

# Campaigning On The Issues

*How a Community Council should decide which issues it will consider, and how to pursue them.*

You will be presented with a large variety of issues and problems. Some will affect a single constituent, some the entire community and beyond. Your Community Council must make a balanced decision on what issues it will tackle and how...

- Start by applying the “community benefit” test. Your actions should be directed towards securing the most positive results for the greatest number of local people, so long as the minority does not suffer in the process. When faced with a number of issues, give first and most attention to those that affect the most people and on which you can realistically have a positive effect.
- Begin by gathering information. Decisions made without information, by prejudging the issue or by making assumptions are a failure in your duty. Find out the key points and then find out what local people feel about it.
- Base you CC’s position on the views of or benefit to the majority of citizens.
- Be honest and realistic about whether you can do something about the issue. What influence can you have on the issue and those involved? Can you secure professional advice on technical aspects that would help you make your case? How remote is the person/organisation you want to influence? What are their interests and how can you get what you want by helping them to get what they want?
- Decide what results you want. Be specific. Know why you want each of these results and exactly how they will meet the conditions above about benefit to the community.



- **Figure out how to get these results, and monitor your activity to make sure it will moves you closer to your target. Know how you can tell when you have achieved success.**
- **An issue does not need to have only two opposing sides. Could your CC be an independent mediator bringing factions together? This is your proper role.**
- **Never allow the CC to become the vehicle for any campaign that is not the evident will of the majority of constituents. When that is proved, maintain your adherence to that position, and do not let your CC become the venue for constant debate about the issue's merits. Nor should any single issue overwhelm your meetings.**
- **When you have determined the official position of your CC on an issue, you should not alter it unless there is a material change in circumstances. Otherwise, you appear weak and incapable, and you will not have wisely represented your community.**
- **A Community Councillor who becomes publicly associated with a particular position on an issue must declare their interest to the CC and not take part in any activity or debate associated with it. An exception would be where you, after making the determinations mentioned above, campaign on the issue collectively as the representatives of the people.**
- **You may choose to appoint a special Committee to coordinate your action on the issue, or delegate this function to one of your standing committees. Make sure the committee has a clear remit and set clear instructions on what it may do or not do without prior approval of the whole CC.**

The ASCC publishes Best Practice Guidance on many topics related to the organisation and work of Community Councils. Visit: [www.ascc.org.uk](http://www.ascc.org.uk)