



BARRIERS TO POLITICS WORKING GROUP

Date: TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2017 at 7.45 pm

**Committee Room 4
Civic Suite
Lewisham Town Hall
London SE6 4RU**

**Enquiries to: Sarah Assibey
Telephone: 0208 314 8975 (direct line)**

MEMBERS

Councillor Suzannah Clarke	L
Councillor Colin Elliott	L
Councillor Joan Millbank	L
Councillor Maja Hilton	L
Councillor Joyce Jacca	L
Councillor Hilary Moore	L
Councillor Jacq Paschoud	L

Members are summoned to attend this meeting

**Barry Quirk
Chief Executive
Lewisham Town Hall
Catford
London SE6 4RU
Date: 6 April 2017**



ORDER OF BUSINESS – PART 1 AGENDA

Item No		Page No.s
1.	Minutes	1 - 6
2.	Declarations of Interest	7 - 10
3.	Gender, Age and Caring Responsibilities	11 - 19
4.	Future Meetings	20



Lewisham



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The public are welcome to attend our committee meetings, however occasionally committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request.

MINUTES OF THE BARRIERS TO POLITICS WORKING GROUP

Tuesday 14 March 2017 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors Suzannah Clarke (Chair), Jacq Paschoud (Vice Chair), Joyce Jacca, Luke Sorba, Sophie McGeevor, Jim Mallory, Liz Johnston-Franklin and Colin Elliot

Also Present: Paul Aladenika (Officer), Salena Mulhere (Officer), David Humphreys (Principal Officer), Sarah Assibey (Support Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Joan Millbank

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

RESOLVED Councillor Clarke was appointed Chair and Councillor Paschoud as Vice Chair of this Committee for the existence of the Group.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared

3. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference were presented and agreed by Members.

4. The Role of a Councillor

David Humphreys gave a presentation on this item to give context on the role and expectations of a councillor, as well as an overview of councillor demographics, campaigns, research and suggest an approach to the areas of focus for the Group. The key points to note were:

- The Equality Act 2010 explains the protected characteristics which might be of use to the Group to discuss and consider when looking into the future discussions and recommendations. These characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation
- Lewisham's Comprehensive Equality Scheme (CES) objectives may fall in line with some aspects of what the Group is trying to achieve.
- The description of the role of a Councillor can be found in both the Local Government Association (LGA) Councillors Guide- which explains that a councillor balances the roles of community leadership, developing council policy and planning and regulation
- The LBL Constitution, elaborates further that councillors represent both the people of their ward and that they also act in the interest of the whole area when involved in making decisions.
- The Council's Handbook for Council Members defines the 5 main areas of responsibility for councillors: deciding on overall council policy and giving the

authority for political leadership; making decisions within Council policy; monitoring and reviewing performance in implementing policy; representing the area and the Council externally and; acting as advocates on behalf of constituents.

- The Constitution does not prescribe how many meetings each Cllr must attend or their specific day-to day responsibilities, other than to state that Cllrs who do not attend a meeting in 6 months may cease to be a member. Councillors are not employed in the same way officers are, however, the role can be seen as similar to that of office holders, e.g. in terms of remuneration. Councillors receive an allowance designed to recompense them for the work they undertake, which was displayed in the form of a table in the report, and compared the allowance paid to councillors in other London boroughs.
- Remuneration for councillors is a decision made by councillors at Full Council, after consideration of advice from an independent expert. Lewisham Councils allowances were set by councillors in 2014.
- Lewisham's allowance is currently second to lowest of its 6 other neighbouring boroughs at £9812 as the Basic Allowance for last year. Some Cllrs may receive a special allowance for additional duties e.g. Chairing Scrutiny or Planning meetings, or Cabinet Member
- Cllrs may also request travel, overnight and carer's allowances as well as subsistence allowances, as set out in the constitution. Councillors are supported with appropriate learning and development to undertake their role, as set out in the Member Development Strategy. A programme of learning and development is provided for councillors, the development of which is underpinned by personal development plans for all councillors who choose to have one. The Local Authority Councillors Census 2013 is the most recent and up to date census which provides detail about the demographic of Cllrs and how their time is spent. Lewisham data is not publically available and has not been analysed because of the small sample size.
- The group could perhaps conduct a survey to gather more up to date and detailed information about councillors' experiences and perceptions. .
- The census shows that Cllrs were spending 22.5 hours per week on Council business (in London). Councillors spent an additional 5.4 hours per week on party/group business; compared with 4.3 hours nationally.
- It was noted that although group/party expectations is not the focus of this working group, party/group expectations of councillors also impacted on the time councillors spent dealing with things that they might perceive as being part of their "role" as a councillor.
- 24% of Councillors had less influence than expected; 6.5% Cllrs in London boroughs would not recommend being a councillor. The Group may want to consider this in the context of demographic information and in relation to the barriers to progression.
- In terms of the demographic profile, the average age of a Cllr in London was 56.5 years old; 10% being under 35 and nearly 50% over 60. 83% of Cllrs across London were white ethnic origin, compared to the 60% of the London population being white; 11.8% Asian/Asian British (2.8% nationally represented) and 2.1% being Black or Black British (0.6% nationally). 8.9% of Cllrs described themselves as having a disability. Over a third of Councillors in London were female at the time of the Census (cf. 13% nationally) and over a quarter of Cllrs in London had caring responsibilities.

