

Diversity Report 2024

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1) Aim and Rationale:

- **Aim**

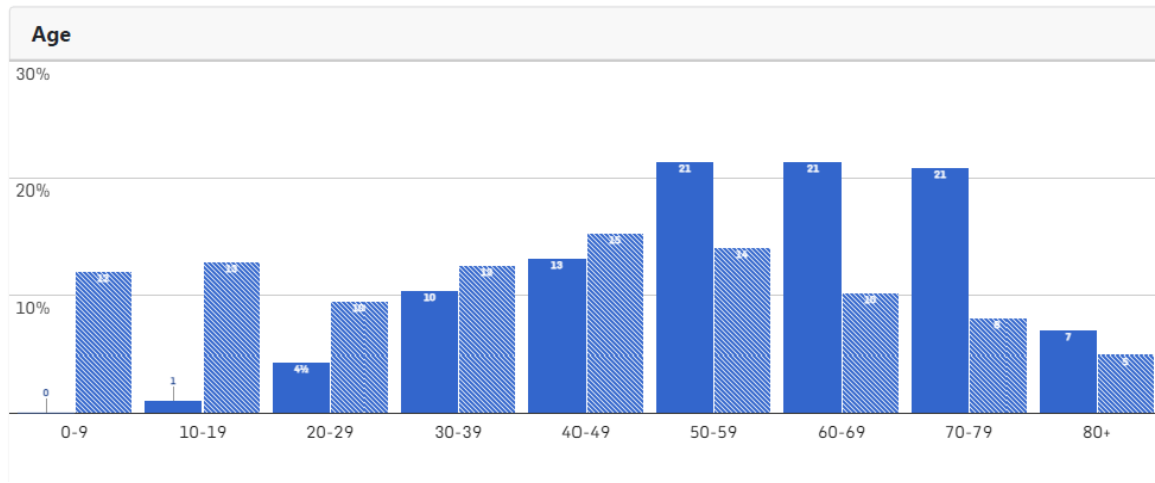
Wokingham Liberal Democrats aspire to be a diverse and inclusive local party, representative of our local population, in terms of membership, executive and elected councillors.

- **Rationale**

A political party that is diverse and representative is better able to serve the interests of the entire population, make fair and effective policy decisions, and build trust and legitimacy with voters. It strengthens democracy by ensuring that all citizens feel heard and respected in the political process.

