Local Election Candidate Survey, 2011

Thank you for following the web link to this questionnaire. We are conducting this survey to collect information from candidates to learn more about the people who stand at local elections, their experience of selection and their opinions of the process. All replies will be treated confidentially.

Please enter the reference code from the top of your letter.

[   ]

1. Firstly, could you tell us whether you were elected or not at the 2011 election?

○ Elected   ○ Not elected

Your previous election experience

2. Did you ever stand for election to a principal authority, eg. London or metropolitan borough, district or county council, before 2011?

○ Yes   ○ No

2a. If yes, please click in the boxes below to show all the years that you stood as a candidate for election and any years that you won the council seat.

	candidate but not elected	**candidate and elected**
2010	○	○
2009	○	○
2008	○	○
2007	○	○
2006	○	○
2005	○	○
2004	○	○
2003	○	○
2002	○	○
2001	○	○
2000	○	○
1999	○	○
1998	○	○

	candidate but not elected	**candidate and elected**
1997	○	○
1996	○	○
1995	○	○
1994	○	○
1993	○	○
1992	○	○
1991	○	○
1990	○	○

Other political and community experience

Please click in the 'Yes' boxes below for any of the activities that apply to you and also click the 'Before standing' boxes if this occurred before you first stood as a local election candidate.

3i. Stood as a Parliamentary candidate

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3ii. Held a local party office

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3iii. Held office in a charitable oganisation

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3iv. Held office in a professional association

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3v. Held office in a trades union

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3vi. Held office in a women's organisation

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3vii. Served on a public body

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3viii. Had a position of responsibility in a local pressure group

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

3ix. Had a position of responsibility in a local community group

☐ Yes ☐ Before standing

4. When you stood for the 2011 election what was your estimation of the probability of winning this seat on a scale of 0 - 10?

○ Highly improbable0   ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5   ○ 6   ○ 7   ○ 8   ○ 9   ○ 10 Highly probable

5. Do you currently live in the ward for which you stood at the recent election?

○ Yes ○ No

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SELECTION

To be answered by candidates for registered political parties only. If you stood in 2011 as a non-party or Independent candidate, please go to Question 10.

6. For how long have you been a member of the party that you represented at the 2011 election?

○ More than 5 years

○ More than 1 year

○ Less than 1 year

○ Not a member

7. Before the 2011 election were there more people seeking selection for your party in this ward than there were available seats?

○ Yes ○ No

8. Did you apply for more than one seat in 2011?

○ Yes ○ No

9. In your opinion why were you selected to contest this particular seat? (Click as many as apply to you.)

☐ Incumbent

☐ Previously a councillor

☐ Local resident

☐ Likely to win this seat

☐ Good reputation

☐ The only volunteer

☐ Prepared to stand as paper candidate

THE 2011 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Some candidates publish information leaflets to be delivered to the residents of their ward. In this recent campaign:

10. Did you produce a campaign leaflet for distribution?

○ Yes

○ No [Goto question 17]

11. How much personal input did you have into the content of your election leaflet?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

12. Did you deliver your own campaign leaflets in your ward?

○ Yes ○ No

If 'Yes', approximately how many hours a week in total did you spend delivering your own campaign leaflets? (note: this is time that does not include door-to-door canvassing and other campaign activities.

[   ]

13. Did you have any help in delivering these leaflets?

○ Yes ○ No

13b. If 'yes' approximately how many hours a week was the average time spent by others delivering your campaign leaflets.

[   ]

14. Was your leaflet delivered to all of the addresses in your ward?

○ Yes   ○ No

If 'no', approximately what % of addresses was leafletted?