- There are various organisations, campaigns, research that can be drawn on as part of the work of this group to understand the barriers to becoming a councillor, such as Amplify, a campaign to encourage women in the Labour Party to take on leadership roles, Operation Black Vote and Stonewall 'Gay in Britain'. Once the focus of the upcoming meetings has been agreed, officers will contact the relevant organisations and groups, to invite them to make written submissions or give evidence to the working group.

The group then discussed the approach to gathering the necessary evidence at the upcoming meetings. The following key points were noted:

- The Chair suggested a thematic focus to the evidence session for future meetings with the themes of **1) Gender, Age and Caring Issues; 2) Disability and Mental Health; 3) BAME and LGBT; 4) Survey Results-including recommendations.**
- Relevant organisations/individuals would be invited to each session to give evidence, as well as conducting a Councillor (to gather evidence about their experience in entering politics and also whilst in politics) and Resident (to gather information about perceptions) survey. It was thought a public survey could help the Group identify the perceptions of residents and to establish what the barriers are to entering politics are. The Chair suggested the following areas of focus for the Councillor Survey and to perhaps be explored in more detail with a handful of councillors as case studies: a) emails and communication b) council and external bodies c) ward and community d) political. The Councillor survey should seek to find out how much time councillors put into their Council work and also how many councillors are in full/part-time work.
- There were concerns that the grouping of BAME and LGBT together in one meeting could prevent sufficient time being given to all of the relevant issues.
- Officers suggested giving a 4 week time frame to prepare the final report for September's Council meeting whereby all evidence gathered by the last meeting will be used in this report.
- Councillors agreed that the group may also consider economic strains under each of the themes.
- In relation to the two surveys, it was agreed that sufficient time was needed to draft them and then allow people time to respond and then to collate and analyse responses.
- The public survey will be a more general survey about what people think about politics and why they would not enter politics, their perceptions, and what would the barriers be if they wanted to enter politics.
- The specific wordings of the questions and how best to phrase it would be undertaken by the officers with extensive consultation experience within, the policy team.
- Getting a precise sample from the specific levels the Group would want will be challenging, there will work to do by the Cllrs themselves in order to get the public to give their responses. Councillors can use this as an opportunity to communicate with the public in their field/area e.g. local assemblies to maximise the response.
- It was recommended that the surveys are electronic, to reach a wider audience and the survey should be as brief as possible. The surveys should close in advance of the July meeting to allow time for analysis in advance of final considerations in September.

- The Councillor survey will be distributed to all council members. It will be looking at the role of a Cllr and looking at the casework and workload of the Cllr. It could also compare the work of councillors in other boroughs if this could be organised within the time available. The Group may have to look at external funding for this task. The Group should also survey the difficulties that some Cllrs may have faced getting into the role. The officers recommended that this survey is given to all Cllrs within Lewisham and then perhaps support this evidence with case studies.

The Working group then had a broader discussion about some of their experiences as councillors and some of the areas of concern that they wished the working group to consider: The following points were noted in the discussion:

- The 22.5 hours of work per week highlighted in the census, were not expectations of Cllrs, but rather what the collated results of the (self-selecting) survey of councillors found as the average of time councillors said they spent on their role as councillors at that time.
- The Group is under no obligation at this inaugural meeting to come up with recommendations, but to rather gain insights and plan how evidence will be gathered to enable the group to write a comprehensive report and make evidence-based recommendations in due course.
- Working full time and being a councillor was felt to be challenging. Flexibility was said to be a barrier because of the constant changes in day-to-day council work and some councillors felt that they would not be able to take up full-time employment alongside being a councillor. This is very dependent on life circumstances as many Cllrs are in the role because they have the time.
- It was felt that there should be more clarity given prior to the selection as a candidate of the expected hours being a councillor should take.
- Cllr Paschoud pointed out that Committees do not meet more than twice a month and most Cllrs are on a maximum of 2 select committees and a licensing or planning committee, then full Council- this is a basic structure. Cllrs have a responsibility to themselves to manage any work on top of this. All community work outside of Council, can actually inform the role of a Cllr. It is imperative that Cllrs are realistic with time management-their obligations and capacity. It is also important that Cllrs note that there are 3 Cllrs in each ward so there is a spread of talents and availability.
- It was suggested that a prescribed figure of “expected hours” could relieve the guilt and pressure that comes with balancing work in and outside of the Council. Although the likelihood of councillors voting to increase their allowances in this climate is very slight, clarity about expected hours might be beneficial to Cllrs.
- Increasing councillors’ allowances in line with any annual staff pay increases was discussed, however it was noted, that the decision to not link allowances to annual increases was made by Cllrs at full Council 2014. Reviewing the decision made in 2014 and suggesting raising allowances in line with neighbouring boroughs was discussed.

