

**Title:** What makes a successful local electoral campaign? Evidence from local government elections 2006-2013

**Abstract:** How much does the behaviour of candidates during the electoral campaign affect their chances of victory? Do their behaviour and campaign methods affect their performance? I address these questions by utilising a comprehensive set of survey data collected by The Elections Centre at Plymouth University, from 2006 to 2013. Using a variety of long-standing and recently introduced variables I find that, along with incumbency and residential status, differences in candidate behaviour and campaign methods are associated with different levels of success. Producing and delivering campaign leaflets, door-to-door canvassing and membership of local community groups are all associated with success, as well as the overall level of hours spent canvassing. Findings imply that the efforts of candidates for local government elections can have a significant impact on electoral outcome.

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There remains little research in the psephological literature that discusses the efficacy of candidate-level campaigning behaviour in British local elections. In particular, there is a dearth of quantitative research that provides comparable evidence of common practices within campaigns for local government. This information could be of particular value to the discipline, due to the nature of local government and the regulatory constraints imposed on them. The size of local elections, relative to their Parliamentary counterparts, are many times smaller in terms of electoral geography, the number of voters and the level of finance required to run a campaign. Spending in British local elections is severely limited, with per-candidate thresholds regulated to just £600, plus 5p per registered elector in each ward. Using these figures, a rough estimate of the average limit for candidates at the 2013 local elections is just over £1,000 (£600 + [8,600 x £0.05]). No deposit is required for candidates to stand and candidates can, and often do, appoint an agent to manage their campaign. The spending limit mentioned above includes any spending on administration, travel and agents fees. So in order to minimise administrative costs, local party officials frequently act as elections agents for several candidates at once. Therefore, they are potentially an important and rich source of information concerning common campaigning practices during local elections. Many core texts on local government provide some anecdotal evidence on the types of behaviour that local election candidates tend to exhibit during the campaign. Some of which will rely on testimony from these election agents in order to assess common practices during the campaign (Fisher & Denver, 2008, Stevens, 2006). However, not all candidates are afforded the same opportunity of commissioning an agent and so this method of collecting information on campaigns is limited, particularly when an investigation wants to include the practices of independents and minor party candidates.

The regulatory limitations on local election campaigns, combined with the small scale of these contests mean that there are a limited array of options for contacting voters, though in more recent years there has been an emerging set of online methods available to candidates. Traditional methods include leafleting, putting up posters, canvassing in person, by mail or telephone, as well as attending the usual hustings events. However, little in the literature utilises data collected directly from candidates to assess the efficacy of these practices. Certainly there are no well-documented studies in the field that span a number of directly comparable elections. Therefore little is known about the quantification of campaign activity at the local level and as a result the efficacy of practices common to British local election campaigns remains under-researched.

However, evidence from voter mobilization literature, particularly in the United States, does give a broad indication of the effectiveness of different types of method used to encourage voters to participate in in the democratic process. In an experimental study of leafleting, Gerber & Green (2000a) have shown that even a very basic form of nonpartisan contact is able to increase turnout among voters who were registered as unaffiliated, particularly if they had voted previously. A single leaflet delivered to voters was able to increase turnout by

some 7%, suggesting that “even a modest stimulus can lead to a sizable increase in the turnout rate” (Gerber & Green, 2000a, pp. 853). Though the research frame was a nonpartisan experiment, it does serve as a useful illustration of the effect that leaflets *can* have on electoral outcome.

Telephone canvassing in the United States was found to be less effective when compared to leafleting. Calls from professional phone banks failed to have any discernible effect on turnout. Gerber and Green suggest that while leafleting had a modest effect on participation, face-to-face methods of canvassing voters may form as a more effective strategy for local candidates to mobilise support for their electoral campaign. Their findings equate the comparative effectiveness of different types of canvassing activity, showing that face-to-face contact has a much larger sway on voter participation than either direct mail or telephone canvassing. They state that the results are a “clear indication that canvassing does affect behaviour” (Gerber & Green, 2000b, pp. 662). This serves to bolster the claim that the “long term retrenchment in voter turnout is partly attributable to the decline in face-to-face political mobilization” (Gerber & Green, 2000b, pp. 653).

