



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

National Survey of Local Government Candidates, 2003

Local Government



**NATIONAL SURVEY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CANDIDATES, 2003**

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**Scottish Executive Social Research
2003**

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1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Following consultation on the Local Government White Paper 'Renewing Local Democracy: the Next Steps' the Scottish Executive published the draft Local Governance (Scotland) Bill on the 4th of February 2003. A number of initiatives were launched to address issues featured in the White Paper. These were intended to support and enhance the broad principles underlying the draft Bill of improving democratic participation and widening the range of people who become involved in local government.

As part of this, the Executive decided to commission research on candidates who stood at the local government elections in May and councillors who were elected. Separate surveys were conducted for unsuccessful candidates and councillors¹, as councillors were asked additional questions relating to their council duties. Since the Scottish Local Government Information Unit (SLGIU) – now part of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) – were already committed to undertaking a similar survey of councillors it was agreed that a joint survey would be conducted. The findings from this survey were published jointly by CoSLA and the Scottish Executive in November 2003 under the title '*Scotland's Councillors*'. We thank Paolo Vestri, Garrick Smith and their colleagues at SLGIU/CoSLA for their work on this survey.

The objective of the candidates' survey was to gather detailed information on candidates' background and profile to examine what sorts of people decide to stand for election. The aim was to assess how representative Local Government candidates are of the community as a whole and, in turn, whether there are significant differences between unsuccessful candidates and councillors. The research will help inform issues of widening access to council membership. To this end, the data collected will be made available to the Widening Access to Council Membership Progress Group, whose remit is "*To take forward work on making council membership attractive to a wider cross-section of the community within the current legislative framework, including the preparation of non-statutory guidance on the definition of politically restricted posts, and make recommendations on the training, development, and support given to councillors.*"

We would like to thank all those candidates who took the time to complete the questionnaire; their assistance is much appreciated.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

Following an open tendering process, Progressive Research Ltd - an independent Edinburgh-based research firm - were commissioned to conduct the data collection phase of the project on behalf of the Executive. All data analysis was carried out in-house. The candidates' questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was developed during the course of April 2003 and was intended to be compatible with both the councillors' survey and questions contained in the 2001 National Census (to allow comparisons to be drawn between candidates, councillors and the wider population).

The questionnaire, covering letter and freepost return envelope were sent to candidates' home addresses in the week following the May 1st local elections. Candidates' addresses were compiled from the lists of Persons Nominated supplied by the Returning Officers in the 32 local authorities. A postcard reminder was sent to those candidates who had not responded approximately three weeks after the initial mailing. A further reminder and second questionnaire were sent out two weeks later, with a final date for receipt of completed questionnaires set a fortnight after that. The contractor performed all data entry and consistency checks; open-ended questions were coded in discussion with the Executive's project manager.

¹ For simplicity, unsuccessful candidates will be referred to as 'candidates' in the remainder of the paper.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Survey of Local Government Candidates 2003 represents the first systematic examination in Scotland of the profile of candidates who came forward for election but who were unsuccessful. It was conducted in conjunction with a survey of councillors, undertaken jointly by CoSLA and the Scottish Executive. The aim of the research was to inform a number of policy proposals aimed at improving local democracy.

The main findings from this research included:

- Only 27.6% of candidates standing at the 2003 Scottish Local Government elections were female, while 21.8% of Scotland's councillors are women. These figures are considerably lower than the 38.0% of MSPs who are female. No party comes close to equal gender representation in their proportion of female candidates or councillors.
- Candidates tended to be older than the general population: only 13% of candidates were aged under 35 compared to a quarter of Scotland's people. The vast majority of candidates came from the 35 to 64 age bracket. On average candidates were around four years younger than councillors (51 years compared to 55). Candidates representing the Scottish Socialist Party had the lowest average age; independents the highest.
- Candidates and councillors are significantly more likely to hold a professional qualification or a degree than the general population.
- Of the 2013 candidates who responded to the survey, 39 (2%) came from ethnic minorities. This is roughly proportional to the ethnic origin of Scotland's population.
- More than eight out of ten candidates (and almost nine out of ten councillors) own or are buying their own home; compared to just over 60% of the population.
- Around 15% of candidates have a long-term illness, disability or health problem which affects their daily activities or the work they can do. This is higher than the 9% of councillors with a similar illness or disability but considerably lower than the quarter of the population who are affected by ill health.
- Almost two-thirds of candidates, and three-quarters of councillors, have no caring responsibilities (for either young children or elderly friends or family). Almost 6% of candidates and 3% of councillors have children aged under five.
- Candidates and councillors are more likely to have access to their own transport than the general population: while two-thirds of households have access to a car, the equivalent figures for candidates and councillors is 80% and 88% respectively. There is some variation in car ownership by political affiliation, but this can generally be explained by age profile and geography.
- Nearly 64% of candidates are in employment – either full or part-time, or self-employed – while a further 23% are retired. There are large differences by political affiliation, the most notable of these is the high percentage of independents who are self-employed.
- Around seven in ten candidates and councillors in employment work in professional or managerial occupations; the remainder hold manual or administrative posts. The majority of candidates (57%) work in the private sector, the remainder are spread across public sector occupations (for example in education, the voluntary sector and local or central government).

There are significant differences by political affiliation: for example, while three-quarters of independents work in the private sector, only 28% of SSP candidates do so.

- Male and female candidates tend to work similar hours to the rest of the adult population. Female candidates are by far the more likely to work part-time hours, while almost a quarter of male candidates work 49 or more hours in the average week.
- Although direct comparisons are difficult, it is clear that candidates and councillors tend to earn higher incomes than the general population. This is confirmed by examining social grade; whereas three-quarters of candidates are in the higher A, B and C1 grades, less than half the population are.
- Motivations for standing for election varied across parties but generally revolved round a desire to represent the community, to improve local services, out of party loyalty or to provide voters with a choice.
- Only a very small minority of candidates (less than 3%) were very confident of winning the seats, while a further 21% were quite confident. Independents were generally the most confident; SSP the least. This lack of confidence is easy to explain: candidates believed the incumbent party was simply too far ahead.
- Almost exactly half of the candidates standing in 2003 had sought election previously. Independent and Labour candidates were the most likely to have previous council experience.
- Despite being unsuccessful, the vast majority of candidates from all parties will definitely or probably seek election in the future. Female candidates are slightly less likely to stand again than their male counterparts.

3. RESPONSE RATES AND REPRESENTATIVENESS

A total of 2013 responses were received from the 2976 unsuccessful candidates, representing an overall response rate of 67.6%. For a postal survey of this nature this is a highly satisfactory figure and compares favourably to the response rate achieved in the survey of councillors (60.5%). However, as table 1 shows, the overall response rate hides considerable variation across councils - ranging from a low of 53.6% in North Lanarkshire to a high of 88.9% in Eilean Siar (although the number of candidates in the latter council was small). Generally there was a slightly higher response from more rural authorities, but it is reassuring that the response rate did not fall below 50% in any of the 32 councils.

