

Barriers to Politics Working Group			
REPORT	Barriers to entering and progressing in politics faced due to ethnicity		
KEY DECISION	No	Item No:	3
WARD	N/A		
CONTRIBUTORS	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration		
CLASS	Part 1	Date:	24 July 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 ethnicity which people face when running for and progressing as a local councillor.
- 1.2. This report draws on data from the most recent Census of Local Authority Councillors (2013) and provides information on research in to the barriers people face due to their ethnicity whilst running for and progressing in elected office. The report highlights campaigns and initiatives which have attempted to support people to enter and progress in politics.

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 25,000 since the 2011 Census (this represents a 9 per cent increase since 2011). By the time of the next national Census in 2021, the population of the borough is forecast to reach 321,000 (a 16 per cent increase on 2011). 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. ETHNICITY CONTEXT

4.1. At the time of the last Census of Local Authority Councillors in 2013, the vast majority of councillors were white (96 per cent). These figures were similar to previous censuses. In 2010, 96.3 per cent of councillors were white and in 2008 the figure was 96.6 per cent.

4.2. The table below shows the percentage of residents from each ethnic group at the time of the National Census 2011 across the population of England, London and Lewisham.

Area	White (%)	Mixed/multiple ethnic groups (%)	Asian/Asian British (%)	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (%)	Other ethnic group (%)
England	85.4	2.3	7.8	3.5	1.0
London	59.8	5.0	18.5	13.3	3.4
Lewisham	53.5	7.4	9.3	27.2	2.6

4.3. A greater proportion of councillors in London boroughs were from minority ethnic backgrounds (15.7 per cent) than was the case in England as a whole at the time of the 2013 Census of Local Authority Councillors; despite this, people from non-white backgrounds represented 40.2 per cent of the population as a whole. Councillors in the North East and South West were most likely to be white (100 per cent and 99.2 per cent of respondents respectively) than in any other region, although the figures were broadly similar in all regions apart from London.

4.4. A report based on data from the Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013 which divides responses in to white and other ethnicity is published by the Local Government Association. In terms of leadership within a local authority, 5.8 per cent of respondents from a non-white background were a directly elected mayor or deputy mayor; 1.6 per cent of respondents who were not white were a local authority leader compared to 2.8 per cent of white respondents. White councillors were over twice as likely to be party/group leader (7.6 percent compared to 3.4 percent).

- 4.5. The Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013 found comparable involvement in committees and subcommittees between councillors of different ethnicities: white councillors were members of an average of 3.3 committees or subcommittees, compared to 3.2 for those who were another ethnicity. Likewise, comparable time was spent on council business: councillors who were a non-white ethnicity spent an average of 20.9 hours on council business, compared to white councillors who spent 20.7 hours. A discrepancy can be observed in relation to party business, with councillors who were white spending an average of 4.2 hours on party business and councillors from a non-white background spending 5.8 hours on party business.
- 4.6. Respondents to the Census from other ethnicities were far more likely to become a councillor to resolve an issue (33.7 per cent compared to 13.7 per cent). White councillors were over twice as likely to say they became a councillor because they were asked to compared to councillors of another ethnicity (28.1 per cent of white councillors compared to 13.6 per cent from another ethnicity).
- 4.7. Councillors from a non-white background were more likely to say that they had more influence than they had expected before entering the role (60 per cent for other ethnicity and 40.8 per cent for white councillors). Respondents from a non-white ethnic background were considerably more likely to say that they would stand for re-election (81.6 per cent) compared to white councillors (64.8 per cent); 15.2 per cent of white councillors said they wouldn't be standing for re-election, compared to 6.9 per cent of councillors from another ethnic background.
- 4.8. Respondents to the Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013 who were from a non-white ethnicity were more likely to have one or more caring responsibility (38.6 per cent compared to 27.5 per cent). Conversely, respondents who were from a non-white ethnicity were less likely to respond that they had a long term illness, a proxy for disability (9.3 per cent of councillors from another ethnicity compared to 13.3 per cent of white councillors).
- 4.9. According to the Census of Local Authority Councillors, approximately a third of councillors in England were women, but minority ethnic women were particularly under-represented; in 2010, 2 per cent of female councillors were non-white and in 2013, 3.5 per cent of female councillors were non-white.
- 4.10. In terms of age representation, 11.9 per cent of white councillors were aged under 45 at the time of the last Census of Local Authority Councillors, this compares to 22.7 per cent of non-white councillors.

5. ETHNICITY RESEARCH AND CAMPAIGNS

- 5.1. The BAME Women Councillors' Taskforce was convened by the Government Equalities Office in May 2008 to consider practical ways of encouraging BAME women to become local councillors and to make councils more representative of the communities they serve. The Taskforce set itself five objectives: to improve BAME women's knowledge and awareness of underrepresentation, to motivate and encourage them, to build their confidence and skills, to work to overcome cultural barriers within political parties that act as barriers to BAME women, and to help reduce stereotyping and raise awareness of the benefits of representation by BAME women.

- 5.2. The BAME Women Councillors' Taskforce conducted outreach events, a community leadership programme and a mentoring programme. The Taskforce highlighted the importance of good communications between partner organisations to harness the valuable input of each and coordinate efforts from an early stage. The Taskforce recommended that a single clear summary of the steps to becoming a councillor is developed. The group highlighted the importance of supporting the individual journey to becoming a councillor. The taskforce recommended that care is taken in matching mentors and that expectations should be managed along the way. The BAME Women Councillors' Taskforce highlighted the need for political parties to recognise that more support is needed to engage BAME women in party politics.
- 5.3. The Operation Black Vote and Government Equalities Office 'Black Asian Minority Ethnic Women Councillor Shadowing Scheme' ran in over 50 local authorities and 60 BAME women from across the country took part. The experience equipped the participants to stand for elected office and resulted in nearly a quarter of participants standing in the May 2010 local elections, with four participants elected as councillors.
- 5.4. The Operation Black Vote and Lewisham Council Civic Leadership Programme was launched in 2009 with the aim of addressing the under-representation of Lewisham's Black and Minority Ethnic residents within areas of civic and political life. Twenty-five participants took part in the 2009 programme using their skills to become more active within the community or to take public office and 40 BAME Lewisham residents took part in the second year of the programme. Four participants in the first year of the programme stood as candidates in the 2010 local elections; another candidate was appointed by the Secretary of State for Education to a role within the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulation (OFQUAL), another chaired a Safer Neighbourhood Panel and one became a Board member for Race on the Agenda.
- 5.5. In 2017, the LGiU's Commission on Women in Local Government found that Black, Asian, and minority ethnic women are underrepresented in local government. Only 5.5 per cent of women councillors responding to the Commission's survey identified as BAME, slightly greater than the 3.8 per cent of men but vastly below the 14 per cent of the England and Wales population which identifies as BAME.
- 5.6. The Commission on Women in Local Government noted that due to the very small numbers of respondents to their survey who were BAME, they were unable to draw statistically significant conclusions. The data however did indicate that 24 of 48 BAME female respondents said they had experienced discrimination based on their protected characteristics other than gender, and 22 of 53 BAME male councillors respondents said that they had.

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. The legal implications are set out in the body of this report.