2) Membership

- Age

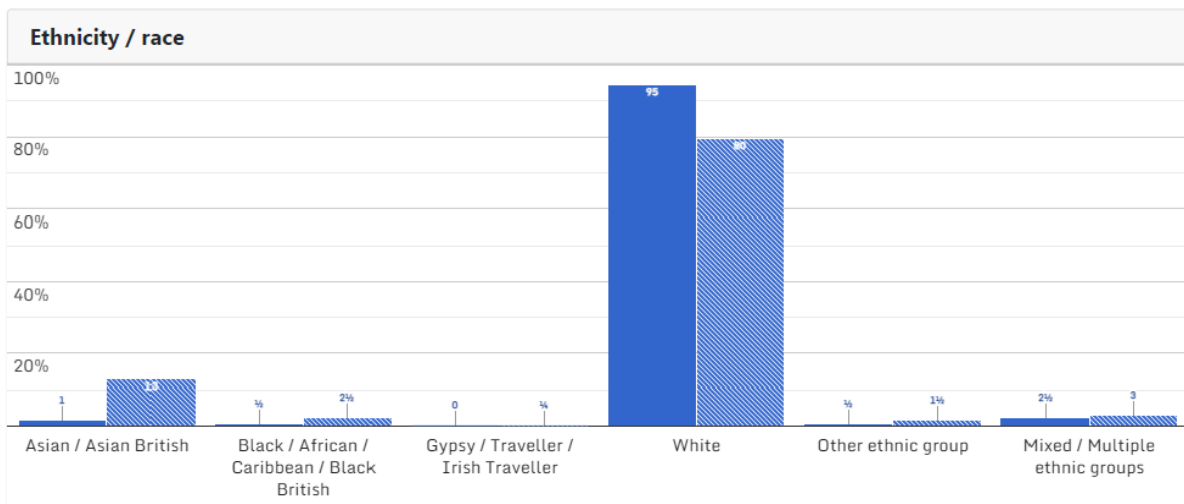


Dark blue = members in Wokingham local party

Light blue = Wokingham census 2021 data

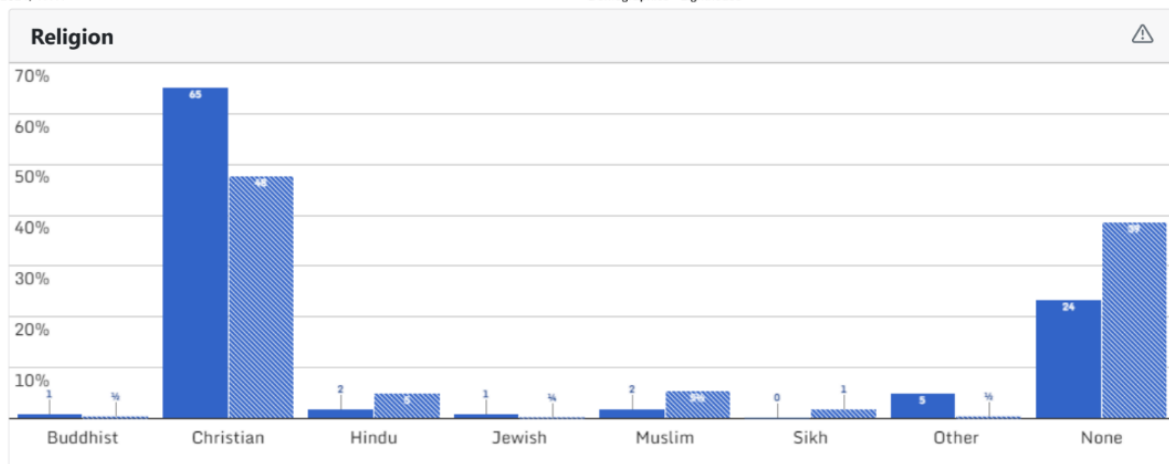
Membership is overrepresented in age groups 50+, however 30-49 look reasonable compared to census data. We have few younger members, 20-29.

- Ethnicity



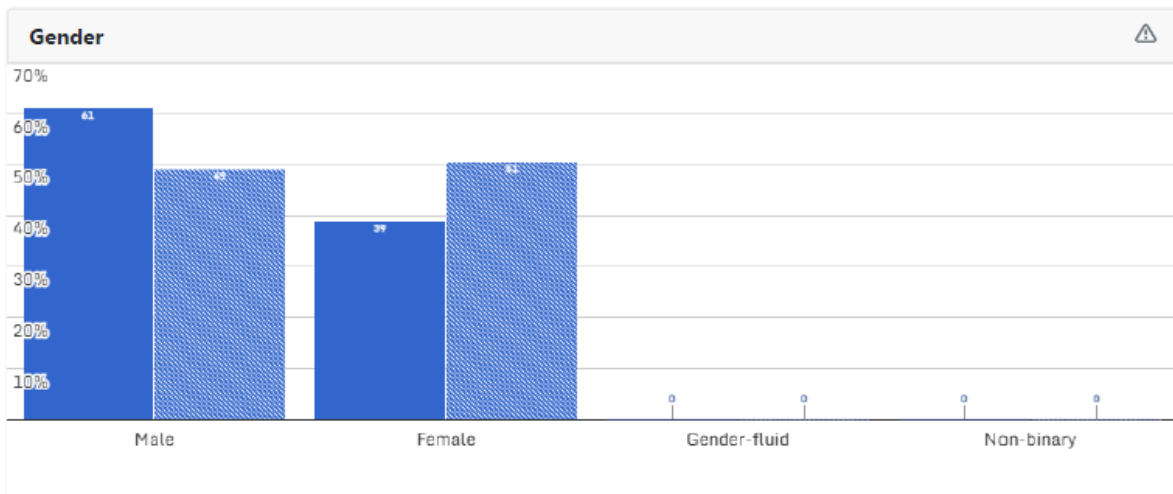
Our members are predominantly white. 2021 census data shows the population of Wokingham to be 13% Asian/Asian British but we only have 1% of our membership from that group. Increasing this should be a focus for the local party.