Table 1: Response rates by council

Council	Candidates	Responses	% Responses
Aberdeen City	149	100	67.1
Aberdeenshire	145	116	80.0
Angus	88	65	73.9
Argyll and Bute	73	55	75.3
Clackmannanshire	31	21	67.7
Dumfries and Galloway	94	66	70.2
Dundee City	101	56	55.4
East Ayrshire	76	51	67.1
East Dunbartonshire	74	57	77.0
East Lothian	77	62	80.5
East Renfrewshire	58	46	79.3
Edinburgh, City of	223	145	65.0
Eilean Siar	18	16	88.9
Falkirk	65	46	70.8
Fife	212	146	68.9
Glasgow City	263	150	57.0
Highland	91	56	61.5
Inverclyde	58	34	58.6
Midlothian	60	36	60.0
Moray	52	37	71.2
North Ayrshire	73	48	65.8
North Lanarkshire	125	67	53.6
Orkney Islands	16	11	68.8
Perth and Kinross	104	83	79.8
Renfrewshire	113	74	65.5
Scottish Borders	65	43	66.2
Shetland Islands	16	12	75.0
South Ayrshire	73	42	57.5
South Lanarkshire	171	109	63.7
Stirling	71	51	71.8
West Dunbartonshire	46	31	67.4
West Lothian	95	69	72.6
TOTAL	2976	2013*	67.6

* Note: This figure contains 12 candidates whose council is unknown.

In terms of representiveness by political affiliation, as table 2 shows the survey received a positive response from all parties (and from independents). The response rate from Liberal Democrat candidates, at 81.2%, was particularly high, but it is encouraging that over 60% of candidates from all four major political parties completed the questionnaire (the response rate from SSP candidates was only slightly below 60%).

Table 2: Response rates by party

Party	Responses	% Responses
Independent	184	71.0
Conservative	432	63.8
Labour	297	72.3
Liberal Democrat	406	81.2
SNP	498	63.4
SSP	182	58.3
Other ²	14	51.9
TOTAL	2013	67.6

Finally, how representative is the sample in terms of gender? As the gender profile of all candidates is known (collated from lists of persons nominated), a comparison between responding candidates and all candidates is possible. As table 3 shows, the gender profile of responding candidates almost exactly matches that of all candidates - 30.1% of the sample were female compared to 30.0% of all candidates. With this overall high response rate, it's perhaps not surprising that the gender profile of respondents so closely mirrors that of all candidates.

Table 3: Response rate by gender

Gender	All Respondents	%	All Unsuccessful Candidates	%
Male	1408	69.9	2083	70.0
Female	605	30.1	893	30.0

Given the high response rates across councils and parties, and the fact that the gender profile of respondents almost exactly matches that of all unsuccessful candidates, there is little to be gained from re-weighting the sample to take account of differential response rates. Moreover, many questions will be analysed by political affiliation and clearly there is no intrinsic bias due to the differential response rates across parties in such tables.

² Due to the small numbers, 'others' are excluded from the majority of tables broken down by political affiliation.

4. CANDIDATES' PROFILE

This section of the report examines the demographic characteristics of candidates and, where appropriate, compares the profile of candidates with that of Scotland's councillors (using data from the 2003 Councillors' Survey). Comparisons with the wider population are also made using data from the 2001 National Census.

4.1. GENDER

A comparison of the gender profile of unsuccessful candidates, councillors, all candidates (i.e. candidates and councillors) and Scotland's population as a whole is given in table 4 below. As the table shows, although women make up over half of the population only 27.6% of the 4198 candidates standing in the local elections were female. In terms of actually being elected, the under-presentation of women is even more obvious with just 266 (21.8%) of Scotland's 1222 councillors being female (this represents a fall of 0.8% from 1999). Female representation at council level also compares unfavourably to the Scottish Parliament, where women make up 38% of the 129 MSPs.

So why this large discrepancy in the percentage of women standing and the percentage elected? One possible reason is historical and relates to the slow turnover of councillors. Almost three-quarters of councillors elected in 2003 were returning councillors (this is similar to the pattern in earlier elections). This means that any increase in the percentage of female councillors will be incremental (although of course the number of females councillors actually fell at the last election). Could it also be that female candidates tend to fight less winnable seats? Although there is some evidence to back this assertion the data does not yet exist to test this hypothesis (for example, the marginality of the seat is not always the best indicator of how winnable it is).

Table 4: Gender of candidates, councillors and population (%)

Gender	Unsuccessful Candidates	Councillors	All Candidates	Population ³
Male	70.0	78.2	72.4	48.1
Female	30.0	21.8	27.6	51.9

Table 5 provides details of the percentage of female candidates and councillors by their political affiliation. The Liberal Democrats had the greatest percentage of female candidate (37.4%), followed by the Conservatives (32.3%) and SSP (27.9%). Women made up around a quarter of Labour and SNP candidates, but just 16% of independents and less than 14% of 'others' (although the latter is based on a small number of cases).

The Liberal Democrats also have the highest proportion of female councillors (just under a third), while women constitute just 15.2% of all independent councillors. In electoral terms, female candidates in all parties, with the exception of the SNP and to some extent independents, perform relatively poorly in relation to their male counterparts. This is particularly true in the Conservative Party - while almost a third of Conservative candidates were female, only 22.8% of the party's councillors are women.

³ All population data, unless otherwise stated, is taken from the 2001 Census published by the General Records Office Scotland (GROS). See: www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

Table 5: Female candidates and councillors by political affiliation (%)

Party	Candidates	Councillors
Independent	16.0	15.2
Conservative	32.3	22.8
Labour	25.9	20.0
Lib Dem	37.4	32.6
SNP	25.0	24.9
SSP	27.9	-
Other	13.8	-
All	27.6	21.8

Note: SSP and 'others' excluded due to small numbers.

Women made up over 40% of candidates in only two councils: Perth and Kinross (44.2%) and Midlothian (41.5%) and less than 20% in a further four: Eilean Siar (5.2%), West Dunbartonshire (15.7%), Orkney (18.8%) and Argyll and Bute (19.2%). Although three of the four councils with the lowest proportions of female candidates are rural or island councils with large numbers of independent candidates, there doesn't appear to be any clear gender patterns across different types of council (e.g. in terms of political composition, rurality, size, etc.). Figures supplied by CoSLA show that Aberdeen and East Dunbartonshire are the only councils where the ratio of female to male councillors is greater than one in three (this compares to three councils in 1999).

4.2. AGE

Table 6 details the age profile of candidates, councillors and the population as a whole. Candidates are disproportionately drawn from the 45 to 64 age bracket; 52.5% of candidates belonged to this age group compared to only around a third of the adult population. The young are particularly under-represented with only 13% of candidates aged 21 to 35, as opposed to a quarter of the population. Standing for election is also less common among older members of society, with just 16.4% of candidates aged 65 or over (compared to over a fifth of Scotland's population). The youngest candidate to respond to the survey was 21 (the minimum legal age), while the oldest was 86. No fewer than 68 candidates were aged 75 or over.

If the age profile of candidates is unrepresentative of the wider population then the profile of councillors is still worse. Less than 5% of councillors are under 35 (and just 1% under 30), while over two-thirds are aged 45 to 64. The over 65s are also significantly under-represented on Scotland's councils.

Table 6: Age profile (%)

Age Category	Candidates	Councillors	Population
21-24	3.3	-	6.5
25-34	9.7	4.3	18.6
35-44	18.1	12.6	20.7
45-54	24.6	26.8	18.3
55-64	27.9	40.2	14.6
65 and over	16.4	16.1	21.4

Comparing age by gender shows that the profiles of male and female respondents are similar. Although female candidates are, on average, slightly older than their male counterparts the differences are small and not statistically significant. The age differences between male and female councillors are significant, however. Almost 20% of male councillors are 65 or over, compared to just 7% of female councillors. The average age of male councillors, at just over 55, is three years older than for their female counterparts.

