

**ITEM 12**  
**ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE TO STAND AS COUNCILLORS**  
**OSCPR190106**

Introduction

- 1.1 Members requested a review into what could be done to attract more people to stand as Councillors.
- 1.2 Questions were put to the Community Voice Panel in December to establish what local barriers there might be which prevent people from standing as a Councillor. In addition, further research has been carried out into different tools already in use elsewhere in the country.

Results of the Community Voice Survey

- 2.1 The results are attached at appendix 1. While not a huge sample, the fact that 9 per cent had thought of standing might be seen as encouraging.
- 2.2 Members will note that the main reason given for not standing is 'time off work'. There are also some quite interesting additional comments.

Tools already used in other Authorities

- 3.1 Some authorities produce a step-by-step guide on how to stand as a Councillor which is distributed to each household and to relevant groups such as Parish and Town Councils, neighbourhood forums etc. The guide also includes other relevant information such as allowances payable and time commitment that might be expected. This Authority could consider using existing tools, for example, Copeland Matters – perhaps a pull-out and keep central section – to produce a similar guide.
- 3.2 Many other authorities schedule evening meetings, specifically to address issues of time off work. It is estimated that the cost to Copeland Borough Council of such a move would be in the region of £4,500 at current rates.
- 3.3 Some authorities also hold open evenings, where members of the public can come and chat to existing Councillors about the work they do. Other authorities take this idea further by offering shadowing opportunities, where people interested can follow a Councillor for a morning or afternoon.

- 3.4 Some authorities produce a 'corporate' video portraying the different areas of Council business, illustrating ways in which the Council makes a difference to the local community. Self-evidently this is a more costly option, dependent on securing resources. However, if produced astutely, such a video might also have a use as a lobbying tool.

#### Conclusion

- 4.1 Members are now asked to consider the information gathered so far and whether there is further research they feel might be required before forming conclusions at their next meeting.

## **CONTENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In November 2005, Copeland Borough Council requested that CN Research carry out a telephone survey with members of the Community Voice Panel. Views were asked on satisfaction with enquiry handling by the Council and whether members of the panel had considered standing as councillors. This report looks at responses from this survey.

### **METHODOLOGY**

CN Research carried out the fieldwork, data entry, analysis and reporting of results. Fieldwork began on 30 November 2005 and ended on 7 December 2005. At least 3 attempts were made to contact panel members by telephone. Telephone questionnaires were carried out using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). 285 interviews were achieved in total, making results representative to + or – 6% of Copeland Borough Council residents.

### **SUMMARY**

- 9% of the Community Voice panel has thought about standing for councillor.
- Of the 25 that considered standing as councillor, only 3 actually stood (12%)
- The main reason given for not standing for councillor is difficulty getting time off work (27%)

#### ***"Have you ever thought about standing for councillor?"***

9% of the Community Voice panel has thought about standing for councillor, see Table 5

**Table 5**

<b>Base</b>	285
<b>Have you ever thought about standing for councillor?</b>	
Yes	25 8.8%
No (thank and exit survey)	260 91.2%

***“If yes, did you stand as councillor?”***

Of the 25 that considered standing as councillor, only 3 actually stood (12%), see Table 6

**Table 6**

<b>Base</b>	25
<b>Have you ever thought about standing as a local councillor?</b>	
Yes	3 12.0%
No	22 88.0%

***“If no, what prevented you from doing so?”***

The main reason given for not standing for councillor is difficulty getting time off work (27%), see Table 7. 9% said a lack of information about how to stand prevented them from doing so.

**Table 7**

Base	22
<b>IF NO: What prevented you from doing so?</b>	
<i>Timing of meetings</i>	1 4.5%
<i>Childcare/dependent relative problems</i>	1 4.5%
<i>Childcare/dependent relative costs</i>	- -
<i>Loss of earnings/allowances</i>	- -
<i>Getting time off work</i>	6 27.3%
<i>Lack of information about how to stand</i>	2 9.1%
<i>Don't fully understand the role of councillor</i>	- -
<i>Don't know what I would have to do</i>	1 4.5%
<i>Don't think being a councillor would change much</i>	1 4.5%
<i>Other</i>	13 59.1%

**Other:**

- Time available \*5.
- Not sure if I would be elected
- Just never took the idea forward but will reconsider now!
- Didn't do anything about it.
- Too nervous and too straight talking
- Not sure of commitment required.
- In process of standing.
- I am a parish councillor so was not sure if I could stand.
- Felt I was too old at 78 years. The commitment would be too much.