[   ]

15. Did you help deliver campaign leaflets in another ward?

○ Yes   ○ No

16. When you prepared the campaign leaflet how important was it to include the following information for voters?

	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not at all important
Your personal background	○	○	○	○
Your previous political experience	○	○	○	○
Your record of local community involvement	○	○	○	○
Your competency for public office	○	○	○	○
Comment on the record of other parties/councillors	○	○	○	○
Your party's local priorities	○	○	○	○
Your party's national policies	○	○	○	○
Political party information to increase membership	○	○	○	○
Political party information to recruit volunteer workers for campaign	○	○	○	○
Information on how to donate money to the local campaign	○	○	○	○

17. Do you maintain an online presence (excluding e-mail) in any of the following areas? If none go to Question 23.

☐ Facebook   ☐ Twitter   ☐ Personal blog   ☐ Personal website   ☐ Other

If 'Other' (eg. YouTube or Flickr) please give details:

[text box]

18. If you do have an online presence, which, if any, of these did you use as part of your ward election campaign?

[text box]

19. If you did use the Internet as part of your ward election campaign, do you think that your online presence made a difference to the effectiveness of your campaign in any of the following areas:

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not particularly effective	Made no difference
Raising my overall profile amongst voters in general	○	○	○	○
Helping to recruit volunteer workers for my campaign	○	○	○	○
Helping to encourage current volunteers to offer more of their time	○	○	○	○
Helping to raise funds for the local campaign/party	○	○	○	○
Increasing local party membership	○	○	○	○
Actually recruiting more people to vote for me	○	○	○	○
Gaining coverage from the local media	○	○	○	○

20. How much personal input did you have in compiling the content of your online campaign media?

○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

21. Did you have any help in maintaining an online presence?

○ Yes ○ No

22. Approximately how many hours a week were spent updating online media?

[text box]

23. Thinking back to the recent campaign, do you agree or disagree with following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Str dis
Local newspaper coverage of the campaign was fair	○	○	○	○	
The online campaign was of little interest to most people in the ward	○	○	○	○	
Most candidates in the ward had an online presence	○	○	○	○	
Voters were mostly interested in the national campaign issues of the major parties	○	○	○	○	
The national referendum on voting reform was allowed to dominate the local election campaign	○	○	○	○	

24. Did you campaign in other wards?

○ Yes ○ No

25. Apart from the time you spent delivering campaign leaflets approximately how many hours a week did you spend on each of the following campaign activities?

Door-canvassing [   ]

Telephone-canvassing [   ]

Internet campaigning [   ]

Other [   ]

Total per week [   ]

If 'Other', please state what activities

[   ]

26. Here is a list of activities which frequently form part of a ward campaign. Please indicate on the scale shown below how much effort was put into each of them during your campaign, whether very little or no effort (1), a very substantial effort (5), or somewhere in between.

	Very little or no effort				Very substantial effort
	1	2	3	4	5
Distributing leaflets	○	○	○	○	○
Door-to-door canvassing to draw up lists of supporters	○	○	○	○	○
Door- to-door canvassing to introduce the candidate	○	○	○	○	○

	Very little or no effort				Very substantial effort
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Telephone canvassing	○	○	○	○	○
Sending out election addresses	○	○	○	○	○
Emailing voters	○	○	○	○	○
Organising postal votes	○	○	○	○	○
Specific campaigning aimed at postal voters	○	○	○	○	○
Special efforts to appeal to specific groups of voters	○	○	○	○	○
Getting media coverage	○	○	○	○	○
Maintaining a website	○	○	○	○	○
Social Network sites (e.g. Facebook)	○	○	○	○	○
Video/image sharing sites (e.g. YouTube/Flickr)	○	○	○	○	○

27. Did you 'knock up' or 'fetch out' voters on polling day using lists of 'promises' based on canvass returns?

○ Yes ○ No

28. On polling day were some of your 'promises' contacted by telephone to remind them to vote?

○ Yes

○ No

29. Overall. did you enjoy campaigning?

○ Yes

○ No

30. Would you be prepared to stand as a candidate for local election again?

○ Yes

○ No

STANDING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

31. In local elections many incumbents seeking re-election are successful. Below is a list of possible explanations for why this might be the case. Please click on any that apply.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Greater experience gained from working on the council	○	○	○	○	
Enjoy a higher local profile than their challengers	○	○	○	○	
Incumbents put more personal effort into their re-election campaigns	○	○	○	○	
Are able to recurit more volunteers for their campaigns	○	○	○	○	
Have a stronger relationship with local media	○	○	○	○	
Support from among local voters is consistent and reliable	○	○	○	○	
Incumbents no longer have an advantage	○	○	○	○	