- **Religion**



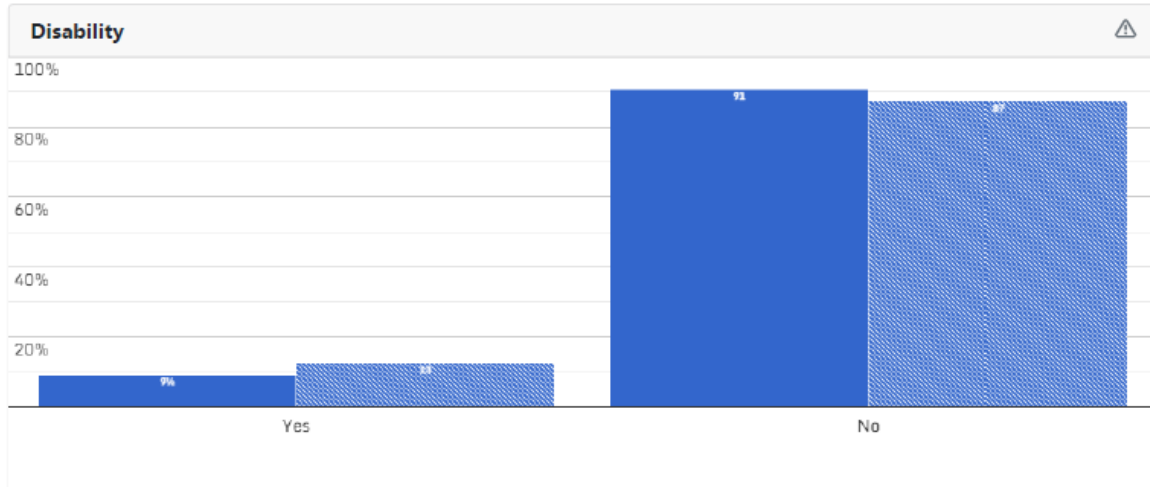
65% of our members are Christian, compared to 48% in the local population. 24% of our members state they have no religion compared to 39% in the local population. Muslims and Hindus are underrepresented in our membership.

- **Gender**



61% male, 39% female: Women are under-represented in our membership. We should seek to understand why, and address this.

- **Disability**



This looks reasonably representative, though slightly lower than the census data.

Conclusion: Given our starting point for election candidates is our membership, in order to ensure we have a diverse pipeline to draw from, we should look to increase our membership of younger people (age 20-29), women and ethnic minorities (specifically Asian to match our census data). We should seek to ensure we are considering the different Asian communities we have locally (Muslim, Hindu, Hong-Kongers, etc). Our diversity strategy (to be created) should be drafted to include these as priorities.

