

Local democracy



Before running your session:

Make sure to familiarise yourself with the notes and discussion topics. Make sure you know how you'll be able to display the slides and plan out how much time you're going to spend on each section depending on how long you have and manage your time closely. Also plan how you'll gather feedback from the audience.

Top tips for public speaking:

- Keep it interactive - we have included questions you can ask the audience and discussion topics you can integrate.
- Most people when they're nervous speak quickly and quietly. Ask loudly and slowly at the beginning if everyone in the room can hear you and try to stick to that volume and pace.
- No one is perfect, if you stumble or lose your place no one will mind! Just take a moment to figure out where you were and lean on the notes to get back into your stride.
- If anyone asks you something you don't know - ask if anyone else knows the answer, look it up together there and then, look it up after the session and go back to them.

Speaking notes:

Today we're going to learn about local level democracy here in the UK.

You can see here lots of badges about how important it is to vote. Why does voting matter?

In the UK there are different types of elections where you can vote different people into power.

The most well known elections are general elections where you vote for your MP, who sits in Parliament. But there are other elections, that are just as important, where people can elect someone to represent them on their local council. Our local council is

MPs versus Councillors

MPs represent about 92,000 people.

MPs work on local and UK-wide issues.

Councillors represent about 8,000 people.

Councillors focus on local issues.



Your MP represents about 92,000 people and they work alongside 650 other MPs to run the country.

Whereas your local council is only responsible for people living in [the name of your local council]. The Council is split up into areas called wards. Each ward elects its own councillors, who then make up the Council. Each ward typically has about 8,000 people in it, so they're much smaller than constituencies.

If you want to make a change in your local community who do you think is going to be more useful, your MP or councillor and why?

How do local councillors support democracy?

A councillor's primary role is to represent the people in their local area. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. They do this by speaking up on behalf of local residents about issues affecting the community.



Read out the slide.

Why does local democracy matter?

Democracy means citizens have a choice about who represents them.

Democracy provides a system to deal with a range of different views in the decision-making process.

Local communities are important for democracy.

Local democracy means having a say on what you want for your local area, and who makes these decisions



Read out the slide.

Ask if the audience if they're looking forward to being old enough to vote for their representatives. Why? Why not?

Let them know that even though they're not old enough to vote that they still have a voice and that they can still engage with their elected representatives by writing to them and meeting with them to share their views right now.

Discuss why it is important that a range of perspectives are represented when people are making decisions about what happens in their local area.

Prompts:

Why might different groups experience the same local issue differently?

Can you think of an example where a change in your local area helps one group but unintentionally makes things harder for another?

What happens when only a small group of people are involved in decision-making?

How could having a wider range of voices improve the quality of local decisions?

What stops people (especially young people) from getting involved? What barriers could be reduced?

ed?

What services do I need to live?

How do you get to school?

Where do you spend your free time?

Where do you buy your food?

What happens to your rubbish?



Ask people all or 1-2 of these questions. Then explain why their answers link to the role of local councils.

Transport: In many areas, councils are responsible for:

- Planning and funding socially necessary bus routes.
- Working with bus operators to improve local services.
- Running concessionary travel schemes for eligible groups.
- Managing bus stops, shelters, and interchanges.
- Street lighting.
- Footpaths and pavements.
- Cycle paths.
- Road safety measures e.g. school streets and 20mph speed limits near schools.

Food:

- Local councils use the town planning system to decide what types of businesses can open in certain areas e.g. whether new food shops, supermarkets, or takeaways can open.
- They also play a part in enforcing food hygiene and food standards by inspecting local businesses.
- Identifying areas with poor access to affordable, healthy food ("food deserts") and working to improve access. They also support efforts to reduce diet-related health inequalities.

Leisure:

- Local councils are the main public investors in leisure infrastructure, spending over £1.4 billion a year in England and maintaining nearly 2,727 leisure facilities and most of the UK's 27,000 parks and green spaces.

- Councils often own and operate, or commission operators to run: Leisure centres, swimming pools, sports halls, pitches, and athletics facilities, parks, green spaces, and playgrounds.

Rubbish:

- Local councils are the main bodies responsible for collecting, handling, recycling, and disposing of household waste. Waste services are one of the most visible and universal functions of local council and every household relies on them.

- As well as collecting your waste councils provide local recycling centres.

Local councillors' responsibilities

Children's services
e.g. youth centres,
secure accommodation,
foster care.



Social housing



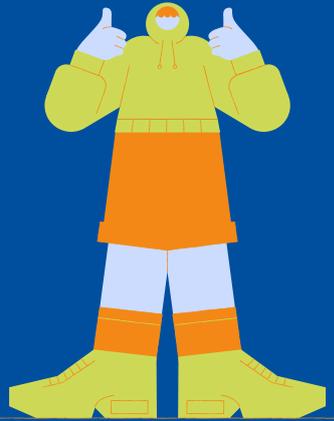
Leisure centres,
sports facilities,
parks



Encouraging tourism



Supporting
high streets



Bin collection and recycling



Public transport



Maintaining roads



Support for older people
and people with disabilities



Libraries

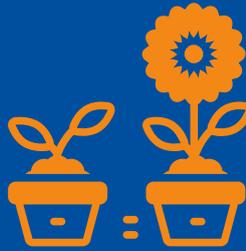


What do you like about where you live?

What do you really like about your area?



What do you think could be made better?



Depending on how much time you have this could be a quick fire round with everyone, or you could dedicate time to thinking about this in pairs or small groups.

If you have enough time you could write to your local councillor about the things you want to improve in your area.

Wrap-up by asking everyone what is one thing they could do to create change in your community e.g. register to vote, vote when old enough, encourage others to register to vote and vote, volunteer, campaign, contact your councillor, take social action e.g. organise a litter pick.

Q & A

www.ihaveavoice.org.uk

