

THE VOICE OF THE COUNCILLOR

A Councillor Commission (chaired by Clive Betts MP) has been conducting an independent review on the role and work of Councillors. The review was chaired by Professor Colin Copus, Professor of Local Politics, Local Governance Research Unit at De Montfort University in partnership with De Montfort University and Municipal Journal Councillor Commission.

A series of workshops were held across the country with Councillors from all tiers of Local Government discussing how Councillors do their work within their communities and the pressures and challenges they face within the community they serve.

Following these seminars a final report [The Voice of the Councillor](#) has been produced with six recommendations:

- Speaking within the Council
- Speaking beyond the Council
- Speaking to central policy change
- Speaking about perceptions
- Speaking about the job
- Speaking and a parish or town Councillor

Conferences are currently being held to talk to Councillors and officers to gather feedback from colleagues around the country.

The Voice of the Councillor seminar held recently in Andover looked at three topics and asked for feedback from officers and Councillors. The topics were

- Speaking as a parish/town councillor which discussed working relationships with principal councils.
- Democracy and the Community Councillor discussing work as a community councillor and how the role has changed due to things like social media.
- Growing a strong local democracy from the ground up, discussing issues and barriers to becoming a councillor and how to promote the office of councillor.

The final session held was with a panel of:

Councillor Phil North - Leader of Test Valley Borough Council
Councillor Cathy Scott – Kirklees Council
Councillor Mike Evans – Whiteley Town Council
Virginia Ponton – Local Government Association
Victoria Westhorp – Office for Civil Society

This session summarised the discussions of the day and the work being done with the Commission to be able to understand the future needs and role of the councillor. This is a national debate and feedback is welcome.