The survey showed that SSP candidates were the youngest of all, with a mean age of 41 (table 7). Independents tended to be the oldest (mean of 56), while there was little difference in the average ages of candidates from the other major parties. The mean age of all candidates was 51. At 55, the average age of councillors is slightly higher than that of candidates. Independent councillors are again the oldest, while there is little difference in the average ages of councillors representing the other major parties (the figure for the SSP is based on just one return). By way of comparison, the mean age of the population (aged 21 and over) is 49.

Table 7: Mean age of candidates and councillors (years)

Party	Candidates	Councillors
Independent	56	58
Conservative	53	57
Labour	51	53
Lib Dem	53	54
SNP	50	53
SSP	41	55
Other	43	-
All	51	55

Finally, are there any gender differences in the mean ages of candidates and councillors from different political parties? Among candidates the only significant difference occurs within the Conservative Party, where females candidates are, on average, four years younger than their male counterparts. There are greater variations among councillors however, with female independent councillors being around three and a half years younger than their male colleagues and female Liberal Democrat councillors being around five years younger.

4.3. EDUCATION QUALIFICATION

Candidates are significantly more likely to hold a degree or professional qualification than the population as a whole (54.7% to 20.9%). Just 7.1% of respondents had no formal educational qualifications, as compared to over a third of the general population. There is little difference in the level of educational attainment of candidates and councillors (although candidates are slightly more likely to hold a degree or professional qualification).

Table 8: Highest education qualification (%)

Education Qualification	Candidates	Councillors	Population
None	7.1	12.6	34.6
'O' Grades/Levels	8.2	10.3	23.1
Highers/'A' Levels	9.1	9.4	11.2
Higher education below degree	14.3	12.6	7.2
Professional/Vocational	15.4	13.2	↑ 20.9
University/Polytechnic degree	39.3	35.8	↓
Other	6.7	6.0	-

Note: Figures for population relate to those aged 20 to 74.

The survey showed that female candidates are slightly more likely to hold a degree than their male counterparts, but generally levels of educational attainment are similar for both sexes. Interestingly however, female councillors have significantly higher levels of education attainment than their male colleagues. Whereas a third of male councillors hold a degree, the equivalent figure for females is almost 45% (indeed less than 5% of female councillors have no formal qualifications). These figures are consistent with the findings of the 1999 Councillors' Survey.

There are wide disparities in the educational qualifications of candidates from different political parties, as table 9 shows. Liberal Democrat candidates have the highest educational attainment of all, with over 50% holding a degree and a further 15% having professional qualifications. Around four in ten Labour and SNP candidates hold a degree, while Labour candidates are also the most likely to have left school with no formal qualifications. Around a fifth of independent and Conservative candidates hold professional or vocational qualifications.

Table 9: Highest education qualification by political affiliation (%)

Party	None	'O' Grade	Higher/'A' level	Prof/Vocat	Higher below degree	Degree	Other
Independent	10.0	10.6	9.4	21.7	11.1	27.2	10.0
Conservative	4.7	9.4	12.7	19.0	13.6	35.0	5.6
Labour	10.4	7.7	5.7	12.1	14.5	40.7	8.8
Lib Dem	4.2	5.2	8.6	14.8	13.8	50.4	3.0
SNP	6.8	8.5	9.3	14.5	14.1	39.2	7.6
SSP	9.4	9.4	6.1	9.9	21.0	35.4	8.3

4.4. ETHNIC ORIGIN

A total of 39 candidates (2% of all candidates responding to the survey) came from non-white ethnic origins. Of these 39, three stood as independents, five for the Conservatives, twelve for Labour, seven for the Liberal Democrats, nine as Scottish Nationalists and three for the SSP. The highest proportion of non-white candidates was Pakistani (eleven in total). As table 10 shows, the ethnic profile of candidates almost exactly matches that of Scotland's population. CoSLA's figures suggest that ethnic minorities are under-represented on Scotland's councils, with only 14 councillors (1.1%) belonging to an ethnic minority.

Table 10: Ethnic origin (%)

Ethnicity	Cand N	Candidates	Population
White	1951	98.0	98.0
Black African	3	0.2	0.1
Black Caribbean	2	0.1	0.0
Black Other	2	0.1	0.0
Indian	6	0.3	0.3
Pakistani	11	0.6	0.6
Bangladeshi	1	0.1	0.0
Other Asian	4	0.2	0.4
Other	10	0.5	0.4

Although in terms of ethnicity candidates are representative of the wider population, a closer inspection of the data shows that 12 of the 39 ethnic minority candidates stood in one council: Glasgow. Only Perth and Kinross had more than two candidates from a non-white ethnic origin, while more than half of councils had no ethnic minority candidates (although note that these findings relate to respondents only).

4.5. MARITAL STATUS

Given the age profile of candidates, councillors and the general population (as noted in table 6 above), it's not surprising that councillors are significantly more likely to be married than either candidates or the population as a whole. While 53% of the population over 20 years old are married, the corresponding figures for candidates is 63% and for councillors 79%. Only one in ten councillors is single, compared to around a quarter of candidates and the wider population.

Table 11: Marital status (%)

Marital Status	Candidates	Councillors	Population
Married	62.9	78.6	53.0
Widowed	4.5	3.7	9.6
Divorced	7.2	4.6	7.5
Separated	2.4	3.8	3.8
Single/living with partner	22.9	10.2	26.0

Figures for population relate to those aged 20 and over.

Marital status by political affiliation follows similar age patterns; SSP candidates, having the youngest profile, are the least likely to be married.

4.6. HOUSING TENURE

Local government candidates are significantly more likely to own (or be in the process of buying) their home than the general population. Over 80% of candidates who responded to the survey own their home, as compared to 63% of the population. While over a fifth of the Scottish population live in local authority rented accommodation only 6% of candidates do so (candidates are also less likely

to rent from a Housing Association). Home ownership is also very much the norm among councillors; nine out of ten councillors either own or are buying their own property, while only very small numbers reside in the rented sector.

Table 12: Housing tenure (%)

Housing Tenure	Candidates	Councillors	Population
Own outright	36.3	44.7	23.4
Own with mortgage	46.1	44.0	39.2
Rent from Local Authority	5.9	6.4	21.6
Rent from Housing Association	2.4	1.6	5.6
Rent from private landlord	5.1	1.8	5.6
Live with relatives/rent free	4.3	1.5	4.6

Note: Figures for population relate to households.

There is some variation in housing tenure by political affiliation, with the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat candidates more likely to own their own home than candidates from the other parties. SSP candidates, in particular, are significantly more likely to live in rented accommodation – in either the public or private sector – or to be staying with relatives (this is probably related to the younger age profile of SSP candidates).

Table 13: Housing tenure by political affiliation (%)

Party	Own or Buying	Rent - LA/HA	Rent – private	Live with relatives
Independent	77.3	13.8	6.6	2.2
Conservative	86.2	2.4	6.1	5.4
Labour	87.1	9.6	1.4	2.0
Lib Dem	88.4	3.0	4.9	3.7
SNP	81.5	10.5	3.6	4.4
SSP	61.3	19.4	11.0	8.3
All	82.4	8.3	5.1	4.3

4.7. LONG-TERM ILLNESS, HEALTH PROBLEM OR DISABILITY

Just over 15% of candidates standing for election, and who responded to the survey, reported that they had long-term illness, health problem or disability which affected their daily activities or the work they could do. This is lower than the quarter of the population with an illness or disability, but considerably higher than the 8.7% of councillors who reported ill health or a disability. Male candidates are slightly more likely to suffer from illness or disability than females (16.2% and 13.9% respectively). Unsurprisingly, the best indicator in predicting illness is age: over a fifth of candidates aged 65 or over reported that they suffer from ill health (although interestingly even among 21 to 34 year olds the figure is over 10%). However, this figure is significantly lower than the 53% of the population of the same age with a limiting long-term illness or disability. It would appear therefore, that candidates in this oldest age group are appreciably more likely to be in good health than their cohort group. Given the commitments involved in holding elected office it is perhaps not surprising that ill health among councillors is relatively rare, no matter the age category (for example, only

around one in ten councillors aged over 65 noted a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability).