32. Almost all adults are eligible to become local councillors, yet relatively few come forward to be candidates. Do you agree or disagree with these possible reasons for the non-involvement of most citizens?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Being a councillor is too time consuming	○	○	○	○	
Councillors don't have the power to make a difference	○	○	○	○	
Councillors are insufficiently paid	○	○	○	○	
Intrusive media coverage of personal life may discourage some people from standing	○	○	○	○	
Political parties dominate local government and this discourages people who don't want a party allegiance	○	○	○	○	
Political parties should recruit some local candidates who are not party members	○	○	○	○	

33. One of the aims of recent modernisation initiatives in local government is to attract a greater cross-section of people to serve as councillors. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree
There should be more women as councillors	○
There should be more younger (18-35 years) people as councillors	○
There should be more Black, Asian and minority ethnic people as councillors	○
Greater social diversity amongst councillors would improve the public image of local government	○

34. Do you agree or disagree with the following general explanations of why there are relatively few women in local politics?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disag
are not interested in politics	○	○	○	○	○
don't have the confidence for politics	○	○	○	○	○
put their families above a political career	○	○	○	○	○
don't like the confrontational style of politics	○	○	○	○	○
are put off by the councillor stereotype of white, male and middle aged	○	○	○	○	○
In general, local parties don't do enough to recruit women candidates	○	○	○	○	○
In general, too few women come forward to be candidates	○	○	○	○	○

35. Do you agree or disagree with the following general explanation of why there are relatively few people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in local politics?

	Strongly agree	Ag
are not interested in politics	○	○
don't have the confidence for politics	○	○
put their families above a political career	○	○
don't like the confrontational style of politics	○	○
are put off by the councillor stereotype of white, male and middle aged	○	○
In general, local parties don't do enough to recruit Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates	○	○
In general, too few Black, Asian and minority ethnic people come forward to be candidates	○	○

36. Do you agree or disagree with the following general explanations of why there are relatively few younger people (18-35 years age group) in local politics?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
are not interested in politics	○	○	○	○	○
don't have the confidence for politics	○	○	○	○	○
put their families before politics	○	○	○	○	○
don't like the confrontational style of politics	○	○	○	○	○
are put off by the councillor stereotype of white, male and middle aged	○	○	○	○	○
In general, local parties don't do enough to recruit younger people	○	○	○	○	○
In general, too few younger people come forward to be candidates	○	○	○	○	○

37. In your opinion which of these reasons account for councillors standing down after just one four-year term? (please click on any that apply)

☐ They have achieved what they set out to do

☐ Being a councillor is too time consuming

☐ Find it difficult to get time off work for council meetings

☐ Can't balance family commitments with council duties

☐ Councillors don't have the power to make a difference

☐ Councillors are insufficiently paid

☐ Councillors receive insufficient support from the council

☐ Intrusive media coverage

☐ Party political domination

YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A COUNCILLOR

Questions 38 to 41 should be answered only by those who had experience as a councillor, PRIOR to the 2011 election. Otherwise please go to Question 42.

38. Approximately how many hours a week did you spend on council duties?

39. In your capacity as a councillor did you have additional responsibilities eg. leader of the council, or other portfolio holder?

40. Approximately how much time did you spend travelling to and from a council meeting?

41. Approximately how frequently were you involved in the following activities relating to your position as a councillor?