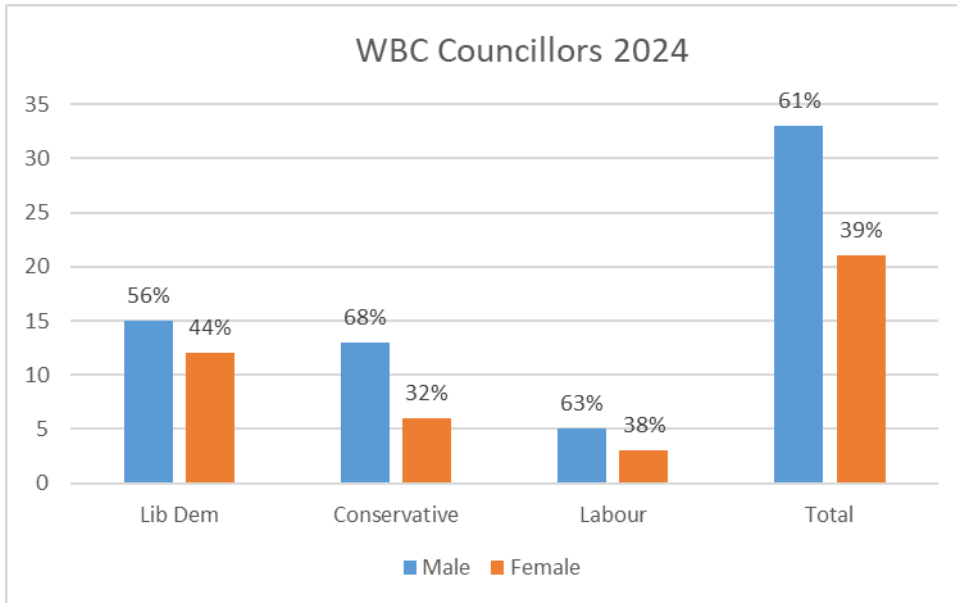
3) Elected Councillors

- **Wokingham Borough Council**

- **Gender**

Number of councillors by gender post-May 2024 election

Party	Female n (%)	Male n (%)	Total n
Lib Dem	12 (44%)	15 (56%)	27
Conservative	6 (32%)	13 (68%)	19
Labour	3 (28%)	5 (63%)	8
Total	21 (39%)	33 (61%)	54

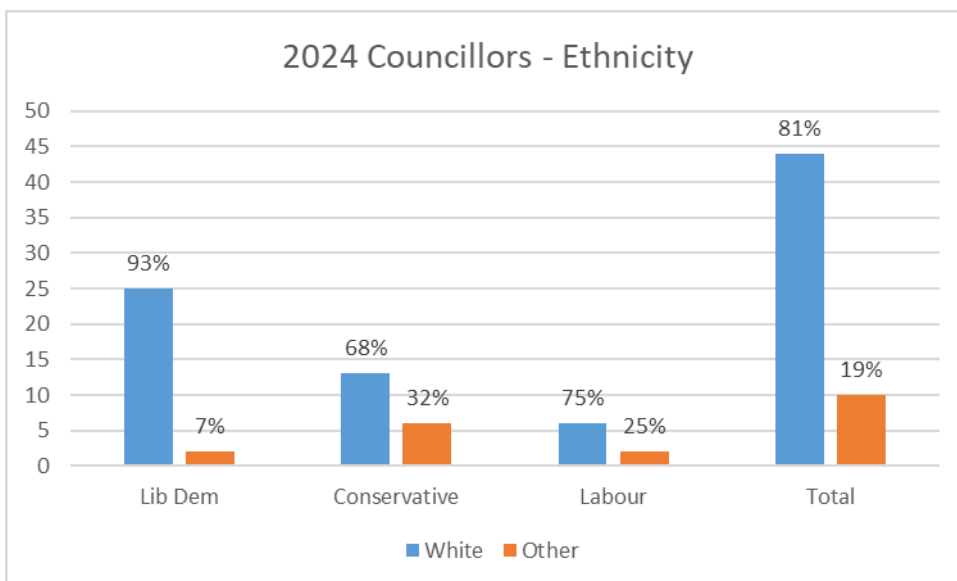


For context:

- Women’s representation on local councils in the UK is currently 37% (Oscar Research 2024) and the pace of progress is slow, rising from 28% in 1997 to 33% in 2017 (Local Government Commission, 2017).
- Representation on local councils in England by party is: Labour 47%, Liberal Democrats 35% and Conservatives 29% (Oscar Research, 2024). Labour are the only party to use positive measures to ensure a gender balance at local level.
- WBC is reflective of the national average, 39% cf 37%. Liberal Democrats in Wokingham have a better gender balance than Liberal Democrats nationally, 44% cf 35%.