Table 14: Long-term illness/health problems/disability (%)

Illness/Disability	Candidates	Councillors	Population
Yes	15.5	8.7	24.4
No	84.5	91.3	75.6

Note: Figures for population relate to persons in households aged 20 and over.

Comparisons by political affiliation show some variations across parties (table 15). Independent candidates are the most likely to suffer from illness or disability (21.4%), while the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats are the least (11.4% and 12.6% respectively). The higher prevalence of ill health among independents is probably related to the older age profile of those candidates.

Table 15: With a long-term illness/health problems/disability by political affiliation (%)

Party	%
Independent	21.4
Conservative	11.4
Labour	15.4
Lib Dem	12.6
SNP	18.3
SSP	17.2

4.8. CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

One might suppose that having care responsibilities - be it for young children or elderly relatives - would influence the probability of an individual standing for election. Given the commitments involved in being a councillor, individuals with very young children may be dissuaded from seeking election. Table 15 would seem to confirm this as just 5.6% of candidates have children aged under five, while less than 5% have caring responsibilities for the elderly (indeed just 130 candidates have more than one of the care responsibilities listed below). Councillors are even less likely to have care responsibilities than candidates, although this is perhaps not surprising given their older age profile (only 17% of councillors are aged under 45 compared to over 30% of candidates).

Although direct population comparisons are difficult as the Census asks about dependent children in the household rather than care responsibilities, a number of general observations are possible. The Census showed that 10.8% of the adult population (those aged 16 and above) have dependent children aged under five (almost twice the proportion of candidates), while a further 6.8% have care responsibilities for a child aged between five and nine. Census figures also suggest that 60.6% of adults under pensionable age have no dependent children⁴. Taken together, this would seem to show that candidates, and even more so councillors, are less likely to have caring responsibilities than the general population.

⁴ Dependent children are defined as children aged 0-15 or a child aged 16-18 in full-time education.

Table 16: Care responsibilities (%)

Responsibility	Candidates	Councillors
Children 11-16	14.4	12.0
Children 5-10	10.0	4.1
Children under 5	5.6	3.1
Elderly	6.6	4.8
Other	4.8	2.7
None	65.9	73.2

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

There is little difference in the percentage of male and female candidates with care responsibilities - 33.4% and 35.9% respectively. The main determinant of the likelihood of caring responsibility is, of course, age. While over a fifth of candidates aged 25 to 34 have caring responsibilities for children under the age of five, the equivalent figure for those respondents aged over 55 is less than 1%. A similar pattern emerges from the councillor data. However, what is impossible to establish is whether having young children – and the time commitments this involves – actively dissuades potential candidates from coming forward for election or whether there are other more important influences at play (for example, younger people may be less able to take time off from paid employment to attend council functions).

As table 17 shows, there is some variation in care responsibilities by political affiliation. SSP candidates are considerably more likely to have children (particularly young children), this again reflects their younger age profile. Over a fifth of Labour candidates have children aged between 11 and 16, while the Conservatives are the least like to have any caring responsibilities.

Table 17: Care responsibilities by political affiliation (%)

Party	Child 11-16	Child 5-10	Child <5	Elderly	Other	None
Independent	15.9	6.0	3.3	8.2	4.4	66.5
Conservative	9.0	8.7	4.3	7.6	5.2	70.7
Labour	20.4	10.7	4.2	6.2	6.6	60.6
Lib Dem	11.8	8.3	5.5	9.0	4.5	67.4
SNP	15.9	10.8	6.9	5.3	3.7	65.7
SSP	17.9	17.9	10.6	2.2	6.1	58.7

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

4.9. CAR OWNERSHIP

Eight out of ten candidates own a car, which suggests that candidates are more reliant on cars than the general population (around two-thirds of which have access to a car). There is little difference in car ownership by gender, but there is considerable variation across age groups (for example, only around a quarter of candidates aged under 25 own a car). Car ownership among councillors is very much the norm with close to 90% having their own means of transport.

Table 18: Car ownership (%)

Car	Candidates	Councillors	Population
Yes	79.5	87.8	65.8
No	20.5	12.2	34.2

Note: Population figures relate to households.

As table 19 shows, SSP candidates are the least likely to own a car, while independents are marginally the most likely. Two explanations are possible: the first relates to the age profile of candidates. As noted above, SSP candidates tend to be the youngest of all candidates and it is among the youngest age groups that car ownership is less prevalent. The second explanation relates to geography. In rural or island areas with limited public transport links, candidates are much more reliant on cars than their counterparts in urban councils. For example, over 90% of candidates own a car in all three Island authorities, as well as in Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. On the other hand, less than 70% of candidates own a car in Glasgow and Edinburgh where public transport links are generally more reliable. With SSP candidates tending to stand in urban wards and independents largely concentrated in rural authorities, the patterns seen in the table below can be explained.

Table 19: Car ownership by political affiliation (%)

Party	Own
Independent	86.3
Conservative	82.9
Labour	81.4
Lib Dem	83.5
SNP	80.5
SSP	50.5
Other	69.2

4.10.1 EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Almost two-thirds of candidates are in employment - whether full-time, part-time or self-employed (table 20 below). Given the age profile, it is not surprising that almost a quarter of candidates are retired. The remaining candidates are either unemployed, permanently sick or disabled, in education, looking after the home or not working for another reason. Breaking down employment status by gender shows that 68% of male candidates are in employment, compared to 55% of women. Female candidates are also more likely to be retired than their male counterparts (28% to 21%). Women constitute the majority (around three-quarters) of those candidates looking after the home or family, but there was little difference by gender across other employment status types.

The employment status of councillors is broadly similar to that of unsuccessful candidates. Almost half of councillors are in full-time employment (this includes almost 26% who state their occupation as a full-time councillor), while a further 20% are self-employed or in part-time occupations. A slightly lower percentage of councillors than candidates are retired. This may appear counter-intuitive given the older age profile of councillors, however it is explained by the fact that over a quarter of councillors of pensionable age state their occupation as a full-time councillor (rather than as being retired).

Although there are some difficulties in producing comparable population figures, a number of general observations are possible. While roughly equal proportions of candidates and the public are in full-time employment, candidates and councillors are significantly more likely to be self-employed. Even when we limit our sample to those respondents aged under 75 (to make it comparable with Census figures), considerably higher numbers of candidates are retired (21% to 15%). A further 18% of the population aged 20 to 74 are classed as economically inactive, but the Census does not give additional details for this particular age cohort (data for 16-74 year olds show that 7.4% are permanently sick, 3.9% are looking after the home and 3.9% are inactive for another reason). What is clear, however, is that considerably higher number of the population are economically inactive than either candidates or councillors.