- Cllrs questioned whether a barrier is being created to where people may feel they cannot afford to enter the role of a Cllr due to the current rate of allowance and the current lack of potential annual increase, and whether councillors should be paid a salary in the same manner as employees of the Council.. Opposing this argument, other councillors reminded colleagues that they were not employees and the role of councillor was akin to that of a governor, not a member of staff: meaning councillors were paid an allowance to prevent Cllrs from being out-of-pocket by undertaking the role.
- Many Cllrs, are either in full-time employment or they are on a pension or retired from employment, so this allowance would not be their primary source of income. However, it was noted that the Cllr allowance may have a significant impact on other allowances or benefits a Cllr may be in receipt of. The impact of a councillor allowance on state benefits was noted as needing to be further considered when remuneration was next considered by the Council, after the next Council election.
- The expectancy that some Cllrs should be retiring form the role, can also create a barrier due to the perception that the role is for younger people. Chair agreed that ageism should be looked further into in coming meetings
- Regarding the hours of work, the Group discussed evening, daytime and weekend work (weekend “work” being a largely political element). Cllrs mentioned that hours are an issue when it effects peoples’ personal time. With several expectations of councillors outside of formal meetings, both in terms of constituent and ward expectations, and expectations of political groups, this can cause some Cllrs to feel overwhelmed.
- It was noted that the only formal expectation is that Cllrs attend a meeting at least once every 6 months to remain in the role and eligible for an allowance, and that outside of that, working hours are not specified. The expectation and framework for the responsibilities of the role are based on the Constitution. How councillors choose to execute their responsibilities and what specifically they feel is expected of them is largely a matter for individual councillors, their ward colleagues and, what their political parties expect from Cllrs. There is a clear border between political activity and work within the Council.
- There is an expectation from residents and public that Cllrs are available all day every day, so clarification and knowledge of what a Cllr is and does will ease the pressure that some Cllrs may receive from the public and better manage expectations. Highlighting, on the website for example, that councillors are not full time employees of the Council so will not always be able to respond immediately may help.
- Working collaboratively with ward colleagues, and beyond if necessary, may assist with the pressure councillors feel. There is a role for parties in supporting collaborative working between ward and party colleagues. Political Groups may like to consider formal procedures for councillors to follow if they were unhappy within their ward.

RESOLVED: The Group agreed the themes for each of the coming meetings until September as suggested, with some flexibility should there need to be if, after the first evidence session, members should feel differently about these themes.

The Group also reiterated that this Committee has been set up as a way of discussing barriers to becoming a local councillor, including but not limited to the barriers of entering, progressing in and staying in politics.

5 . Future meetings

RESOLVED: The proposed scheduled of meetings was agreed.

The meeting finished at 9.34pm

Agenda Item 2

BARRIERS TO POLITICS WORKING GROUP		
Report Title	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
Key Decision		Item No. 2
Ward		
Contributors	Chief Executive	
Class	Part 1	Date: 18 April 2017

Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

1 Personal interests

There are three types of personal interest referred to in the Council's Member Code of Conduct :-

- (1) Disclosable pecuniary interests
- (2) Other registerable interests
- (3) Non-registerable interests

2 Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined by regulation as:-

- (a) Employment, trade, profession or vocation of a relevant person* for profit or gain
- (b) Sponsorship – payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than by the Council) within the 12 months prior to giving notice for inclusion in the register in respect of expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses (including payment or financial benefit from a Trade Union).
- (c) Undischarged contracts between a relevant person* (or a firm in which they are a partner or a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest) and the Council for goods, services or works.
- (d) Beneficial interests in land in the borough.
- (e) Licence to occupy land in the borough for one month or more.
- (f) Corporate tenancies – any tenancy, where to the member's knowledge, the Council is landlord and the tenant is a firm in which the relevant person* is a

partner, a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest.

- (g) Beneficial interest in securities of a body where:-
- (a) that body to the member's knowledge has a place of business or land in the borough; and
 - (b) either
 - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person* has a beneficial interest exceeds 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that class.

