share Scotland-wide were discussed. In particular, it is noted that local elections are on a local council area basis as opposed to a national total. Ms Yaqoob clarified that in respect of all elections it would be her aim to have a national candidate list proportion of 50:50 from Scotland as a whole and this would take account of individual or local variances in the ability to find numerically equal gender candidate lists from each party. The real concern as voiced by the Members is their critical perception that voters must have the ability to choose their preferred candidate irrespective of gender and that it could be envisaged that legislative quotas could impair voter choice and this is a crucial remaining concern in relation to the campaign's step-change objectives.
- 5.5 There was a full discussion on all aspects of the "What Women Want" resource and the draft motion. Members thanked Ms Yaqoob for a very helpful briefing and confirmed the Council's views would be reviewed at its April 2018 meeting.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

### Finance

6.1 N/A

#### Financial Implications:

##### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

##### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

### Legal

6.2 There are no legal issues arising from the report.

### Human Resources

6.3 There are no direct human resources implications.

### Equalities

6.4 There are no equalities implications.

### Repopulation

6.5 There is no direct effect upon repopulation.

## 7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The All Members' Briefing gave Members the opportunity to review in detail the campaign's objectives and its implications.

## 8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Nil.

Dear Council Leader,

We are writing to you in hope you will work with us to tackle women's under-representation in Scotland's local councils.

We are the Women 50:50 campaign, a cross party campaign group established in 2014, with one purpose; to tackle structural inequality and deliver fair representation for women in Scotland. We believe that whilst small gains have been made through voluntary mechanisms to increase the number of women in councils, these mechanisms do not go far enough, and despite them, women are still only 29% of councillors. As such, we are campaigning for legislated candidate quotas which would mean that all political parties had to put forward at least 50% women candidates in local and national elections. This measure is proportional and a well evidenced approach to tackling under-representation.

We have the support of four out of five party leaders and the majority of MSPs and we hope we can garner your support and the support of your council.

We recognize however that many councillors are independent and therefore not aligned to any political party. The measures we seek are specifically targeted at political parties, as they have the structures to create this change and deliver specific outreach to seek candidates across seats in Scotland. We know that this will influence the wider culture of our councils and politics, and we hope it will also encourage more women to run as independent candidates.

**You can support our campaign in two ways:**

1. By talking about it to your council colleagues and taking forward a motion of support; a draft of which is attached. If you choose to do this, please let us know the outcome, as if we would like to add you to the list of councils which support the campaign on our website.
2. By using the "what women want" resource we have produced with our partner organisation, Engender (attached). This resource provides key questions for Councillors to consider when making decisions to ensure women are engaged and involved in your council's activities and that gender equality is a key feature within local politics.

We hope you agree with us that women's under-representation is unacceptable and now is the time to take bold action.

Thank you in advance, if you have any questions please email us.

Talat Yaqoob

Chair and Co-Founder

**Women 50:50**

The campaign for fair representation in Scotland

e: [scottishwomen5050@gmail.com](mailto:scottishwomen5050@gmail.com)

w: [www.women5050.org](http://www.women5050.org)

@women5050 f: [www.facebook.com/women5050](https://www.facebook.com/women5050)

# What Women Want

(from their elected representatives)



WOMEN

50:50

WOMEN ARE UNDERREPRESENTED  
IN SCOTTISH POLITICS.

29%

35%

OF COUNCILLORS

OF MSPs

Women in Scotland are from different backgrounds, races, religions, and sexualities, and are both disabled and non-disabled. Right now this diversity is missing from our elected bodies.

This means that it is vital that all elected representatives work to promote equality for all women.

Engender and Women 5050 have been talking with women across Scotland to form these key questions you should ask yourself, and your colleagues, regularly.

Keep this resource with you, and look at it regularly. It will help you ensure you are doing the best you can for the women you represent.

How are my decisions  
working for women?

1.

How much will this policy/programme cost, and how much will be spent on men and boys, and girls and women?

2.

How will this policy or programme tackle discrimination and gender inequality? How will it increase women's and men's equality?

3.

How many men were involved in deciding what this policy or programme should include? How many women?

## Am I representing all women in my constituency?

1.

This year, have I received training from specialist organisations on human rights, violence against women and equalities?

2.

Am I communicating in an accessible way? Do I advertise my surgeries in a range of places and formats, and offer other ways to communicate including phone and house calls? Is it easy for women to hold me to account over my decisions?

3.

Within the last month, have I spoken to women in my community including women from all faiths and none, black minority ethnic women, lesbian bisexual and trans women, women from all social-economic backgrounds, disabled women, older and younger women, mothers, carers and refugees?

## How am I using my position to promote equality?

1.

When I chair meetings and events, do I make sure women and men have equal time to speak?

2.

What have I done this month to ensure that more women, including BME, disabled and LGBT women, are elected for my party next time?

3.

Have I publicly said that gender equality and issues principally affecting women are important to me, and how I am working for change, in the past month?

We hope you find this resource useful.

[www.engender.org.uk/whatwomenwant](http://www.engender.org.uk/whatwomenwant)

[info@engender.org.uk](mailto:info@engender.org.uk)

[@Engenderscot](https://twitter.com/Engenderscot)

[@Women5050](https://twitter.com/Women5050)



ENGENDER

WOMEN

50:50

## **EXAMPLE MOTION TO COUNCIL:**

The council notes that women are under-represented across councils in Scotland and make up only 29% of councillors. Council further notes that whilst voluntary mechanisms such as all women shortlists, networks and mentoring have made some progress, women are still not represented equally.

Council notes that despite these measures 29% is the highest proportion of women in council in Scotland's history.

The council congratulates the Women 50:50 campaign which has been working across all political parties and has gained support from the SNP, Scottish Labour, Scottish Liberal Democrats and Scottish Green Party leaders and co-conveners.

The council supports Women 50:50's aim for fair representation of women in Scotland through legislated candidate quotas and backs the campaign's call for fair representation of women across Scotland's public life.

The council recognises that women are not a homogenous group, and that in any of our outreach work to encourage and champion women we should ensure that we engage a diverse group of women from different races, cultures, religions, disabilities, socio-economic statuses and sexualities.