Table 20: Employment status (%)

Employment Status	Candidates	Councillors	Population
Full-time employed	39.1	48.7*	40.8
Part-time employed	9.0	10.0	12.2
Self-employed	15.8	19.4	7.1
Unemployed	3.8	1.1	3.7
Retired	23.3	18.7	14.9
Full-time education	2.0	0.8	2.2
Permanently sick/disabled	2.8	0.5	↑
Looking after home/family	2.9	0.7	17.9
Other	1.5	0.1	↓

Note: The figures for population relate to those aged 20-74. * Includes 26.0% who state their occupation as full-time councillor.

The table below shows that Labour and the SSP have the greatest proportion of candidates employed in full-time occupations, while independent candidates are particularly prevalent in self-employed occupations (such as farming). The Conservatives, independents and Liberal Democrats have the highest proportion of candidates who are permanently retired from work. Other interesting patterns include the relatively high proportion of SSP candidates in full-time education and the higher levels of unemployment among independent and SSP respondents.

Table 21: Employment status by political affiliation (%)

Employment Status	Ind	Con	Lab	LD	SNP	SSP
Full-time employed	21.2	32.5	50.0	38.0	40.0	53.1
Part-time employed	6.5	7.9	6.5	12.2	9.1	11.2
Self-employed	28.8	19.2	13.3	11.7	16.8	6.1
Unemployed	7.1	2.6	2.4	2.0	3.6	9.5
Retired	28.8	30.1	19.4	27.5	21.2	5.0
Full-time education	0.5	2.6	0.3	2.0	1.8	5.6
Permanently sick/disabled	4.9	0.9	4.4	2.2	2.8	2.8
Looking after home/family	1.6	3.7	1.4	3.0	3.4	2.8
Other	0.5	0.5	2.4	1.0	1.0	3.9

4.10.2 EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY

Of those candidates in employment, the majority are in managerial or professional occupations (table 22). Over a quarter hold managerial or executive positions, while a further 44% are employed in other professional, technical or educational professions. Only 13% of local government candidates are in manual or craft occupations, a similar percentage to those in administrative, clerical or secretarial posts. Although a slightly higher percentage of councillors are employed in managerial or executive positions, the figures are generally similar for both groups.

Table 22: Employment category (%)

Employment Category	Candidates	Councillors
Managerial/Executive	25.1	30.2
Professional/Technical	31.8	30.8
Lecturer/Teacher/Researcher	12.5	11.4
Manual/Craft	13.4	12.8
Admin/Clerical/Secretarial	13.1	9.8
Other	4.0	4.9

Note: Figures for councillors excludes full-time councillors.

Men are about 10% more likely to hold managerial or executive positions than women (indeed, almost three-quarters of men in employment hold managerial or professional occupations). Almost a quarter of the female respondents are employed in administrative, clerical or secretarial posts, while 15% of males hold manual or craft jobs.

There are considerable variations in employment category by political affiliation (table 23). Conservative candidates are by far the most likely to hold managerial or executive positions (46.3%), followed by independents (only 5.6% of SSP candidates are in this category). However, the majority of candidates from all parties are in managerial or professional occupations (including education and research). Around a quarter of SSP candidates are in manual or craft occupations, while roughly 10-15% of each party's candidates hold administrative, clerical or secretarial positions.

Table 23: Employment category by political affiliation (%)

Employment Category	Ind	Con	Lab	LD	SNP	SSP
Managerial/Executive	30.0	46.3	25.8	19.2	20.1	5.6
Professional/Technical	33.0	22.1	33.3	42.3	30.9	27.4
Lecturer/Teacher/Researcher	9.0	5.8	10.6	16.3	12.1	25.0
Manual/Craft	14.0	9.2	14.6	5.0	17.8	23.4
Admin/Clerical/Secretarial	8.0	12.1	11.1	14.2	15.6	14.5
Other	6.0	4.6	4.5	2.9	3.5	4.0

4.10.3 EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

Well over half of candidates are employed in the private sector, while over one in ten are employed in the education sector. There are also a significant number of candidates working in local or central government (5.6% and 5.2% respectively) and for voluntary organisations (7.4%). The majority of councillors work in the public sector; over 11% are employed in local government, a further 8% in

central government and a relatively large proportion (9%) in the voluntary sector (these figures exclude full-time councillors).

Table 24: Employment sector (%)

Employment Sector	Candidates	Councillors
Local government	5.6	11.6
NHS	5.6	5.3
Voluntary sector	7.4	9.0
Central government	5.2	8.2
Education	11.3	7.4
Other public sector	8.4	10.8
Private sector	56.6	47.8

Breaking down the above figures by gender shows that female candidates are significantly more likely to work in the public services than their male counterparts - 57% of women are employed in the public sector compared to just 40% of men. This difference is mainly due to higher levels of female employment in education, the NHS and the voluntary sector (although there are higher proportions of male candidates working in local government).

There are also wide disparities in employment sector across the political parties (table 25). Only 28% of SSP candidates are employed in the public sector, compared to over 70% of independents and Conservative candidates. The SSP and Liberal Democrats have high percentages employed in the education sector, while a large number of SSP candidates (nearly 15%) work in the voluntary sector.

Table 25: Employment category by political affiliation (%)

Employment Category	Ind	Con	Lab	LD	SNP	SSP
Local Government	6.3	3.6	8.5	3.3	4.1	10.4
NHS	2.1	5.3	4.5	9.8	4.1	6.4
Other public sector	6.3	4.0	12.6	5.3	10.4	12.0
Voluntary sector	6.3	6.1	9.0	7.0	5.4	14.4
Central government	1.0	2.4	7.0	6.1	5.7	8.0
Education	4.2	7.3	9.0	18.0	9.2	20.8
Private sector	74.0	71.3	49.2	50.4	61.1	28.0

4.11 HOURS WORKED

Male candidates work, on average, 40.9 hours a week, which is slightly lower than the male population as whole (who work 42.3 hours in an average week). On the other hand, female candidates tend to work longer hours than other working women (33.1 hours as compared to 31.1). Comparing these figures with the average hours worked by councillors is problematic. Some councillors combine their council duty with paid employment, while new councillors (i.e. those elected for the first time in 2003) can only guess what impact their election will have on the hours they work⁵.

⁵ For a more detailed analysis of hours worked by councillors see '*Scotland's Councillors*'.

These mean figures hide a great deal of variation, however. As table 26 shows, just under a quarter of male candidates (and the male working population more generally) work long hours - 49 hours or above - while the corresponding figure for female candidates is around 7%. Female candidates are also much more likely to work part-time hours than their male counterparts; over a third work 30 hours or less a week compared to just 14% of males candidates (the equivalent population figures are 40% and 9% respectively).

Table 26: Hours worked in an ‘average’ week

Hours Worked	Cand - Male	Cand - Female	Popn - Male	Popn - Female
0-15	3.0	8.6	2.3	10.0
16-30	11.3	25.6	5.2	30.4
31-37	24.1	30.4	16.1	25.6
38-48	38.6	28.8	53.1	28.9
49 and over	23.0	6.7	23.3	5.1

Note: Population figures relate to those in employment aged 20 to 74.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is no strong correlation between care responsibilities (either for young children or elderly relatives) and hours worked. One might suppose that the third of female candidates who work shorter hours do so because they have young children, however the survey provides no evidence for such a conclusion. Moreover, there is a relatively weak link between hours worked and age. Although only a few female candidates under the age of 35 work very short hours (less than 16 per week), part-time workers tend to be spread fairly evenly across other age categories.