*A relevant person is the member, their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they live as spouse or civil partner.

(3) Other registerable interests

The Lewisham Member Code of Conduct requires members also to register the following interests:-

- (a) Membership or position of control or management in a body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council
- (b) Any body exercising functions of a public nature or directed to charitable purposes , or whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy, including any political party
- (c) Any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25

(4) Non registerable interests

Occasions may arise when a matter under consideration would or would be likely to affect the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect the wellbeing of those in the local area generally, but which is not required to be registered in the Register of Members' Interests (for example a matter concerning the closure of a school at which a Member's child attends).

(5) Declaration and Impact of interest on members' participation

- (a) Where a member has any registerable interest in a matter and they are present at a meeting at which that matter is to be discussed, they must declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and in any

event before the matter is considered. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the matter is a disclosable pecuniary interest the member must take not part in consideration of the matter and withdraw from the room before it is considered. They must not seek improperly to influence the decision in any way. **Failure to declare such an interest which has not already been entered in the Register of Members' Interests, or participation where such an interest exists, is liable to prosecution and on conviction carries a fine of up to £5000**

- (b) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest they must still declare the nature of the interest to the meeting at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered, but they may stay in the room, participate in consideration of the matter and vote on it unless paragraph (c) below applies.
- (c) Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member must consider whether a reasonable member of the public in possession of the facts would think that their interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair the member's judgement of the public interest. If so, the member must withdraw and take no part in consideration of the matter nor seek to influence the outcome improperly.
- (d) If a non-registerable interest arises which affects the wellbeing of a member, their, family, friend or close associate more than it would affect those in the local area generally, then the provisions relating to the declarations of interest and withdrawal apply as if it were a registerable interest.
- (e) Decisions relating to declarations of interests are for the member's personal judgement, though in cases of doubt they may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

(6) Sensitive information

There are special provisions relating to sensitive interests. These are interests the disclosure of which would be likely to expose the member to risk of violence or intimidation where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that such interest need not be registered. Members with such an interest are referred to the Code and advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance.

(7) Exempt categories

There are exemptions to these provisions allowing members to participate in decisions notwithstanding interests that would otherwise prevent them doing so. These include:-

- (a) Housing – holding a tenancy or lease with the Council unless the matter relates to your particular tenancy or lease; (subject to arrears exception)
- (b) School meals, school transport and travelling expenses; if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or a school governor unless the matter relates particularly to the school your child attends or of which you are a governor;
- (c) Statutory sick pay; if you are in receipt
- (d) Allowances, payment or indemnity for members
- (e) Ceremonial honours for members
- (f) Setting Council Tax or precept (subject to arrears exception)

Agenda Item 3

Barriers to Politics Working Group			
REPORT	Gender, Age and Caring Responsibilities		
KEY DECISION	No	Item No:	3
WARD	N/A		
CONTRIBUTORS	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration		
CLASS	Part 1	Date:	18 April 2017

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides context and evidence for the Barriers to Politics Working Group to consider as part of the evidence session on barriers related to gender, age and caring responsibilities which people face when running for and progressing as a local councillor.
- 1.2. This report provides a national and London context including councillor demographics and explores campaigns and research into the barriers to politics linked to the key themes of gender, age and caring responsibilities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The Barriers to Politics Working Group is recommended to:
 - Note the report.
 - Consider the evidence given at the meeting.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1. The Equality Act 2010 defines the following characteristics as protected characteristics:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- 3.2. Lewisham's Comprehensive Equality Scheme (CES) 2016-20 sets out how the Council will meet its duties to improve the quality of life and life chances of all Lewisham's

residents as well as the various equality groups afforded specific protection under the Equality Act of 2010. The scheme contains the following five overarching objectives:

- tackle victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- improve access to services
- close the gap in outcomes for our citizens
- increase mutual understanding and respect within and between communities
- increase participation and engagement.

- 3.3. The London Borough of Lewisham is home to 292,000 people; Lewisham has the fifth largest Inner London population size and the 13th largest in London. Between the 2001 and 2011 national Censuses the population of Lewisham increased by 30,000. By the time of the next national Census in 2021, the population of the borough is forecast to reach 321,000. Children and young people make up 25 per cent of Lewisham's population, whilst those aged over 65 comprise of 10 per cent of the population.

4. GENDER CONTEXT

Key Facts

- At the time of the last Census of Local Authority Councillors in 2013, 36 per cent of councillors in London and 31.6 per cent of councillors nationally were female.
- 26 per cent of candidates who contested in the local elections in 2014 were female.
- In 2014, 12.3 per cent of local authority leaders in England were women.

