

LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATE SURVEY 2010

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.

1. Firstly, could you tell us whether you were elected or not at the 2010 election?

Elected ₁ Not elected ₀

2. This year the General Election date was chosen to coincide with your local elections. Please respond to each of the following statements concerning this decision. (Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Holding simultaneous elections is a good idea					
The public interest is heightened by the General Election and that interest spilled over into the local council elections					
Campaigning locally was difficult because voters were largely interested in the parliamentary election					
Our local party priorities were eclipsed by the party's national campaign					
It was difficult for my party to recruit local election candidates because of the general election					
The local campaign received sufficient coverage by the local press					
Local newspaper coverage of the local campaign was fair					

3. When you stood for the 2010 election what was your estimation of the probability of winning this seat on a scale of 0 - 10? *(Please circle the appropriate number.)*

Highly improbable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Highly probable*

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

Yes ₁ No ₀

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SELECTION

Questions 5 – 8 to be answered by candidates for registered political parties only.
If you stood in 2010 as a non-party or Independent candidate, please go directly to Question 9.

5. For how long have you been a member of the party that you represented at the 2010 election? *(Please tick **ONE** box).*

More than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	More than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/>	Not a member <input type="checkbox"/>
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6. Before the 2010 election were there more people seeking selection for your party in this ward than there were available seats?

Yes ₁ No ₀

7. Did you apply for more than one seat in 2010?

Yes ₁ No ₀

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

	Tick those that apply
Incumbent	
Previously a councillor	
Local resident	
Likely to win this seat	
Good reputation	
The only volunteer	
Prepared to stand as paper candidate	

THE 2010 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

9. Canvassing during the campaign. *(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).*

	Yes	No
Did you produce a campaign leaflet for distribution?		
Did you deliver the campaign leaflets?		
Was your leaflet delivered to all addresses in your ward?		
Did you canvass by telephone?		
Did you canvass by the internet / email?		
Did you contact any of the local media in order to publicise your campaign?		

If you produced a campaign leaflet please answer Q.10 if not go to Q11.

10. In your campaign literature how important was it to include the following information for voters? *(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).*

	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				
Political party information to increase membership				

11. Did you campaign in other wards?

Yes ₁ No ₀

12. Approximately how many hours a week did you spend campaigning during the election period?

Hours

13. Overall, did you enjoy campaigning?

Yes ₁ No ₀

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

Yes ₁ No ₀

15. In the future do you have an ambition to stand as a candidate for any of these elections? *(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).*

	Yes	No	Don't know
European Parliament			
UK Parliament			
London Assembly			
County Council			

Questions 16 – 19 are to be answered by candidates for the London local elections only.

If standing for any other local authority elections please go directly to question 20.

The London Councils have funded a non-political campaign, entitled 'Be a Councillor' to encourage a wider range of people to become councillors.

16. Were you aware of the 'Be a Councillor' campaign? Yes ₁ No ₀

17. Did you attend any events run by your local council about becoming a councillor? Yes ₁ No ₀

18. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements *(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).*

	Yes	No	Don't Know
A non-political campaign is the best way to encourage a wider range of people to become councillors			
A non-political campaign is the best way to publicise the work of councillors			
Political parties should be allocated funds so that they can afford to run their own recruitment campaigns			
The members of my local constituency party actively recruit diverse candidates			

19. Which of these describes your experience before standing for election in 2010? *(Please tick **ONE** box only).*

I was a party member who subsequently decided to stand for election	
I was a party member who was asked to stand for election	
I wanted to be a councillor and joined a political party to help me achieve my ambition	
I wanted to be a councillor but decided to stand as an Independent candidate	

STANDING FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

20. 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? *(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).*

	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					
Once elected councillors receive insufficient support from the council					
Most people are not interested 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					
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					

21. 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? *(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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.					
Greater social diversity amongst councillors would increase voter turnout					

22. There are 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? (Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

	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					
Local authority websites should contain information about becoming an election candidate					
Local authorities should enclose leaflets about becoming a candidate with the council tax notification					
National parties should do more to project positive images of local councillors					
There should be a national advertising campaign to attract local election candidates from outside the political parties					

23. Do you agree or disagree with the following general explanations of why there are relatively few women in local politics? (Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

Women...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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					

24. Do you agree or disagree with the following general explanations of why there are relatively few people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in local politics? (Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

<i>Black, Asian and minority ethnic people...</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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					

25. 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? (Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

<i>Younger people...</i>	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					

26. In your opinion which of these reasons account for councillors standing down after just one four-year term?

	Please tick those 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	

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

27. Proposals are suggested that seek to encourage more members of the general public to become actively engaged in influencing and shaping local policy.