There is some variation in the number of hours worked by political affiliation and gender, however. As table 27 shows, Conservative male candidates work the longest hours (45.5 hours per week), followed by independents and SNP candidates. There is less disparity among female candidates, although Labour candidates work slightly longer hours. Indeed, there is little difference in the hours worked between male and female Labour candidates (a similar pattern emerges for SSP candidates). The largest difference in working time between the sexes occurs within the Conservative Party, where male candidates work, on average, over 13 hours a week longer.

Table 27: Mean hours worked by political affiliation and gender

Party	Male	Female	All
Independent	42.3	31.5	40.5
Conservative	45.5	32.2	42.4
Labour	39.4	35.9	38.4
Lib Dem	38.8	31.9	36.4
SNP	40.8	33.2	38.9
SSP	36.7	33.2	35.7
All	40.9	33.1	38.8

Note: Figures refer to those in employment and aged under 75.

4.12 INCOME

Over half of candidates and councillors have a gross annual income of under £20,000, while for around a quarter this figure is under £10,000. Candidates are slightly more likely to earn large salaries (in excess of £40,000) than councillors – 8.6% as compared to 5.9% (although note that the figures for councillors excludes councillors’ basic and Special Responsibility Allowance).

Table 28: Annual gross income (%)

Income (£)	Candidates	Councillors
Under £10,000	22.2	26.1
£10,000 - £19,999	34.5	34.4
£20,000 - £29,999	24.2	23.9
£30,000 - £39,999	10.6	9.7
£40,000 and over	8.6	5.9

Note: Gross income = income from all sources before tax/NI deductions.

However, these figures alone tell us little. Income is likely to be dependent on a number of factors, perhaps most notably gender and age. Table 29 below shows that there are significant differences in the income of male and female candidates. Whereas 23% of male candidates earn over £30,000 per annum the equivalent figure for females is less than 10%. However, the most notable differences occur at the lower income brackets – over a third of female candidates earn less than £10,000 (around twice the proportion of male candidates). The same broad patterns emerge from the councillor data – female councillors are significantly more likely to earn less than £10,000, while very few have an income of over £40,000. Comparing candidates with councillors shows that both male and female candidates are more likely to earn higher salaries than their elected counterparts (although again note that the figures for councillors exclude allowances).

Table 29: Annual gross income by gender (%)

Income (£)	Cand - Male	Cand -Female	Counc - Male	Counc - Female
Under £10,000	17.3	34.1	22.9	37.7
£10,000 - £19,999	33.2	37.6	33.9	36.3
£20,000 - £29,999	26.5	18.4	25.8	17.1
£30,000 - £39,999	12.1	6.8	10.3	7.5
£40,000 and over	10.8	3.1	7.2	1.4

Although it is difficult to find comparable income data for the population as a whole a number of general observations can be made. The Scottish Household Survey suggests that 31% of Scottish **households** have a net income of less than £10,000. Given that less than a quarter of candidates have an **individual** income of under £10,000 we may conclude that candidates are generally less likely to earn low incomes than the population as a whole. Similarly, while over 43% of candidates have an income in excess of £20,000 only a third of households earn an equivalent amount (and of course many families have more than one income provider). The data on social grade (see table 31 below) would seem to confirm our general conclusions that candidates tend to come from higher status backgrounds.

In terms of differences in income by gender, figures from the Department of Trade and Industry’s Women and Equality Unit confirm the general patterns outlined in the table 29 above. While women have an individual mean gross income of just over £7,500 per annum, the equivalent figure for men is almost £15,000 (although clearly there is a large standard deviation). Analysis of income distribution by quintiles confirms this pattern: women are over-represented in the bottom two income quintiles, while men are disproportionately concentrated in the top two quintiles.

As noted above, there is also likely to be a strong correlation between age and income levels. The survey does indeed show such a relationship. Only 4% of candidates aged under 35 are in the highest income bracket, as compared to 10% of ‘middle-aged’ candidates (35 to 64 year olds). Predictably, respondents aged over 65 are even less likely to be earning over £40,000 per annum than younger candidates. Similarly, at the other end of the income scale younger candidates are by far the most likely to earn less than £10,000. Similar patterns emerge from the councillor survey.

There are large differences in income across the political parties. Over a third of independent candidates have a gross income of less than £10,000 per annum, while the equivalent figure for the Conservatives and Labour is under one in five. Conservative and Liberal Democrat candidates are the most likely to earn over £40,000 a year, while less than 1% of SSP candidates earn this amount (as may be expected given the age profile).

Table 30: Annual gross income by political affiliation (%)

Party	<£10k	£10-19k	£20-29k	£30-39k	£40k
Independent	35.1	27.0	25.3	5.7	6.9
Conservative	18.2	34.3	21.0	12.4	14.1
Labour	19.9	30.8	25.9	14.7	8.7
Lib Dem	20.4	36.1	20.9	11.6	11.1
SNP	21.5	36.6	27.8	8.4	5.7
SSP	27.9	39.5	24.4	7.6	0.6

Finally, comparing income by political affiliation and gender reveals some interesting patterns. Around 60% of female independent candidates earn less than £10,000 per annum, compared to roughly a third of candidates from the other major parties. Male Conservative candidates are the most likely to earn over £40,000 per year, followed by the Liberal Democrats. Only small proportions of female candidates in all the parties are in this highest income bracket.

4.13. SOCIAL GRADE

Social grade is a socio-economic classification frequently used by the market research and marketing industries, most often in the analysis of spending habits (see Appendix 2 for a definition of the grading schema). Table 31 compares the social grades of candidates with those of the wider population (there are no comparable figures available for councillors). Clearly candidates are much more likely to belong to the higher A and B grades than the general population - 35% of respondents are categorised in these social grades compared to only 19% of Scotland's population. Even more noticeably, only four candidates (0.2%) who responded to the survey are grouped in social grade E, compared to almost a quarter of the population.

Table 31: Social grade (%)

Social Grade	Candidates	Population
AB	35.2	19.0
C1	41.0	26.6
C2	14.6	14.6
D	9.0	17.5
E	0.2	22.4

Note: Population figures refer to social class of household reference person.

There are some interesting differences in the social grades of male and female candidates. Although men are proportionally more likely to belong to social grades A and B, over 80% of women are in social grades C1 or higher (compared to under three-quarters of men). Male candidates are almost twice as likely to belong to social grade D as their female counterparts.

Turning to social grade by political affiliation, the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives have the highest proportion of candidates in social grades A and B (41.4% and 38.9% respectively), while the Scottish Socialists have the lowest (22.5%). However, the majority of candidates from all parties are in social grade C1 or higher.

Table 32: Social grade by political affiliation (%)

Party	AB	C1	C2	D	E
Independent	30.1	37.2	20.8	11.5	0.5
Conservative	38.9	40.9	10.8	9.4	0.0
Labour	32.9	44.2	14.0	8.9	0.0
Lib Dem	41.4	42.4	9.5	6.5	0.3
SNP	35.0	38.7	17.0	8.8	0.4
SSP	22.5	45.7	20.8	11.0	0.0

5. REASON FOR STANDING AND PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

5.1. MOTIVATIONS FOR STANDING

Section four outlined the types of people who stand for election but what motivates so many people to come forward in the first place? The survey asked candidates to state their **main** reason for standing and responses are categorised in table 33 below.