- 4.1. Approximately a third of councillors were female at the time of the last Census of Local Authority Councillors in 2013 (36 per cent in London and 31.6 per cent nationally).¹ 31 per cent of councillors newly elected in 2015 were women – a slight decrease compared to the 2014 figure of 32 per cent.² The table below shows the percentage of male and female councillors at the time of each Census since 2001.³

	2001 per cent	2004 per cent	2006 per cent	2008 per cent	2010 per cent	2013 per cent
Male	70.7	70.3	69.3	68.4	68.5	67.3
Female	28.5	29.1	29.3	30.8	30.6	31.7
No Response	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.8	1.0	0.9

- 4.2. Information about candidate demographics in local elections is not routinely collected. A 2014 Survey of Local Election Candidates, published by the Elections Centre, found that 26 per cent of candidates who contested in the local elections in 2014 were female.⁴ Similarly, 26 per cent of candidates in the 2015 general election were women and 29 per cent of MPs elected were female.

¹ National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013

² Electoral Reform Society, 'Which Women Win? The 2015 English local election' (March 2016)

³ Vyara Apostolova & Richard Cracknell, 'Women in Parliament and Government', *House of Commons Library Briefing Paper* (February 2017)

⁴ Based on a sample of 13 per cent of candidates. Colin Rallings et al., '2014 Survey of Local Election Candidates', *The Elections Centre* (2014)

- 4.3. On average, male councillors in England had been a councillor for 10 years, compared to women who had been councillors for 8.3 years.⁵
- 4.4. The proportion of women in leadership roles is much smaller than the proportion of men: in 2014, 12.3 per cent of local authority leaders in England were women, this compared to 16.6 per cent in 2004.⁶ Across England, 53.7 per cent of male councillors held one or more positions, such as chair or vice chair of overview and scrutiny or a cabinet member, compared to 51.4 per cent of female councillors.⁷
- 4.5. In terms of representation in leadership within a political party, 15.8 per cent of male councillors who responded to the Census were Group leaders or deputy leaders, compared to 8.7 per cent of women.⁸
- 4.6. The Census found that men and women shared priorities in terms of why they become councillors; the most prevalent reason for a man to become a councillor was to serve the community (89.6 per cent) which was also most prevalent for women (90.5 per cent).⁹
- 4.7. At the time of the Census, a greater proportion of male councillors were in full-time paid employment (21.5 per cent) than women (14.3 per cent); this is in line with the national position at the time as 22 per cent more men were in full time employment than women, with women accounting for nearly 75 per cent of the part time workforce.¹⁰ Nearly double the proportion of women said that their employer was not aware that they were a councillor (4.4 per cent) than men (2.6 per cent). On average, female councillors spent 22 hours per week on council business compared with male councillors who spent 20.2 hours per week.¹¹
- 4.8. A similar proportion of male and female councillors felt that they were effective or very effective in their role; 89.9 per cent of male councillors felt that they were effective or very effective, compared to 90.2 per cent of female councillors. A greater proportion of men would recommend being a councillor (83.7 per cent) compared to women (80.1 per cent).
- 4.9. Without their current packages of support available to councillors, a greater proportion of women felt that they would not be able to fulfil their role; 36.7 per cent of women felt that they would not be able to fulfil their role or only to a small extent without support, compared to 32.3 per cent of men.¹²
- 4.10. More women than men had received one or more training opportunities in the 12 months before the census (87.3 per cent c.f. 84 per cent), however fewer women than men had received an induction (21.8 per cent c.f. 22.2 per cent).

⁵ National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013

⁶ Ms. Gill Bryan, Ms. Margaret Gallagher, Dr. Gill Kirkup (Convenor), Professor Joan Swann & Ms. Sheila Thornton ‘Exploring Women’s Participation In Local Politics’, *Milton Keynes Fawcett Group* (September 2016)

⁷ National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013 – analyses by gender

⁸ National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics, ‘Labour Market Statistics, September 2013’, *Statistical Bulletin* (September 2013)