○ **Ethnicity**

Data on ethnicity is not reported. The following data for WBC is “best guess” and limited to white and other.

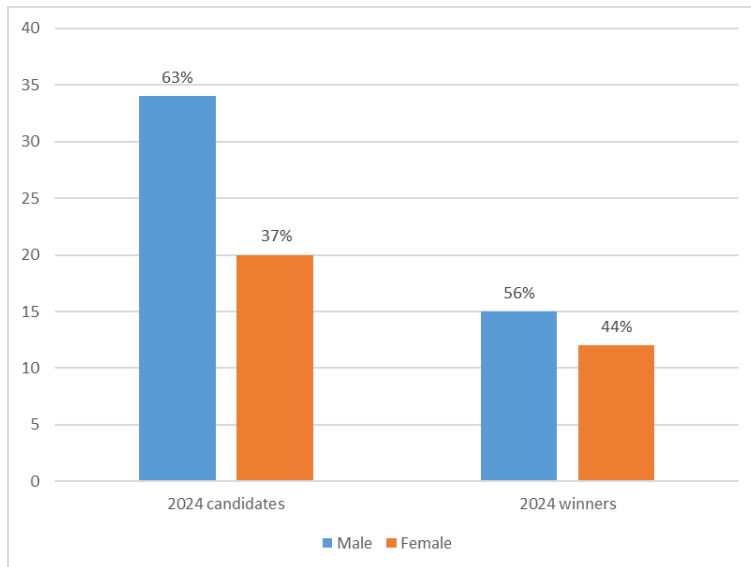


The ethnic diversity of our Lib Dem WBC councillors is not reflective of the ethnic diversity in the Borough as per the 2021 census data.

- **Age**

Currently there is no data held on age of councillors at WBC.

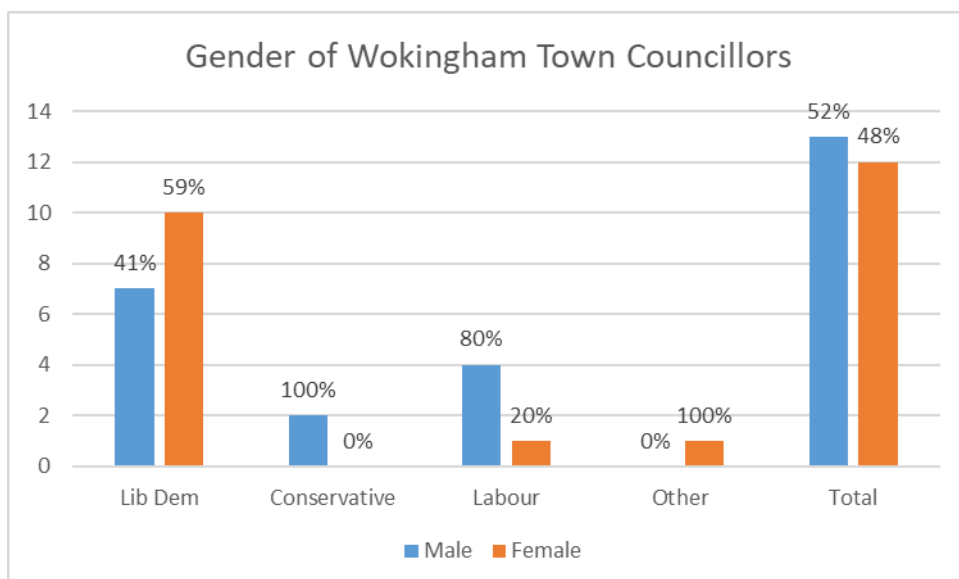
- **Lib Dem Candidates for the 2024 local election**