What are your views about using the following methods to involve the public?
(Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

	A good idea	A bad idea	Don't know
Recall elections where councillors can be removed from office if a quarter of the local electorate petition for that to happen			
Local referendums			
Open coffee mornings with local councillors			
Regular meetings with local groups			
Internet polling of local citizens			
Meet your councillor session at local community centre / library			
Newsletters			
Internet Blogs			
Greater use of social media, e.g. Twitter / Facebook			
Live Web video coverage of council meetings			
Web 'Town Hall' discussions			
Invite councillors to local events			
Councillors to talk more to local press			

28. Do you agree or disagree that increased public engagement could be effective in these areas? (Please tick **ONE** box in each row).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Increase understanding of local government					
Increase trust in local government					
Identify local problems					
Inform the council about residents' priorities					
Inform residents about complex issues					
Create opportunities for residents to suggest alternative solutions					
Obtain the views of a wider range of residents					
Encourage more people to stand for election					
Encourage more people to vote in local elections					

YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A COUNCILLOR

Questions 29 – 32 should be answered only by those who had experience as a councillor, PRIOR to the 2010 election. Otherwise please go directly to Question 33

29. How many hours a week did you spend on council duties?

Hours

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

.....

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

Hours

32. Approximately how frequently were you involved in the following activities relating to your position as a councillor? (*Please tick **ONE** box in each row.*)

	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					

YOUR POLITICAL CAREER

Your experience of becoming a candidate for the first time

33. 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						
Local Pressure Group						
Women's groups						
Trade unions						
Employers						
Others						

34. 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 decision		
b)	consequence of being approached or encouraged by others		

Please now answer EITHER Q35a OR Q35b

- 35.a) *If entirely your own decision* was this because: (*Please tick **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	

- 35.b) *If consequence of being approached or encouraged by others* was it because you were approached by: (*Please tick **ONE** that most applies*).

A serving councillor	
A member of the local political party	
A friend / neighbour	
A member of a local trade union	
A member of a local community group	
A member of a local club, e.g. rotary club	
Other (please specify)	

YOUR PREVIOUS ELECTION EXPERIENCE

36. Did you ever stand for election to a principal authority, eg. London or metropolitan borough, district or county council, before 2010? Yes ₁ No ₀

If **Yes**, please tick in the boxes below to show all the years that you stood as a candidate and, where relevant, those years when you were successful in being elected. (*Please tick as **many** as apply to you*).

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
candidate										
elected										

	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990
candidate										
elected										

OTHER POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

37. Please tick in the 'Yes' column below for any of the activities that apply to you and also tick the 'before standing' column if this occurred **before** you first stood as a local election candidate:

		Yes	<i>Before standing</i>
i	Stood as a Parliamentary candidate		
ii	Held a local party office		
iii	Held office in a charitable organisation		
iv	Held office in a professional association		
v	Held office in a trades union		
vi	Held office in a women's organisation		
vii	Served on a public body		
viii	Had a position of responsibility in a local pressure group		
ix	Had a position of responsibility in a local community group		

FINALLY, A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

38. Are you ? Male ₁ Female ₂

39. What was your age last birthday? years

40. Ethnic origin (*Please choose **ONE** from section A – E, then tick the appropriate box*)

A. White

- British ₁
- Irish ₂
- Other White (*please specify*) ₃
.....

B. Asian

- Asian British ₄
- Indian ₅
- Pakistani ₆
- Bangladeshi ₇
- Other Asian (*please specify*)..... ₈

C. Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean ₉
- White and Black African ₁₀
- White and Asian ₁₁
- Other Mixed (*please specify*) ₁₂

D. Black

- Black British ₁₃
- Caribbean ₁₄
- African ₁₅
- Other Black (*please specify*)..... ₁₆

E. Chinese or other ethnic group

- Chinese ₁₇
- Any other (*please specify*) ₁₈
.....

41. Educational qualifications: (*Please tick the highest that you have obtained*).

No qualifications	1
GCSEs or equivalent	2
'A' levels or equivalent	3
First degree	4
Higher degree	5

42. 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
Permanently sick or disabled		4
In voluntary occupation		5
Registered unemployed		6
Full-time student		7
Retired		8
Looking after home / family		9
Other (<i>please specify</i>)		

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

.....

44. 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

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire - all replies will remain confidential.

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, Research Officer : LGC Elections Centre : University of Plymouth