Using a survey of Labour Party members to assess the effect of local party campaign activity on electoral outcome, Whiteley & Seyd (1994) provide evidence in support of campaign effects in British parliamentary elections. Aggregated campaign activism (e.g. putting up posters, delivering leaflets and canvassing for voters), reported by local party members is shown to be highly associated with the party’s performance. The study suggests that the organisation and enthusiasm of local party members is a key influence on the party’s local success. The study also refers to Bochel & Denver’s earlier experimental design, which provides clear evidence in support of the canvassing strategy as a significant influence in local election campaigns. Results imply that the practice of canvassing, which is traditionally followed by ‘knocking-up’ of ‘fetching-out’ on election day, may be linked to greater levels of turnout and as a result, success for the more organised local parties (Bochel & Denver, 1972).

The evidence for face-to-face methods of voter contact, described in the literature, suggests that it is the personal nature of these methods that may have the greatest influence. The hypothesis for most of these studies is that face-to-face campaigning offers campaigners an opportunity to engage with residents, allowing voters to at least acknowledge the prospect of voting. Also the canvasser has a clear opportunity to adjust his/her manner and language to judge the reciprocity of voters, an opportunity that is less afforded to telephone canvassing and leafleting, which is considered a less engaging campaign activity.

Green et al, go on to replicate Gerber & Green’s research a further six times, providing additional evidence in support of similar practices, particularly the personal nature of campaign activities. Again, face-to-face campaign activities are suggested to be less susceptible to the usual demographic variations in turnout recognised in electoral research, such as age and socio-economic status. Green *et al* (2003) provide sufficient evidence to suggest that door-to-door canvassing is both a successful practice in the American example and that it has

the potential to alter the status quo in terms of the traditional variation in turnout across the social demographics, regardless of the closeness of the contest. Gerber *et al* state that “even in settings where the election outcome seems a foregone conclusion, this type of personal contact has a marked effect on voter participation” (Gerber et al, 2003, pp. 1,095).

Though the literature remains relatively silent on the efficacy of online contact with voters, there is little expectation from this project’s authors that online methods of engagement will have any major effect on electoral outcome. Particularly as the research discussed above has tended to argue the merits of campaigning methods that seek to actively engage with voters.

The implications of the existing research, though principally American in its origin, resonate with the situation in British local elections. Candidates for local government are restricted by their means, yet are electorally closest to voters. It suggests that candidates who are able to meet many voters or who are able to recruit volunteers to meet voters on their behalf, may stand a greater chance of success than those who cannot. The success of door-to-door campaigns in mobilising voters is especially impressive given the meagre budgets on which these campaigns operate. Experimental results from the US suggest that for every 12 successful face-to-face contacts, campaigners can expect at one additional vote on polling day (Green et al, 2003, pp. 1,094). An even more compelling argument for local campaigning having a meaningful impact on electoral outcome is that the severe limits placed on campaign methods and spending, combined with their scale, “mean that face-to-face contacts between party activists and voters become particularly important during election campaigns” (Whitely & Seyd, 1994, pp. 243). So, if candidates, or their respective local parties, feel that they may have at least *some* influence over their electoral fate, actually meeting voters in person is one of the few ways they may be able to do so.

Drawing on the evidence from existing literature, this paper goes on to present a research frame, as well as the data and methods that are used to assess the relative efficacy of various forms of campaign behaviour at the candidate-level in British local elections.

**Research Frame, Data & Methods:** The objective of this paper is to provide an exploratory assessment of candidate-level behaviour during local election campaigns. By utilising survey data, in combination with electoral results, both of which have been compiled by The Elections Centre at Plymouth University, the project seeks to evaluate the efficacy of various forms of campaigning practice. The project’s aim is to determine the relative merit of common campaigning practices in English local elections, with a view to modelling these behaviours in a multivariate regression. Two major sets of data are used for the project. The principal set is a collection of post-election survey results from local election candidates over the past eight local elections (2006 through to 2013). The total number of respondents for these surveys tallies to almost ten and a half thousand candidates (10,490). These data include a variety of information,

including candidates' attitudes, behaviour, personal characteristics and electoral history. However, the questions in the annual candidate surveys have varied from year to year, so not all data are directly comparable throughout the 2006 to 2013 period. However, a core set of questions concerned with candidate's campaigning behaviour has remained. The results for this core set of questions serve as a heuristic set of evidence, helping to illustrate campaigning behaviours for different candidates and whether or not they are associated with electoral success.