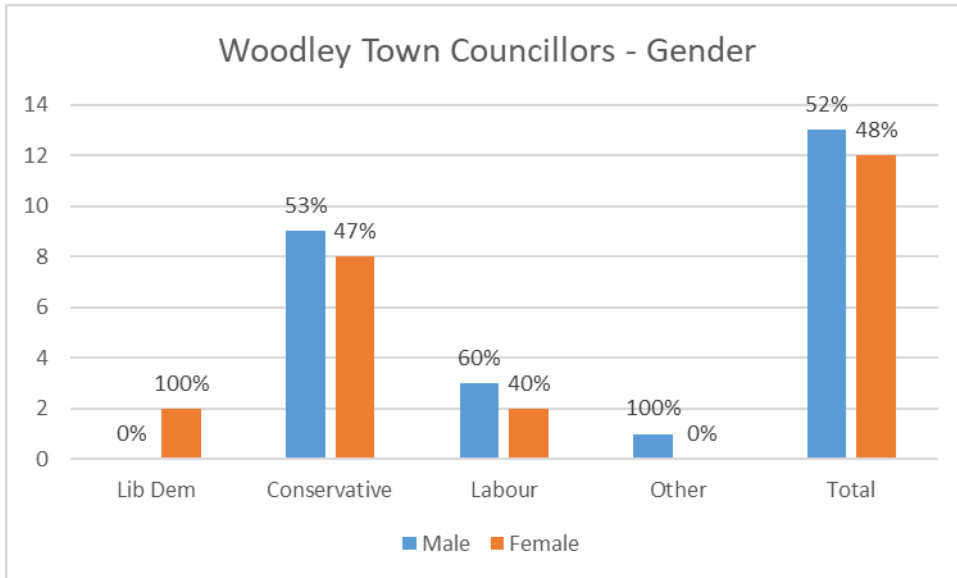


37% of our candidates were female, and 44% of those who won were female.

In order to achieve gender balance and a better representation of ethnic minorities in our elected councillors, we need to ensure diversity is deliberately considered when candidates are selected for local elections. Part of this selection strategy should include consideration of where diverse candidates are stood, wrt likelihood of winning a particular ward.

- **Town Councillors – Wokingham and Woodley**





On both Town Councils the gender balance is approaching 50/50 overall with the Liberal Democrats helping to achieve that balance.

- **Conclusion:**

Whilst we have 44% female councillors on WBC, which is better than both the overall and Lib Dem national average, we need to ensure we are paying attention to recruiting female candidates and where we are standing them in future elections.

We lack ethnic diversity compared to the 2021 census data for Wokingham in our elected councillors. We need to ensure we are building a pipeline of candidates who reflect the ethnic diversity in the borough.

Measures should include efforts to increase the ethnic diversity of our members and to recruit more female members. We should also consider how to motivate and encourage a more diverse group of our existing members to stand in local elections. We should ensure existing Town Councillors are considered as potential candidates for WBC.

Our process for selecting election candidates should include consideration of how this will improve the diversity of our elected councillors.

We should consider asking our councillors to self-declare demographic data, particularly relating to protected characteristics so that we have a better understanding of the diversity of our councillors.

4) Wokingham Liberal Democrats Executive

TBD following AGM

5) Future Plans

- **Diversity Strategy**

The Branch needs to develop a Diversity Strategy identifying the goals for membership and elected councillors. An action plan also needs to be developed and agreed by the Exec.

The strategy should identify the priorities for the Branch wrt which protected characteristics are in focus. Actions to increase representation of members, candidates and councillors with these protected characteristics should be agreed.

Whilst the Diversity Champion should take the lead on developing this strategy, it will require agreement, buy-in and support from the Exec in order to implement a successful plan.