

LGiU

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION UNIT



SUPPORTING COUNCILLORS: A MANIFESTO FOR COUNCILS

INDEPENDENT INTELLIGENT INFLUENTIAL

SUPPORTING COUNCILLORS: A MANIFESTO FOR COUNCILS

In promoting this manifesto the LGiU is asking all councils and councillors to implement our 12 action points

1

Promote greater awareness and understanding of what a councillor does so that more people know why they are needed and why they are important.

2

Provide information to all those who work closely with the council to know more about how councillors can get things done, and the limits of their powers.

3

Provide clear information that explains how to become a councillor and the responsibilities involved.

4

Provide training after elections so that members are able to become excellent councillors with a good understanding of the role and responsibilities.

5

Call upon government to revise the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity* so that councils can more actively encourage and better support councillors to communicate with the public.

6

Call upon government to ensure councillors and local government have all the powers and constitutional reforms they need to be able to get things done.

7

Develop mechanisms that devolve resources so that local councillors can effectively influence spending in their locality in line with their community leadership role.

8

Support the development and implementation of a charter containing minimum standards of support to help local councillors carry out their councillor responsibilities effectively.

* For more information on the Code see the LGiU publication, *The Right Side of the Law*

9

Develop with councillors a clear role definition which sets out the main functions and duties and typical demands of being a councillor. The role definition should also help to explain the councillor's role to the public.

10

Support the development of a voluntary national framework of allowances set by an independent panel. The panel should take into account differences in types and sizes of authorities and duties of councillors to benchmark allowances. Councils should consider the framework when setting their own allowances schemes.

11

Review arrangements for working with councillors so that councils adopt modern ways of working, including making best use of technology.

12

Work with businesses to help working councillors to manage their work/ council time better; work with local employers to support employees who become councillors as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes and to help them gain public recognition for it; and publicise the many skills that being a councillor brings to the workplace, to the local authority, to the employee and the benefits that this can bring to employers.

BY SUPPORTING AND ACTING ON THIS MANIFESTO YOU WILL HAVE:

- Ensured government listens and acts on the problems facing local councillors**
- Helped explain what a councillor does and why they are important**
- Helped councillors to represent their local constituents**
- Strengthened democracy and encouraged an excellent range of local candidates**

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The LGiU has been campaigning with local government for almost 25 years. During that time the role of the councillor, as the locally elected representative of their community, has changed enormously. The job is now more time-consuming and complex than ever before. Despite that, for those that do it, it is hugely rewarding.

Helping people to get the services they need and want, making a real difference for the people they live and work amongst is satisfaction enough for some. However many younger and newer councillors are finding it more difficult to carry out the time-consuming voluntary work they do for the council and their political work because they just can't do it effectively alongside their work, home and family life.

The LGiU is urging government to make changes and has contributed to the work of the Councillors Commission report, *Representing the Future*, and the All Party Parliamentary Local Government Group's report, *The Role of Councillors*, on many of these issues.

Councils, as well as government and political parties, can help people to be active and effective councillors, which in turn supports local people to have an active role in the development and delivery of services in their community. Effective councillors are key to effective community engagement.

Signing up to this manifesto means supporting actions that would help make a real difference to existing and future councillors so that more people could seriously consider taking on the role. We believe it is the only way to ensure that local people have a really excellent choice in who represents them and how well communities are able to be represented.

For further information, please visit our website www.lgiu.gov.uk or contact Tracy Gardiner on 020 7554 2836 or email tracy.gardiner@lgiu.org.uk

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