

# Preparing for Elected Office

## Exercise Worksheet

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### **Exercise – how much do you really know about your local area?**

Think about the ward that you would represent if you decided to stand for election. It would be important for you to know about the different communities who live there, the industries and workplaces and the infrastructure that exists to serve and support local people.

Write down what you know about the following:

1. How many people live in the area?

2. What proportion of people claim housing benefit?

3. What proportion of the local population are of retirement age?

**4. What do the most recent crime statistics tell you about crime concerns?**

**5. Who are the major employers?**

**6. How many people commute into the area each day in order to work?**

**7. How many affordable homes are being built?**

**8. How many active community councils are there in the ward?**

Reflect on your responses to the questions above:

- How well do you feel you know the area now?
- Could you learn more?
- Would you feel comfortable to be asked any of these questions by one of your constituents or the local media if you were a councillor?

## Exercise – seeing the ‘bigger picture’

Look at the individual cases presented below and write down some of the potential issues that might lie behind each.

### 1. Four separate cases reported of potholes on a stretch of road

### 2. A rise in the number of queries about on-street parking by people commuting in from other areas

### 3. A constituent is unable to pay their council tax and is looking for support

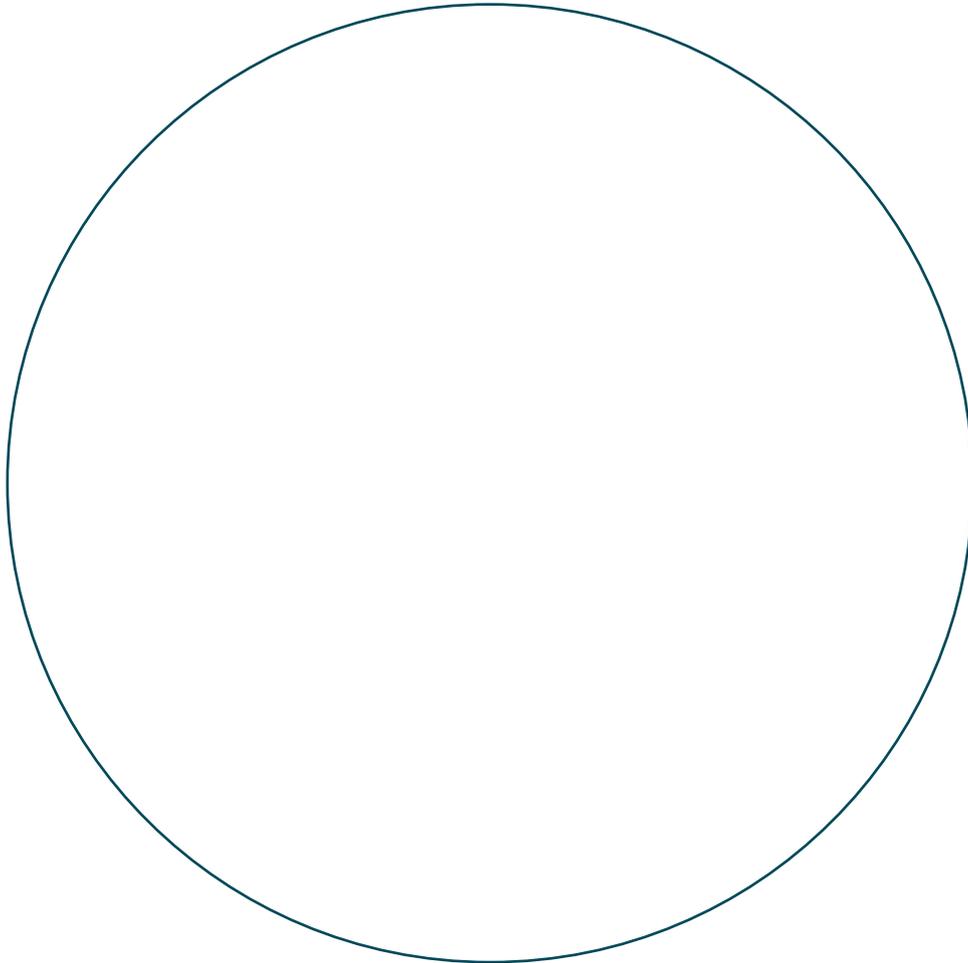
Imagine you were the local councillor who received these cases:

- How might you react?
- What wider concerns would they suggest?
- What first steps would you take?

## Exercise – how you use your time

Think about the time you spend in a typical week on all your commitments, e.g. work, training, education, family duties, hobbies, leisure interests, sports, eating, sleeping etc.

Using the pie chart below, apportion the time you spend on each activity to build up a picture of how you are currently using the time available.



Reflect on the results:

- Does your analysis suggest that you might struggle to make time available in taking on the role of councillor?
  - If you were to be elected, what activities might need to be changed, sacrificed or reduced?
  - How much time do you anticipate spending on councillor duties every week?
- LocalCouncillor.Scot has diaries from current councillors which can give you an indication of how much time you might need to spend being a councillor.

## Exercise - Where do you go from here?

1. Have you identified any further gaps in your knowledge or understanding about what being a councillor is likely to involve? If so, please set these out below and then spend some time to identify any additional guidance or learning resources that could help.

2. What further steps could you now take in seeking to become a candidate in the next elections, or to prepare yourself for elected office?