	More than once a week	More than once a month	About once a month	Less than once a month	Never
Hold ward surgeries	○	○	○	○	○
Circulate newsletters	○	○	○	○	○
Circulate e-newsletters	○	○	○	○	○

	More than once a week	More than once a month	About once a month	Less than once a month	Never
Receive letters from residents	○	○	○	○	○
Receive telephone calls from residents	○	○	○	○	○
Receive emails from residents	○	○	○	○	○
Contact an MP on behalf of a resident	○	○	○	○	○
Attend community events	○	○	○	○	○
Attend party meetings	○	○	○	○	○
Contact local media to publicise ward news	○	○	○	○	○
Approached by local reporters to give interviews	○	○	○	○	○

YOUR POLITICAL CAREER

Your experience of becoming a candidate for the first time

42. How positive or negative were the following people in encouraging you to become a candidate the FIRST TIME you stood for election?

	Very positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very negative	Not applicable
Your spouse or partner	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other family members	○	○	○	○	○	○
Personal friends	○	○	○	○	○	○
Community groups	○	○	○	○	○	○
Business associates	○	○	○	○	○	○
Party members	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local Pressure Group	○	○	○	○	○	○
Women's groups	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trades Union	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Others	○	○	○	○	○	○

43. Thinking about your experience of standing for the first time, was the initial decision to put yourself forward for selection....

○ entirely your own decision

○ consequence of being approached or encouraged by others

Please now answer either 43a OR 43b.

43a. If entirely your own decision was this because: (please click on the one that most applies)

○ You saw it as an important step in beginning a career in politics

○ You felt strongly that you could make a difference

○ You did it for general volunteering reasons

○ You knew someone else who was serving on the council

43b. If consequence of being approached or encouraged by others was it because you were approached by: (please click on the one that most applies)

○ A serving councillor

○ A member of the local political party

○ A friend/neighbour

○ A member of a local trades union

○ A member of a local community group

○ A member of a local club, e.g. rotary club

○ Other

If 'Other' please specify

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44. During the election campaign did you deliver any information about the national referendum on voting reform?

○ Yes

○ No

Please now answer either 44a OR 44b.

44a. If '**yes**'

○ Did the literature favour a yes vote

○ Did the lterature favour a no vote

○ Was the literature neutral in tone

44b. If '**no**'

○ I was never asked to deliver any literature about the referendum

○ I was asked to deliver literature but declined to do so

45. In the national referendum on AV did you personally vote

○ Yes

○ No

○ Did not vote

○ Do not want to say

FINALLY, A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

46. Are you?

○ Male

○ Female

47. What was your age last birthday? (Years)

48. Ethnic Origin (please choose ONE from section A - E, then click on the appropriate box)
White

○ British (English, Scots, Welsh or N. Irish)

○ Irish Republic

○ Other White

Asian

○ Asian British

○ Indian

○ Pakistani

○ Bangladeshi

○ Other Asian

Mixed

○ White and Black Caribbean

○ White and Black African

○ White and Asian

○ Other Mixed

Black

○ Black British

○ Caribbean

○ African

○ Other Black

Chines or other ethnic group

○ Chinese

Other

○ Any other

49. Educational qualifications: (Please click the highest that you have obtained)

○ No qualifications

○ GCSEs or equivalent

○ "A" levels or equivalent

○ First degree

○ Higher degree

50. Which of these best describes your current occupation? Please click one.

○ In full time paid employment

○ In part-time paid employment

○ Self-employed

○ Permanently sick or disabled

○ In voluntary occupation

○ Registered unemployed

○ Full-time student

○ Retired

○ Looking after home/family

50a. Other (please specify)

51. If currently employed, what is your occupation, or if unemployed/retired what was your previous occupation?

52. How would you describe your current or previous occupational status? (please tick one)

○ Professional occupation

○ Managerial and/or Technical occupation

○ Skilled occupation, non manual

○ Skilled occupation, manual

○ Partly skilled occupation

○ Unskilled occupation

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire all replies will remain confidential. Details about previous candidate surveys can be found on our website http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/elections

If you would be willing to take part in a follow-up interview please write in a telephone number or email address.

Telephone No.

[   ]

Email address:

[   ]

[Submit Survey]