

LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATE SURVEY, 2006

We are conducting this survey to collect information from candidates to learn more about the people who stand for local elections, their experience of selection and their opinions of the process. All replies will be treated confidentially and anonymised for our analysis.

1. Firstly, we'd like to learn about your previous political and local community activity.

Prior to the 2006 election,

a. Had you ever been a candidate in metropolitan, district, unitary, London borough and / or county council elections?

Yes ₁ No ₀

If yes, how many times? and when was the first time?

b. Had you ever been elected to metropolitan, district, unitary, London borough and / or county councils?

Yes ₁ No ₀

If yes, how many times? and when was the first time?

Please tick if you have ever:

c	Stood as a Parliamentary candidate	
d	Held a local party office	
e	Held office in a charitable organisation	
g	Held office in a professional association	
h	Held office in a trade union	
i	Held office in women's organisation	
j	Served on a local public body	
k	Had a position of responsibility in a local pressure group	
l	Had a position of responsibility in a local community group	
	tick, 1, blank, 0	

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING A CANDIDATE FOR THE FIRST TIME

2. Why did you first stand as a candidate in a local election? Please rank the following reasons in order of importance.

	1 st reason	2 nd reason	3 rd reason
I wanted to support my party			
I was asked to stand			
I thought I could win			
Dissatisfaction with previous councillor(s)			
I wanted to do something to improve this area for the residents.			
I knew people on the council who encouraged me to stand			
I felt very strongly about particular issues / or a single issue and wanted to do something.			
Response code	1	2	3

Other reasons, please specify

.....

3. Some people may receive encouragement from those around them when they decide to stand for public office, whilst others may experience indifference or disapproval. How positive or negative were the following people in encouraging you to become a candidate the **first time** you stood for election? Please tick one box in each row.

	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	Not Applicable
Your spouse or partner						
Other family members						
Personal friends						
Community groups						
Business associates						
Party members						
Party agents						
Local Pressure Group						
Women's groups						
Trade unions						
Employers						
Others						
Response code	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Thinking about your experience of standing for the first time, was the initial decision to put yourself forward for selection?
(Please tick one)

a	Entirely your own		1
b	Consequence of being approached or encouraged by others		2
c	Mixture of a personal decision assisted by supporters.		3

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SELECTION

To be answered by candidates for registered political parties only.

If standing as a non-party or Independent candidate, please proceed to Question 12

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

Yes ₁ No ₀

6. Did you apply for more than one seat in 2006?

Yes ₁ No ₀

7. In your opinion why were you were selected to contest this seat?

	1 st reason	2 nd reason
Incumbent		
Previously a councillor		
Local resident		
Likely to win this seat		
Good reputation		
The only volunteer		
Prepared to stand as paper candidate		
Response code	1	2

Any other reasons?.....
.....

8. To what extent do you think these factors contributed to your successful selection.

	Very much	Quite a lot	Not very much	Not at all
Your previous political experience				
Your previous community involvement				
Being known to members of the selection committee				
Your age				
Your gender				
Your current or previous employment				
Your reputation				
Response code	1	2	3	4

9. Did you feel that the selection process was?
(Please tick one box in each row)

	Very	Quite	Not very	Not at all
Democratic				
Efficient				
Complicated				
Response code	1	2	3	4

10. Are there any aspects of the selection procedure that you feel could be improved?

Yes ₁ No ₀

11. If Yes, please give details.....

.....

16. Apart from campaign literature did you canvass the residents by any of these means?

- a. Telephone calls Yes ₁ No ₀
 If yes, did you have help with making calls? ₁ ₀
 How were the telephone numbers selected?

- b. Public meetings Yes ₁ No ₀
 If yes, how many?

- c. Visiting households ₁ ₀

- d. Approximately what percentage of the households in your ward was canvassed by you, or on your behalf during the campaign?
.....%

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

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The campaign received sufficient coverage by the local media					
The campaign was of little interest to most people in the ward					
Local newspaper coverage of the campaign was fair					
Voters were mostly interested in the national campaign issues of the major parties.					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

18. Overall, did you enjoy campaigning? Yes ₁ No ₀

Would you be prepared to stand as a candidate for local election again? Yes ₁ No ₀

HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE

19. 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	Strongly Disagree
Being a councillor is too time consuming					
Councillors don't have the power to make a difference					
Councillors are insufficiently paid					
Most people are disinterested in local government					
Intrusive media coverage of personal life may discourage some people from standing					
There is a general lack of public knowledge about local government					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

20. 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	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There should be more women as councillors.					
There should be more young people as councillors					
There should be more councillors with ethnic minority backgrounds					
Greater social diversity amongst councillors would improve the public image of local government.					
Greater social diversity amongst councillors would increase voter-turnout					
Women and men have different life experiences and so bring distinctive insights to the work of a council.					
In general, women councillors have different policy priorities than men.					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

21. Local authorities use a variety of ways to publicise the role of councillors and to encourage more people to stand as candidates. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Local authorities should provide more public information about the work of councillors.					
It is the responsibility of the political parties to recruit candidates					
Councillors are in the best position to recruit new candidates					
Local authorities should advertise for candidates					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

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

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Women are not interested in politics					
Women don't have the confidence for politics					
Women put their families above a political career					
Political parties should encourage more women to be candidates					
Voters discriminate against women candidates					
Too few women come forward to be candidates					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

23. Do you approve or disapprove of the following suggestions for increasing the numbers of women councillors?

	Strongly Approve	Approve	Neutral	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove
All women shortlists					
Party quotas for women candidates					

Questions 24 & 25 should be answered only by those who had experience as a councillor, prior to the 2006 election.

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

25. 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					
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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

Finally, a few questions about you.

26. Are you ? Male ₁ Female ₂

27. What was your age last birthday?years.

28. Do you live in the ward where you stood for election?.....

29. How would you describe your ethnic background?

30. Educational qualifications: please tick any that you have obtained.

GCSEs or equivalent	
"A" levels or equivalent	
First degree	
Higher degree	
No qualifications	
Professional qualifications, please specify.	
Tick, 1 blank 0	

31. Which of these best describes your current occupation? please tick one.

In full time paid employment		1
In part-time paid employment		2
Self-employed		3
In voluntary occupation		4
Registered unemployed		5
Full-time student		6
Retired		7
Looking after home / children / other relatives		8

Other

32. If currently employed, what is your occupation, or if retired what was your previous occupation?

.....

33. How would you describe your current or previous occupational status? please tick one.

Professional occupation		1
Managerial and / or Technical occupation		2
Skilled occupation, non manual		3
Skilled occupation, manual		4
Partly skilled occupation		5
Unskilled occupation		6

34. Where would you most like to be in ten years from now?

A councillor		1
A Member of Parliament		2
Employed full-time, away from politics		3
Employed by a political party		4
Retired from public life		5

Other.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your comments are much appreciated and will contribute enormously towards our aim to reflect the opinions of as many candidates as we can in our report. Please feel free to add any observations of your own about the experience of being a candidate or elaborate on your answers to our questions.

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:

Mary Shears.