¹¹ National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013

¹² Ibid

5. GENDER RESEARCH

- 5.1. A Hewlett Packard internal report quoted in *The Confidence Code* and other articles found that men apply for a job when they meet only 60 per cent of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100 per cent of them.¹³ This research has been disputed by women's leadership coach Tara Sophia Mohr in her Harvard Business Review blog post; Mohr conducted a survey and found that 41 per cent of women and 46 per cent of men indicated that the main reason for not applying for jobs is because they believed they needed the qualifications not to do the job well, but to be hired in the first place.¹⁴ Mohr argued that, the reason for the different approaches to applications is not related to confidence, but that candidates need more information about how application processes work.
- 5.2. All major political parties actively campaign to encourage women to enter politics at a national and local level. 'Amplify' is the name of the Labour Women website launched by Harriet Harman MP to provide a forum for women to discuss what they want from their government and their local authorities, as well as discuss ideas and campaigns. Additionally, the Jo Cox Women in Leadership Programme, run in the memory of Jo Cox MP, will offer training and mentoring programmes over the next five years to train hundreds of women to be future leaders.
- 5.3. In September 2016, the Fawcett Society published 'Exploring Women's Participation in Local Politics', an observational study of Milton Keynes Council Meetings to explore whether there were gender differences and/or inequalities in the way Council business was seen to be carried out in public fora.¹⁵ The report observed major gender differences in distribution of roles and activities and participation in meetings.
- 5.4. Women councillors were over-represented in committees such as corporate parenting, health and adult social care.¹⁶ Women were under-represented in areas such as audit and budget scrutiny. Overall, women were very well represented on the Overview and Scrutiny Groups; out of the 26 members involved, nearly half (12) were women; yet only one of the five was chaired by a woman. Although Women were under-represented as members of financially-focused committees, such as Budget Scrutiny Committee, the Milton Keynes Fawcett Group found that they were not under-represented as Chairs of such committees. It has been argued that experience of finance and planning helps women to rise to the most senior roles in local government.¹⁷
- 5.5. The Fawcett Society's observational study found that in Full Council meetings, female councillors made up 33 per cent of those councillors present in the meeting, but were

¹³ Claire Shipman & Katty Kay, 'The Confidence Code', *HarperBusiness* (April 2014)

¹⁴ Tara Sophia Mohr, 'Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100 per cent Qualified', *Harvard Business Review* (August 2014)

¹⁵ Ms. Gill Bryan, Ms. Margaret Gallagher, Dr. Gill Kirkup (Convenor), Professor Joan Swann & Ms. Sheila Thornton 'Exploring Women's Participation In Local Politics', *Milton Keynes Fawcett Group* (September 2016)

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ E.g. Susanna Ruskin, 'Where are the women? The 'pale, male' council leaders driving the northern powerhouse', *The Guardian* (February 2016)

only responsible for 19 per cent of all interventions by councillors.¹⁸ Women were observed to join discussions late in meetings; by this time many members of the public had left the chamber and hence did not observe these contributions.

- 5.6. The majority of actions from the Milton Keynes Fawcett Group report are directed to political parties and relate to selection and party strategies, however the report of the Milton Keynes Fawcett Group recommended that councillors review their behaviour to make space for less experienced colleagues: both male and female.
- 5.7. Members of the Milton Keynes Fawcett Group will be present at the meeting to discuss their research and findings.

6. AGE CONTEXT

Key Facts

- 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).
- Around one in eight councillors are under 45.
- The proportion aged 70 or over has increased from 13.8 per cent to 22.2 per cent between 2004 and 2013.
- Approximately 32 per cent of 18-24 year olds and 32 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds vote in local elections; this compares to 43 per cent of 18-25 year olds and 54 per cent of 25-34 year olds voting in the previous General Election.

- 6.1. 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. Around one in eight were aged under 45. The proportion aged 70 or over increased from 13.8 per cent to 22.2 per cent between 2004 and 2013.
- 6.2. 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.¹⁹ 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, whereas there has been very little variation in the proportions of councillors who are self-employed or work part-time between 2001 and 2013.
- 6.3. According to the Census of Local Authority Councillors, younger councillors were less likely to report that their councils were fully committed across all council activities compared to those in older age groups (e.g. enabling people to have an influence locally through engagement programmes and encouraging people to be more engaged with democratic processes). For example, 18.5 per cent of councillors aged under 25 reported that their council was fully committed to having mechanisms to organise

¹⁸ Ms. Gill Bryan, Ms. Margaret Gallagher, Dr. Gill Kirkup (Convenor), Professor Joan Swann & Ms. Sheila Thornton ‘Exploring Women’s Participation In Local Politics’, *Milton Keynes Fawcett Group* (September 2016)

¹⁹ Daniel Chandler and Gemma Tetlow, ‘Employment and retirement – explaining recent trends’, *Institute for Fiscal Studies* (October 2014)

inquiries about contentious issues, compared to 40.6 per cent of councillors aged 70 and over.

- 6.4. In terms of the distribution of roles, 51 per cent of councillors under 35 held one or more positions, compared to 54 per cent of those aged over 65; 6 per cent of councillors aged under 40 were either a leader of the local authority or deputy leader, compared to 5 per cent of over 60s.
- 6.5. 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).
- 6.6. Based on the 2013 Census of Local Authority Councillors, a greater proportion of men 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 are aged under 40, compared to 6.7 per cent of female councillors.

