

*LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATE SURVEY, 2008*

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 2008 election

Elected  <sub>1</sub>                      Not elected  <sub>0</sub>

2. We'd also like to learn about your previous political and local community activity.

**Prior to the 2008 election,**

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

Yes  <sub>1</sub>                      No  <sub>0</sub>

If '**Yes**' how many times? ..... and, when was the first time? .....

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

Yes  <sub>1</sub>                      No  <sub>0</sub>

If '**Yes**', how many times? ..... and, when was the first time? .....

2.c) 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	Before standing
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 trade union		
vi	Held office in women's organisation		
vii	Served on a local public body		
viii	Had a position of responsibility in a local pressure group		
ix	Had a position of responsibility in a local community group		
		tick, 1, blank, 0	tick, 1, blank, 0

**YOUR EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING A CANDIDATE FOR THE FIRST TIME**

3. Why did you **FIRST** stand as a candidate in a local election?)

	<i>Please tick those that apply</i>
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

Other reasons, please specify .....

.....

.....

4. 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.*)

	<i>Very Positive</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Very Negative</i>	<i>Not Applicable</i>
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

5. 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		1
b)	consequence of being approached or encouraged by others		2

**Please now answer EITHER 5a OR 5b**

- 5.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	

- 5.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 EXPERIENCE OF SELECTION

**To be answered by candidates for registered political parties only**

If you stood in 2008 as a non-party or Independent candidate, please go to **Question 11**

6. Are you a party member?

Yes ☉<sub>1</sub>                      No ☉<sub>0</sub>

If 'Yes' for approximately how many years have you been a member? .....

7. Before the 2008 election were there more people seeking selection for your party in this ward than there were available seats?

Yes ☉<sub>1</sub>                      No ☉<sub>0</sub>

8. Did you apply for more than one seat in 2008?

Yes ☉<sub>1</sub>                      No ☉<sub>0</sub>

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

	<i>Tick those that apply</i>
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

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

10. To what extent do you think these factors contributed to your successful selection?  
 (Please tick **ONE** box in each row)

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

**To be answered by all candidates**

11. When you stood for the 2008 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*

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

Yes ☉<sub>1</sub>      No ☉<sub>0</sub>

13. Did you personally choose to stand for this seat?

Yes ☉<sub>1</sub>      No ☉<sub>0</sub>

If '**No**' why are you standing in this ward? .....  
 .....

**THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

14. During your election campaign did you contact any of the local media in order to publicise your campaign?

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>

If **'Yes'**, were you successful in obtaining a media response

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>

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

Did you produce a campaign leaflet for distribution?

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>                      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>

If **'Yes'**, go to **Question 16**      If **'No'**, go to **Question 19**

16. Did you deliver the campaign leaflets?

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>

If **'Yes'**, approximately how many hours a week did you spend delivering campaign leaflets? .....

17. Was your leaflet delivered to all addresses in your ward?

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>

If **'No'**, how were the addresses selected?

.....

18. In your campaign literature how important was it to include the following information for voters?

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Quite Important</i>	<i>Not Very Important</i>	<i>Not At All Important</i>
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				
Response code	1	2	3	4

19. Thinking back to the recent campaign, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please tick **ONE** box in each row.)

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
The campaign received sufficient coverage by the local press					
The campaign received sufficient coverage by local radio					
Local newspaper coverage of the campaign was fair					
National issues and not local issues were allowed to dominate the campaign.					
National party leaders should keep a low profile and let local elections be decided by local factors alone					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

20. Did you campaign in other wards?

Yes <sub>1</sub>      No <sub>0</sub>

If 'Yes', why did you campaign in those wards? .....

.....

.....

21. Overall, did you enjoy campaigning?

Yes <sub>1</sub>      No <sub>0</sub>

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

Yes <sub>1</sub>      No <sub>0</sub>

Questionnaire continues on next page.../

**HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE**

23. 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.)

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

24. 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.)

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
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					
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

25. 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.)

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

26. 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.)

<i>Women...</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire continues on next page.../

27. 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>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

28. 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>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire continues on next page.../

29. It is sometimes argued that local government needs new blood and this may mean encouraging long-serving councillors into retirement. Do you believe that:

29 a) Councillors should be forced to stand down at the election immediately following their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>      Don't Know ⑥<sub>9</sub>

29 b) There should be a restriction on the number of consecutive four-year terms that a councillor can serve

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>      Don't Know ⑥<sub>9</sub>

If 'Yes', how many consecutive four-year terms .....

29 c) If legal limits were introduced do you believe that councillors forced to stand down should receive some financial compensation

i) For retiring at age 70:

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>      Don't Know ⑥<sub>9</sub>

ii) For reaching term limit:

Yes ⑥<sub>1</sub>      No ⑥<sub>0</sub>      Don't Know ⑥<sub>9</sub>

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

	<i>Please tick those that apply</i>
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	
Response code	1

**Questions 31- 33 should be answered only by those who had experience as a councillor, PRIOR to the 2008 election. Otherwise please go to Question 34**

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

Hours .....

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

.....  
 .....

33. 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					
Response code	1	2	3	4	5

**FINALLY, A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU**

34. Are you ? Male  1 Female  2

35. What was your age last birthday? .....years.

36. 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
- .....

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

No qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
GCSEs or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
“A” levels or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
First degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Higher degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

38. 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>		

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

40. 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

41. Which of these additional public activities applies to you?

A school governor		1
Member of a health care trust or similar		2
Member of a public board or committee		3
Carry out unpaid, voluntary/charity work		4
Other <i>(please specify)</i>		5

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses 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, Research Officer.  
LGC Elections Centre

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