Since not all of the data collected over the period is directly comparable, a secondary set of data is available that will enable the project to assess further questions put to candidates in 2013 only. This set encompasses a number of key questions not covered in the principal set such as door-knocking activity and canvassing hours. Where possible (i.e. where boundary changes haven't taken place) these data have been merged with both the 2013 and 2009 election results for each candidate and the candidate's party in their respective division/wards. The total number of respondents to the 2013 survey of local election candidates stands at 1,924, all of which have corresponding candidate-level 2013 electoral results merged with the set. Not all division/ward-level election results from 2009 could be merged with the 2013 set and so 1,373 respondents have corresponding 2009 party marginality figures for their respective divisions/wards. Information on division/ward-level marginality is required when constructing any basic binary models of successful campaigning practice. Division/ward<sup>1</sup> marginality may be a crucial endogenous factor that needs to be accounted for in these models. Where this information is unavailable (namely within the principal set of data), candidate estimations of the likelihood of winning are used as a proxy.

Using the secondary set of data (2013) table 1 (below) shows that where information is available to be directly compared, 2009 party ward marginality is shown to have a high degree of association with a candidate's own estimations of the likelihood of winning. The linear regression output (see table 1, below) suggests that party's 2009 ward marginality (in terms of vote share from the winning party in 2009), accounts for almost half the variation of candidate's estimations of winning and reports a coefficient of 0.079 that is significant. As a result, candidate's estimations of the likelihood of winning may serve as a useful proxy-variable for multivariate modelling when marginality data is unavailable.

### **INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE**

As detailed above, in order to assess any difference in the behaviour of candidates, the paper presents tabulations of various campaign methods by the electoral outcome of survey respondents and by the electoral status of those candidates prior to the election. Table 2 (below) presents the frequency and relative share of candidate's electoral status for both sets of data. Four types of

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of brevity we will refer to division/wards as wards throughout the remainder of this paper, though we recognise that they are distinct electoral geographies

candidate have been classified from these sets. The largest share of respondents to the candidate surveys is the more than three and a half thousand respondents categorised as *First Time Candidates*. These account for just over one third of all respondents between 2006 and 2013 (36.4% in 2013). Responses from *Incumbent* candidates make up 23.7% of the total, tallying to just less than two and a half thousand (20.4% in 2013). The smallest share of candidate type is *Former Councillors*. These are non-incumbent candidates who have previously served as a councillor in local government, but contest the election in the survey year as a non-incumbent. This classification of candidate numbers 1,080 responses, which accounts for just 10.5% of all respondents (10.4% in 2013). Finally, 3,289 respondents have been classed as *Serial Candidates*. These are candidates who have stood previously for election to local government but have never been elected. This type of candidate accounts for 31.8% of respondents to these surveys (32.8% in 2013). The vast majority of candidates for local government are either *First-Time* or *Serial Candidates* and have no previous experience on the council.

### **INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE**

Table 3 (below) presents the relative rate of success for the categorised candidate types discussed above. The results illustrate a pattern that is familiar to many students of local elections, with the relative success rate of *Incumbent* candidates far exceeding that of others. From the results tabulated below, *Incumbent* respondents are shown to have been almost seven times more likely of electoral success than *Serial Candidates* and around three and a half times more likely than either *First Time Candidates* or *Former Councillors*; these data are also broadly reflected in those collected for the 2013 set<sup>2</sup>.

### **INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE**

The data discussed above is a practical illustration of the importance of electoral status as an endogenous factor in any assessment of candidate behaviour on electoral success. Considering this, the initial univariate results that follow will also take into account the electoral status of respondents. As there are clear differences in the relative successes of different types of candidate, any simplistic analysis of behavioural associations with electoral outcome may also need to consider the effect of incumbency and candidate experience. Both sets of survey data have been weighted to reflect the electoral make-up of local authorities and the survey years, taking the key demographic and party variables into consideration.

The univariate results that follow are scrutinised for their relative association with electoral success before key practices are identified and later used to build several predictive models of successful campaigning practice. The initial

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<sup>2</sup> The 2013 results, though broadly similar in relative proportions, suggest that fewer respondents were elected in the survey year. Just 59.4% of Incumbents were successful, 10.1% of First Time Candidates, 16.5% of Former Councillors and 8.9% of Serial Candidates

tabulated analysis utilises the principal set of data (spanning 2006 to 2013), before presenting tabulations for campaign and door-knocking activity from respondents to the 2013 candidate survey. For the purpose of binary logistic models that follow, both sets of data are used to assess any electoral success associated with candidate-level campaigning methods.