7. AGE RESEARCH

- 7.1. Key to understanding barriers to politics is an understanding of wider political interest and participation; 43 per cent of 18-24 year olds voted in 2015 general election.²⁰ However, the greatest shift in voter turnout was by both young men and women, with a decrease in 8 percentage points of young men voting in 2015 and a 5 percentage point increase in women voters aged 18-24.
- 7.2. Detailed information about local election turnout is not available, however the 2013 Post Election Survey conducted by BMG Research for the Electoral Commission estimated local election turnout at 51 per cent.²¹ Of those aged 18-24 and those aged 25 to 34, 32 per cent voted in each age bracket. Conversely, in general elections a spike in turnout can be observed between 18-24 year olds and 25-14 year olds; in 2015 an 11 percentage point increase can be observed (from 43 per cent of 18-25 year olds to 54 per cent of 25-34 year olds). Those aged over 65 were most likely to vote in local elections (72 per cent). The 2013 Survey following the local elections found that 53 per cent of voters and non-voters knew 'not very much' or 'nothing at all' about the election.²² Recent research into young people's engagement with the EU referendum found that young people are less likely to vote in elections or join a political party, but are more likely to sign a petition, attend a protest and join a campaign on a singular issue.²³
- 7.3. Richard Berry and Professor Patrick Dunleavy, managing editor and Co-Director of Democratic Audit at the LSE Public Policy Group, in their report 'Engaging young voters with enhanced election information' argued that online resources would give better access to information and hence engage a younger audience better, who were predominately online. There is no central source of ward-level election results. The

²⁰ Ipsos MORI, 'How Britain voted in 2015' (August 2015)

²¹ Electoral Commission, '2013 local elections post-polling public opinion research' (May 2013)

²² Richard Berry & Patrick Dunleavy, 'Engaging young voters with enhanced election information', *Democratic Audit UK* (March 2014)

²³ Katy Owen and Caroline Macfarland, 'A Generation Apart: Were younger people left behind by the EU referendum?', *CoVi/Common Vision* (July 2016)

BBC and other media outlets only publish summaries of results for each council, while the Electoral Commission does not publish any local election results online.²⁴ The research conducted by Democratic Audit UK recognises that young people are less likely to be settled in a particular area and movement between local authority areas contributes to lower levels of political engagement and voter registration.²⁵

- 7.4. The report 'Young people's politics Political interest and engagement amongst 14–24 year olds' supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, noted a limited number of opportunities available for young people to participate in the political process.²⁶ Where young people acknowledged that there were opportunities, they felt they lacked knowledge about the process of engagement. Underpinning this view was a perception that politicians often dismiss the views of young people as childish and unrealistic. Young people in the politically uninterested groups seem to engage politically when issues have direct personal relevance to them or to their local community.
- 7.5. Research by the think-tank the International Longevity Centre for Help the Aged has found that for some, the beginning of retirement can result in a period of greater community engagement; involvement with political groups is particularly high amongst those aged 65 to 69 although participation declines swiftly with age.²⁷

8. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES CONTEXT

Key Facts

- Over a quarter of councillors in London had caring responsibilities at the time of the 2013 Census of Local Authority Councillors (28.8 per cent).
- 18.7 per cent of councillors in London had caring responsibilities for a child.
- Nationally, 24.6 per cent of male councillors had caring responsibilities, compared to 35.1 per cent of female councillors; this disparity is in line with the population as a whole.

- 8.1. Over a quarter of councillors in London had caring responsibilities (28.8 per cent); of the total number of councillors in London, 18.7 per cent had caring responsibilities for a child. In the context of employment status, 2.8 per cent of councillors in London described themselves as not in paid work due to the fact they were looking after a home/family.

Caring Responsibilities For:	Male (per cent)	Female (per cent)
Child/Children	12.9	17.9
Partner	8	7.8
Relative	5.6	11.9
Other	1.4	3.2
One or more caring resp.	24.6	35.1
No caring resp.	75.4	64.9

²⁴Richard Berry & Patrick Dunleavy, 'Engaging young voters with enhanced election information', *Democratic Audit UK* (March 2014)

²⁵Ibid

²⁶Clarissa White, Sara Bruce & Jane Ritchie, 'Young people's politics Political interest and engagement amongst 14–24 year olds', *Joseph Rowntree Foundation* (2000)

²⁷International Longevity Centre, 'Voice: a briefing paper on the voice of older people in society' (2008)