Table 33: Main reasons for standing by political affiliation (%)

Reason for Standing	Ind	Con	Lab	LD	SNP	SSP	All
To represent community/improve local services or area	33.2	24.1	33.1	21.0	32.9	23.6	28.0
Promote party policies/party loyalty	6.4	17.2	20.3	21.7	13.5	25.0	17.2
Provide choice/opportunity to vote for party	5.0	19.0	13.1	25.8	8.7	25.0	15.8
Make changes to council/way council is run	15.0	10.5	4.4	4.2	9.9	5.8	8.3
Asked by party/paper candidate	4.5	7.1	9.9	13.3	5.8	3.8	7.8
To defeat incumbent councillor	14.1	7.7	5.5	2.8	6.9	4.8	6.6
To make a difference (unspecified)	9.1	4.9	5.5	4.2	7.1	5.8	5.9
Specific local issue	5.9	4.3	3.8	2.2	2.9	3.4	3.5
Wanted independent Scotland	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.3	1.4	2.7
Other reason	6.4	5.1	4.4	4.8	3.2	1.4	4.3

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

The main reasons for standing tended to revolve round a desire to represent the community and improve the local area, out of a sense of loyalty to the party (whether to promote the party's policies or simply answering an appeal for candidates) and to give voters a choice. Among other reasons cited for standing were a wish to make changes to how the council was run, specific local issues and the desire for an independent Scotland. There were few differences in the motivations of male and female candidates – around 30% of both sexes stood to represent the local community and to improve local services (although women were slightly more likely to have stood out of loyalty to their party or to provide voters with a choice). The main reasons for seeking election were also consistent across different age groups.

There were a number of interesting variations across the political parties and independents, however. Around a third of Labour, SNP and independent candidates main reason for seeking election was to improve the local community and local services, compared to less than a quarter of candidates from the other parties. A large proportion of Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and SSP candidates cited a desire to promote party policies, while the most common reason given by Liberal Democrat and SSP candidates was to give the electorate the opportunity to vote for their party. A significant minority (15%) of independent candidates mentioned a desire to change the way the council was run as their main motivation. Finally, a relatively high proportion of Liberal Democrat (13%) and Labour (10%) candidates stood because their party asked them to and/or were party candidates.

The councillors' survey asked new councillors (i.e. those elected for the first time in 2003) what their main motivation was for becoming a councillor: 45% cited an interest in the community, while 10% noted a sense of duty or out of public service and a further 10% the desire to improve local services. There was little difference in the motivations of male and female councillors – although 12% of new female councillors gave the main reason for standing as being for career or personal development.

5.2. CONFIDENCE IN WINNING

The reasons for standing are clear - to improve the local area, out of loyalty to the party, to give voters a choice - but how confident were candidates of actually winning? Did they stand because they thought they had a realistic chance of being successful or was it more in hope than anticipation? Although hindsight undoubtedly plays a part, table 34 suggests that the vast majority (over three-quarters) were not very, or not at all, confident of winning the seat. Indeed, just 52 candidates were very confident. Although the main reasons for standing are outlined above, the fact that so few candidates felt they had any chance of being successful raises interesting questions about why so many people still come forward. One can only assume that candidates really do want to offer the electorate a choice, even if they don't believe they'll ultimately be successful. Loyalty to the party must also be an important factor here.

Table 34: How confident of winning (%)?

Confidence in winning	%
Very confident	2.6
Quite confident	20.6
Not very confident	36.1
Not at all confident	40.7

As table 35 shows, only independent candidates had much confidence in their chances of winning (56.8% were either very or quite confident). This perhaps reflects the generally non-party political nature of politics in the Highlands and Islands and other rural areas where the majority of independents stand. Around a third of SNP candidates had at least some confidence in winning, while Liberal Democrat and SSP candidates were the least confident of all.

Table 35: How confident of winning by political affiliation (%)?

Party	Very	Quite	Not very	Not at all
Independent	7.2	49.7	32.0	11.0
Conservative	1.9	14.9	35.3	47.9
Labour	3.4	19.7	40.7	36.3
Lib Dem	1.0	11.6	28.4	59.0
SNP	3.4	28.5	41.4	26.7
SSP	-	6.6	35.4	58.0

So why were so many candidates not confident of winning? Table 36 outlines the main reasons given by candidates who stated they were either not very or not at all confident.

Table 36: Reasons for lack of confidence (%)

Reason	%
Too far behind incumbent/safe seat	81.7
Didn't do any/enough campaigning	7.8
Standing for first time/new party	7.1
Paper candidate	4.3
Other	6.6

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

By far the most common reason cited was that the ward was safe (in electoral terms) for one of their opponents. This is hardly surprising given the relatively small number of seats that change hands from one election to the next (although 292 of the 1222 wards were won by a new candidate in 2003 a high proportion of these are accounted for by the retirement of the incumbent councillor rather than the defeat of a sitting member). Other reasons given included a lack of campaigning, standing for the first time and being a 'paper' candidate (i.e. simply putting your name forward but not fighting the election in any real sense).

Analysing the above figures by political affiliation reveals some variation across parties. Conservative, Labour and SNP candidates were the most likely to lack confidence because the incumbent party was simply too far ahead, while 14% of Liberal Democrat candidates thought they had little chance of winning as they hadn't done enough/any campaigning (although this itself is likely to be related to the marginality of the ward). A relatively high number of SSP candidates believed they were unlikely to win as they were standing for the first time and for a relatively new party.

Female candidates were generally less confident of winning than their male counterparts – a quarter of male candidates were very or quite confident compared to less than 20% of females. As noted above, it is difficult to assess whether this is due to female candidates standing in less winnable seats, although it is interesting that the reasons given for a lack of confidence are almost identical across sexes.

5.3 PREVIOUS ELECTION EXPERIENCE

Almost half of candidates standing in the 2003 local elections had stood for election previously. Liberal Democrats and SNP candidates were the most likely to have previous local election campaign experience (56.5% and 55.0% respectively), while SSP candidates were relatively inexperienced (hardly surprising given that this was the first election in which the party put forward a significant number of candidates).

Table 37: Stood previously by political affiliation (%)

Party	Yes
Independent	43.5
Conservative	52.2
Labour	49.2
Lib Dem	56.5
SNP	55.0
SSP	23.3
Other	21.4
All	49.7

Proportionally men were slightly more likely than women to have stood previously (52% to 46%) but the differences aren't great. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of candidates with previous electoral experience come from the older age groups, with no less than 63% of those aged 65 or over having stood before (compared to a quarter of those aged under 35). Of the 15.5% of candidates who have a disability, long-term illness or health over half (53%) had stood before. Although there is no way of telling whether candidates were suffering from a disability or illness at the time, these figures

are encouraging and would seem to suggest that having a long-term illness or disability does not necessarily deter people from coming forward for election.

So how successful were these previous candidatures? Table 38 provides details of the percentages of candidates who had previously served as a councillor, expressed both as a percentage of those who had stood for election in the past (i.e. a measure of success) and of all candidates standing in 2003.

Table 38: Previously served as a councillor by political affiliation (%)

Party	Who Stood Previously	All Candidates
Independent	53.8	23.4
Conservative	15.8	8.1
Labour	31.7	15.5
Lib Dem	18.3	10.3
SNP	14.7	8.0
SSP	17.1	3.8
All	21.6	10.6

Over a fifth of candidates who had stood previously had served as a councillor (this equates to 10.6% of all candidates in our survey). There is considerable variation by political affiliation, however. For example, almost a quarter of independent candidates and 15.5% of Labour candidates had been a councillor, while the equivalent figure for the Conservatives and SNP is 8%.

So do candidates with previous council experience have any defining characteristics? Around 80% are male (this is consistent with the gender split of current councillors), while perhaps unsurprisingly over two thirds are 55 or over (only 1% are under 35). Interestingly, the data shows that many candidates have considerable past council experience. While the average length of service is 6.5 years, 46 candidates have over ten years experience of sitting on a District, Regional or Unitary authority (one candidate had been a councillor for 57 years).