**Results - Univariate Analysis:** Table 4 (below) shows results to the question “*Did you produce a campaign leaflet for distribution?*”. The results show large differences between the winners and losers. There is a strong association between leaflet production and electoral success, with nearly all those who won their respective elections producing a leaflet for distribution. All types of candidate who won reported leaflet production rates in excess of 97%. Conversely, just two thirds of candidates who were unsuccessful reported that they produced a leaflet. However, where there is little variation between winners, there is a clear difference between losing candidate types and leaflet production. Losing *Serial Candidates* were least likely to produce a leaflet, and this may be a reflection of the high proportion of respondents within this group who felt that they were a ‘paper’ candidate. Some 62% of Serial Candidates who lost in their respective election indicated that they felt they were merely a paper candidate and stood little to no chance of winning, compared to 57.5% of losing First-Time Candidates, 50.1% of Former Councillors and just 22.2% of Incumbent losers. Whether they feel they are a ‘paper’ candidate or hold some form of serious contention will almost certainly have some impact on the profile of the party/candidate at the election and undoubtedly influence the willingness of some to produce what can increasingly be seen as a minimum benchmark for a serious electoral campaign. However, there is considerable variation in the rate of success between candidates who did and did not produce a leaflet (see table 4, below). For all types of candidate producing a leaflet is associated with a significantly higher rate of election.

#### **INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE**

Those respondents who did produce a campaign leaflet for distribution, were then asked, “*Was your leaflet delivered to all addresses in your ward?*” The results presented in table 5 (below) show that there is a clear difference between the proportions of winners between those who did and did not manage to deliver their leaflet to all addresses in their respective wards. More than 92% of winners indicated that they delivered the leaflet to all addressed in the ward, with no meaningful difference between the categories of candidate. By way of comparison, just over half of all losers are reported to have done so, with significant variation between the classifications. Looking at the success rate of different behaviours, just 3.5% of Serial Candidates who did not deliver their leaflet to all addresses in the ward are shown to have won, compared to 23.9% of those who did so. A difference of 20.4%. *First Time Candidates* also experienced a large difference in the share of winners between those who managed to leaflet all addresses within their ward and those who did not, with 35.1% and 7.2% elected respectively. The results are similar for *Former Councillors* showing a fall success rate of 23.9%. Finally *Incumbent* candidates also show a similar

difference of 22.8%, though as expected the rate of success for *Incumbents* is already significantly higher than for all other types of candidate. Interestingly for losing *Incumbent* candidates, just 82.5% managed to deliver their campaign leaflet to all addresses in their ward, meaning that losers are more than 10% less likely to reach all addresses than winning *Incumbents*. All Chi-squared tests return *p*-values that are significant.

### **INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE**

The data presented above is a more subtle measure of campaign behaviour than leaflet production and brings candidate's own efforts under further scrutiny. Many candidates will deliver their own leaflets by hand during the campaign, possibly with the help of volunteers in order to maximise their coverage. Thus failure to reach the entire ward is perhaps a reflection of poor candidate (or local party) organisation, less indigenous support or simply less effort from the candidate.

Since 2011 respondents to the annual surveys were asked, "*Did you have any help delivering these leaflets?*" if they indicated that they had produced one. The vast majority of respondents who produced a leaflet, had some help delivering them around the ward. 95.1% of winners had help, again with little meaningful difference between the types of candidate. The average for losing candidates was slightly lower at 88.9%, and though there is some variation between types of candidate this is not to the same extent as those results described above. Less than a 10% difference separates all types of losing candidate, with *Incumbents* and *Former Councillor* losers averaging a similar rates of candidates receiving help, at 94.3% and 94.6% respectively. However, 88.9% of *Serial Candidates* received help delivering leaflets since 2011 and *First Time Candidates* show the lowest level of support with just 85.7% indicating so. The results presented in table 6 (below) don't paint as clear a picture as those discussed above. The rate of success is shown to be significantly different for both *First Time* and *Serial Candidates*, but not for *Incumbents* and *Former Councillors*. This may be in part to the simplicity of the information collected, but could also be due to the fact that the vast majority of candidates had some form of help. Unfortunately no information is collected on the number of helpers that candidates had during the campaign, which is a severe limitation on these results. However, the results displayed suggest that for those candidates with some electoral experience there is no meaningful difference in the likelihood of winning depending on whether you had help to deliver campaign material to voters. For those candidates with no previous experience as a councillor, the data implies that there is between a 16% and 22% difference in electoral success, depending on whether help was received.