- 8.2. A disproportionate number of female councillors have caring responsibilities than men (35.1 per cent of women, compared to 24.6 per cent of men).²⁸ This disparity is in line with the overall population as 57.7 per cent of unpaid carers were female at the time of the United Kingdom Census 2011.²⁹
- 8.3. Approximately 6.5m people in UK (10 per cent of the population) have unpaid caring responsibilities, this is defined as looking after an ill, older or disabled family member, friend or partner.³⁰ At the time of the 2011 Census, there were 18.2 million families in the UK and 7.7 million families had dependent children; of these 1.6 million were lone parent households.
- 8.4. In the London Borough of Lewisham, a carer's allowance of £9.40 per hour plus travelling expenses can be claimed to pay someone to take up a member's caring responsibilities while they are away from the home on Council business; this payment is based on the London Living Wage.
- 8.5. Although allowances are available to all councillors in Lewisham, in 2014-15 only 5 Lewisham councillors made claims for travel, subsistence or carer's allowances. Allowance claims by Lewisham councillors totalled £600 in 2014-15.

9. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES RESEARCH

- 9.1. In an article in *Cllr Magazine* for the LGiU in December 2015, Lewisham Councillor Gareth Siddorn explained that little attention is paid to the low representation of councillors with caring responsibilities for children.³¹ He argued that a significant increase in allowances is neither economically viable nor politically palatable but that consideration should be given to how the wider system is structured, potentially with fewer councillors who are better supported and more representative of the communities they serve.
- 9.2. Evidence given to the Communities and Local Government Committee by the Centre for Women and Democracy stated that hours and commitments expected of councillors are very high, and not always geared to the needs of people who work or who have caring responsibilities. The Centre for Women and Democracy submitted that councils should give active consideration to their working practices, and, in particular, to the level of "professionalisation".³²
- 9.3. The Centre for Women and Democracy provided evidence suggesting that women are often particularly concerned about physical security, especially when working alone. The Communities and Local Government Committee were told that women in particular find the idea of being "on call" 24 hours a day, combined with personal details

²⁸ National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013

²⁹ Office for National Statistics, 'Full story: The gender gap in unpaid care provision: is there an impact on health and economic position?' (May 2013)

³⁰ Number of carers in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland based on the United Kingdom Census 2011

³¹ Councillor Gareth Siddorn, 'Looking for a Better Balance', *Cllr Magazine* (December 2015)

³² House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, 'Councillors on the frontline', *Sixth Report of Session 2012-13* (January 2013)

such as homes addresses being public, particularly worrying. This was particularly true for women who were living alone or with children.³³

10. SUMMARY

- 10.1. In local elections, female candidates are proportionately more likely to be elected than men. Nevertheless, women are underrepresented as only a quarter of candidates who stand in local elections are female and a third of councillors at the time of the 2013 Census were female. The research presented within this report suggests that this could be due to a lack of information about the election processes, and a tendency for women to be less likely than men to apply for positions when they are unsure about whether or not they will be successful in attaining the role.
- 10.2. In the context of political apathy, voter turnout suggests that young people are disengaged in local politics until they are much older than they are with national politics. The research considered as part of this report suggests that this is in part about the way information is presented, and the way in which they experienced and are involved in the local political sector from a young age.
- 10.3. Male councillors are disproportionately represented amongst younger and older councillors; 8.4 per cent of male councillors are aged under 40 compared to 6.7 per cent of female councillors of the same age; 46.2 per cent of male councillors are aged over 65, compared to 38.6 per cent of female councillors.
- 10.4. A disproportionate number of female councillors have caring responsibilities than men (35.1 per cent of women, compared to 24.6 per cent of men) although this is in line with disparity observed within the population as a whole. A greater proportion of councillors have unpaid caring responsibilities for a relative or partner compared with the population as a whole, however people with caring responsibilities for dependent children are underrepresented. Arrangements for councillors including allowances are available to Lewisham Councillors, but these are not regularly claimed in practice.

11. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

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

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

³³ House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, ‘Councillors on the frontline’, *Sixth Report of Session 2012–13* (January 2013)

Agenda Item 4

Barriers to Politics Working Group			
REPORT	Future Meetings		
KEY DECISION	No	Item No:	4
WARD	N/A		
CONTRIBUTORS	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration		
CLASS	Part 1	Date:	18 April 2017

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 A timeline of meetings and reporting is suggested for members to discuss and agree a focus for subsequent sessions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The group is recommended to:

- Agree the focus of subsequent meetings of the working group as a result of the group's initial discussions

3. FUTURE MEETINGS

- 3.1 On 22 February 2017, when agreeing the creation of the Barriers to Politics Working Group, Full Council agreed that the group would bring a report to Council by September 2017.

- 3.2 To enable the Group to meet that reporting deadline and gather the necessary evidence, the following schedule of meetings has been agreed:

- 18th April (evidence session): Gender, Age and Caring Responsibilities
- 17th May (evidence session)
- 27th June (evidence session)
- 13th July (evidence session)
- 6th September (draft report considered and recommendations agreed)