5.4. LIKELIHOOD OF STANDING AGAIN

So will the failure to get elected in 2003 deter candidates from standing again? The evidence presented in table 39 would suggest not.

Table 39: Likelihood of standing for election again by political affiliation (%)

Party	Definitely	Probably	Unlikely	Definitely not
Independent	32.8	41.1	23.3	2.8
Conservative	27.0	44.1	24.6	4.2
Labour	27.4	45.9	20.9	5.8
Lib Dem	22.2	48.6	22.9	6.2
SNP	34.7	45.0	17.3	3.0
SSP	34.4	53.9	10.6	1.1
All	29.4	46.1	20.5	4.1

Almost 30% of candidates thought they would definitely stand again, a further 46% believed they would probably do so. Indeed, just 4.1% of unsuccessful candidates completely ruled out putting their name forward again. There is some variation by political affiliation. Over a third of SNP and SSP candidates said they would definitely stand again, while for the Liberal Democrats this figure was under one in four. Conservative and Labour candidates were proportionally the most likely to completely rule out running again (5.8% and 6.2% respectively).

Despite being defeated (and in many cases heavily defeated) it is interesting that the vast majority of candidates from all political parties state that they are likely to stand again. Of the quarter of candidates who are unlikely to stand again some interesting patterns emerge. For example, women are over twice as likely as men to completely rule out standing again. There is also a clear age effect: older candidates are much less likely to stand again than younger age groups. Although candidates with a limiting long-term illness or disability are less likely to stand again than other candidates the differences are small and not statistically significant.

6. CONCLUSION

The traditional image of a Scottish councillor is probably of an educated white middle-aged male working in a professional or managerial job. The findings outlined in this paper, and in more detail in *'Scotland's Councillors'*, would appear to confirm this stereotype. Almost 80% of councillors are male, only small minorities are under 35 or over 65, and the majority of those in employment hold managerial or professional posts. Councillors are also more likely than the general population to hold a degree or professional qualification, own their own home and have an income in excess of £20,000 per annum (excluding allowances).

What was unclear, however, was whether candidates who come forward for election but who are unsuccessful come from similar social backgrounds as those who are successfully elected as councillors, or whether there were significant differences between the two groups. Our research shows that although there are some variations in the profile of candidates and councillors – a slightly larger percentage of candidates are female, the age profile is lower, and candidates are more likely to work in the private sector – the differences are not significant.

The survey also found that almost half of candidates standing in 2003 had stood for election previously and around one in ten had served as a councillor. The majority of candidates in 2003 stated their intention to stand for election again in the future. This would seem to confirm that candidates and councillors are generally drawn from the same pool of people.

Given this narrow range of people motivated to stand for election to local government, measures will need to be taken to improve the diversity of candidates coming forward from those groups currently under-represented. To this end, the data and results outlined in this paper will be made available to the Widening Access to Council Membership Progress Group, whose remit includes taking forward work on making council membership attractive to a wider cross-section of the community within the current legislative framework.

One factor which may encourage more people to come forward for election is the introduction of a new system of remuneration for councillors which recognises their role in local government (including pension arrangements). Councillors and candidates tend to come from higher status backgrounds and it could be that people on lower incomes or with family commitments are discouraged from standing for financial reasons. The Councillors' Remuneration Progress Group are currently investigating options around these issues and will use evidence from both surveys to inform its work.

There will also be a need for local authorities and political parties themselves to adopt practices that encourage more people to feel confident and able to contribute to the work of Scottish Councils.



SURVEY OF LOCAL ELECTION CANDIDATES

Please complete this questionnaire by ticking the appropriate boxes or writing in your answer where required. Once completed, please return the questionnaire in the freepost envelope provided.

Q1 Are you:

- Male
- Female

Q2 What age were you on your last birthday? (please write in)

_____ years

Q3 What is your employment status? (please tick one box only)

- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Self-employed
- Unemployed and seeking work
- Permanently retired from work
- In full-time education
- Permanently sick or disabled
- Looking after the home or family
- Not working for another reason (e.g. short-term illness)
- Other (please specify)

Q4 What is your occupation? If out of work or retired please indicate previous occupation. (please write in)

If not full-time, part-time or self-employed, please proceed to question 8

Q5 What category best describes your employment? (please tick one box only)

- Managerial/Executive
- Professional/Technical
- Lecturer/Teacher/Researcher
- Manual/Craft
- Admin/Clerical/Secretarial
- Other (please specify)

Q6 Which category best describes your employment sector? (please tick one box only)

- Local government
- Central government
- NHS
- Education
- Other public sector
- Private sector

Voluntary sector

Q7 If you are in employment (full-time, part-time or self-employed), please specify how many hours a week you work on average? (please write in)

_____ hours per week

Q8 What is your annual gross income? (Gross income = income from all sources before tax/NI deductions)

- Under £10,000
- £10,000 - £19,999
- £20,000 - £29,999
- £30,000 - £39,999
- £40,000 or over

Q9 Do you own a car?

- Yes
- No

Q10 Do you: (please tick one box only)

- Own your home outright
- Own your home with a mortgage
- Rent from a local authority
- Rent from a Housing Association
- Rent from a private landlord
- Live with relatives

Q11 What is your highest education qualification? (please tick one box only)

- 'O' Grades/levels
- Highers/'A' levels
- Professional/Vocational
- Higher education below degree
- University or Polytechnic degree
- Other
- None

Q12 What is your marital status?

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Living with partner
- Single

Q13 Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

Yes
 No

Q14 Do you have any care responsibilities? (please tick all boxes which apply)

Yes, Children aged 11-16
 Yes, Children aged 5-10
 Yes, Children aged under 5
 Yes, Elderly
 Yes, Other
 No

Q15 Please state your ethnic origin:

White
 Black African
 Black Caribbean
 Black Other
 Indian
 Pakistani
 Bangladeshi
 Chinese
 Other Asian
 Other (Please specify) _____

Q16 In the election, which type of candidate did you stand as?

Independent
 Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
 Scottish Labour Party
 Scottish Liberal Democrat Party
 Scottish National Party
 Scottish Socialist Party
 Other (please specify) _____

Q17 What was the main reason you stood for election to council?
 (please write in)

Q18 Before the election how confident were you of winning the seat?

Very confident *Go to Q19*
 Quite confident *Go to Q19*
 Not very confident *Go to Q18a*
 Not at all confident *Go to Q18a*

Q18a If you weren't confident of winning the seat, why not?
 (please write in)

Q19 Did you attend the election count?

Yes
 No

Q20 Have you stood for election to a council in the past?

Yes *Go to Q21*
 No *Go to Q23*

Q21 Have you served as a councillor in the past?

Yes *Go to Q22*
 No *Go to Q23*

Q22 If yes, please state the council(s) and term(s) of office. (please write in)

Council(s)	Term(s) of Office	
	From	To

Q23 How likely are you to stand for election to a council in the future?

Will definitely stand again
 Will probably stand again
 Unlikely to stand again
 Will definitely not stand again

Thank you for completing the questionnaire – please return it in the FREEPOST envelope enclosed – no stamp required

APPENDIX TWO: SOCIAL GRADE SCHEMA

AB	Higher and intermediate managerial/administrative/professional
C1	Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/administrative/professional
C2	Skilled manual workers
D	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers
E	On state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade workers

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