

Barriers to Politics Working Group			
REPORT	Evidence Session: Age and Caring Responsibilities		
KEY DECISION	No	Item No:	?
WARD	N/A		
CONTRIBUTORS	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration		
CLASS	Part 1	Date:	27 June 2017

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides context for the Barriers to Politics Working Group to consider as part of the evidence session on barriers related to age and caring responsibilities which people face when running for and progressing as a local councillor.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The Barriers to Politics Working Group is recommended to:
- Note the report.
 - Consider the evidence provided 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 has a population of 301,000 (the 13th largest in London and the 5th largest in Inner London). The population of the borough has increased by 16,000 since the 2011 Census. 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. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. Over a quarter of councillors in London had caring responsibilities at the time of the last Census of Local Authority Councillors in 2013 (28.8 per cent); of the total number of councillors in London, 18.7 per cent had caring responsibilities for a child.

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

4.2. 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. Nationally, 7.5 per cent of female councillors described their employment status as not in paid work as they were looking after the home or family, this compares to 0.9 per cent of male councillors.

4.3. Members of the Lewisham Parent and Carers Forum have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss how they feel barriers could be mitigated to support people with caring responsibilities to stand for and progress as local councillors. The Lewisham Parent and Carers Forum is for all parents and carers in the London Borough of Lewisham who have children and young people with disabilities and additional needs from 0 to 25 years of age. The Forum is involved in influencing local services such as health, education and social care.

4.4. A representative from Carers Lewisham has been invited to provide evidence for the Barriers to Politics Working Group. Carers Lewisham supports carers in the Borough from the age of five, by providing advice, information, support and coping strategies. Carers Lewisham are an independent charity who support six thousand carers in Lewisham.

5. AGE

5.1. 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. The proportion aged 70 or over increased from 13.8 per cent to 22.2 per cent between 2004 and 2013.

- 5.2. 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. 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.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. 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).
- 5.5. 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.
- 5.6. Members of the Barriers to Politics Working Group have been invited to a Young Advisors meeting to discuss the perceptions of the role of a councillor with the group. Evidence provided by the Young Advisors will be presented at a subsequent meeting. The Young Mayor and Young Advisors look at key decision-making reports and engage with service managers, policy-makers and elected members to both hear and comment on plans and strategies for the delivery of services.
- 5.7. Members of the Positive Ageing Council have been invited to make a written submission for the Barriers to Politics Working Group to consider. The Positive Ageing Council was set up in 2011 to help give older people a voice and share views and ideas. The group is open to anyone aged 60 years or over who lives, works, learns or volunteers in the borough. A smaller Steering Group comprised of 20 local volunteers aged 60 years or over act as an older person's consultation group for Lewisham Council and local partners.

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

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

9.1. Appendix A: Carers Lewisham Written Evidence Submission

9.2. Appendix B: Lewisham Positive Ageing Council Written Evidence Submission