

Barriers to Politics Working Group			
REPORT	Feedback from the Young Advisers		
KEY DECISION	No	Item No:	3
WARD	N/A		
CONTRIBUTORS	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration		
CLASS	Part 1	Date:	6 November 2017

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides context and feedback from a session with the Young Advisers for the Barriers to Politics Working Group to consider.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The Barriers to Politics Working Group is recommended to:
- Consider evidence given at the meeting when making its recommendations.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Young Mayor and Young Advisers look at key decision-making reports in the London Borough of Lewisham and engage with service managers, policy-makers and elected members to both hear and comment on plans and strategies for the delivery of services.
- 3.2 According to the Census of Local Authority Councillors in 2013, the average age of a councillor in London was 56.5 years (cf. 60.2 nationally); 10.2 per cent of councillors in London were aged under 35 years, 46.7 per cent were aged over 60 years. Across England, the average age of councillors has increased over recent years, the average age recorded in 2010 was 59.7, up from 57.8 in 2004. The proportion aged 70 or over increased from 13.8 per cent to 22.2 per cent between 2004 and 2013.
- 3.3 The proportion of retired councillors has increased from 36.8 per cent in 2001 to 46.6 per cent at the time of the 2013 Census of Local Authority Councillors; this is in spite of increasing employment rates for both older men and women in relation to the population as a whole. At the same time, the proportion of councillors in full-time employment has decreased steadily from 27.2 per cent in 2001 to 19.2 per cent at the time of the 2013 Census.
- 3.4 Councillors from minority ethnic backgrounds had a slightly younger age on average (55.1 years old in 2013 and 52.9 years old in 2010) than other councillors (60.4 years old in 2013 and 60.0 years old in 2010).

- 3.5 Based on the 2013 Census of Local Authority Councillors, a greater proportion of male councillors were aged over 65 (46.2 per cent) compared to women (38.6 per cent). At the younger age bracket, 8.4 per cent of male councillors were aged under 40, compared to 6.7 per cent of female councillors.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members of the Barriers to Politics Working Group were invited to a Young Advisers Forum to discuss the perceptions of the role of a councillor with the group. The Barriers to Politics Working Group agreed that members would attend a Young Advisers meeting and report back to a subsequent meeting at the evidence session which covered 'Age'.

5. YOUNG ADVISERS EVIDENCE

- 5.1. Cllr Jacq Paschoud attended a Young Advisers meeting on 9th October 2017 and asked the following key questions:
- What is your understanding of the role of the councillor?
 - What would encourage you to stand as a candidate in a local election?
 - What would discourage you from standing as a candidate in a local election?
- 5.2. The discussion with the Young Advisers focused primarily on understanding of the role of a councillor and the young people in attendance recognised that they were more politically engaged than some of their peers, however they suggested that some councillors were more approachable than others.
- 5.3. The Young Advisers told Cllr Paschoud that some, but not all, young people learn about politics as part of Citizenship classes in schools, although this focused on politics at a national level. One young person told the group that the work of councillors is underrated due to the fact that they didn't feel that it was publicised.
- 5.4. The Young Advisers didn't feel as though they knew very much about local politics and that the Young Mayor's programme and Young Advisers Forum doesn't currently act as a stepping stone to politics in adult life.
- 5.5. The Young Advisers recommended that councillors visit schools in their wards to tell young people about what they do and about how to get involved with politics more generally.
- 5.6. Members were invited to attend a follow-up Young Advisers session on 30th October 2017 due to the interest of the group and evidence from this session will be provided at this meeting on 6th November 2017.

6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The equality implications are set out in the body of this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report at this time.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Legal implications will be given at the appropriate time when there are specific proposals.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 9.1. Young Advisers Appendix A: Lewisham Young Mayor Programme Evaluation Summary - Dr. Kalbir Shukra