### **INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE**

Another measure of campaign behaviour is the estimated time spent by respondents in campaigning. In response to the question "*How long did you spend delivering these leaflets?*" candidates indicated on average how long they personally spent delivering campaign leaflets per week in hours. The data



tabulated below (see table 7), shows the success rate of candidates who did and did not campaign for more than 10 hours a week, by their respective categorisation of candidate. For all types of candidate, except *Incumbents*, there is a noteworthy difference in the share of candidates winning, by the level of campaign activity. For *First Time Candidates*, those who campaigned for at least 10 hours were shown to be more than 8% more likely to win in their respective survey year than those who did not achieve that level of campaign activity. The result is similar for *Former Councillors* and *Serial Candidates*, who were 9.4% and 6.2% more likely to win in their respective survey years if they campaigned for at least 10 hours a week. Interestingly, there is no difference in the share of *Incumbent* candidates winning between those who did and did not achieve 10 or more hours a week delivering leaflets.

The results presented in table 7 (below) are a weak indication that campaign effort may alter outcome, though as there are clear differences in average share of candidates achieving these hours, between the different electoral statuses, this may also be a reflection of the different status of the candidates.

#### **INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE**

Table 8 (below) presents results from the following question put to respondents, “*Were you a member of a local community group before standing?*” The data shows modest increases in the proportion of candidates who were elected in their respective survey years depending on whether or not they indicated they were a member of a community group before they stood for election. Chi-squared tests show that these results are significant for those candidate classifications with no previous experience as a councillor (i.e. *First Time* and *Serial Candidates*). However, *Incumbents* and *Former Councillors* are shown to have less difference in the share of winners across members and non-members of local community groups. Results presented in table 8 (below) are a modest suggestion that a candidate’s position within their local community may have a small association with electoral outcome, particularly if they have no previous experience as a councillor.

#### **INSERT TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE**

In 2013 candidates were asked, “*During the campaign, did you ‘knock-up’ or ‘fetch-out’ voters using a list of promises based on canvassed voters?*” This practice is similar to that described earlier in this paper. Knocking-up is a campaign tool used predominantly by the major parties to utilise information collected during the campaign period on ‘promised votes’ for a candidate or party. This activity requires a degree of organisation and is principally a face-to-face exercise, though telephone and mail canvassing is also tool for some electoral campaigns. The results tabulated below (see table 9) suggest that the practice may be quite effective. There are a clear and sizable minority of candidates that participate in canvassing voters during the campaign and the subsequent ‘knocking-up’ on polling day. The results show a large difference in take up between types of candidate, with *Incumbents* most likely to practice the method. More than half (52.8%) of all winners were involved in canvassing, whereas less than one fifth

(19.0%) of those who lost indicated so. In Total, some 41.9% of those who took part in knocking-up activities were elected in 2013, compared to just 13.1% of those who did not, meaning that those who indicated that they had knocked-up during the campaign were over three times more likely of victory.

For all types of candidate the data suggests that knocking-up was significantly associated with electoral success (see table 9, below). As expected *Incumbents* are more likely to practice knocking-up than other classifications of candidate, with just under half indicating so. In 2013 there was almost a 10% increase in the success rate of *Incumbent* candidates when they indicated that they knocked-up compared with those *Incumbents* indicated otherwise. Knocking-up appears to make the biggest difference for *Former Councillors* whose success rate increases by more than five-fold when knocking-up activity is reported. Just a quarter of *Former Councillors* indicated that they knocked-up in 2013, and of these respondents 41.1% were elected, compared to just 7% of those who didn't<sup>3</sup>. The results produce a similar story for *First Time* and *Serial Candidates*, showing that a relatively small proportion of these groups practiced this strategy during the campaign, yet when they did; their chances of success appear to be much higher comparatively. For both types of candidate, respondents' chances of success were elevated by more than 20% if they indicated that they knocked-up during the campaign period.

### **INSERT TABLES 9 & 10 ABOUT HERE**

The data presented in table 9 (above) suggests a strong association between electoral success and the practice of knocking-up during the campaign, a finding that is inline with much of the literature on face-to-face forms of mobilisation in electoral research. For all categories of candidate Chi-Squared tests return significant results for these associations. Moreover, the results displayed in table 10 (above) suggest that the efficacy of this campaigning method goes beyond the simple binary measure of association described for the results in table 9 (above). Table 10 displays the mean hours spent by winners and losers from the different types of candidate. The results imply that, of those candidates who indicated that they did knock-up during the campaign, there was a significant difference in the average number of hours spent canvassing between winners and losers. Winners (20.4 hours) are shown to knock-up almost 7.5 hours more a week on average than losers (13.1 hours). This gap remains relatively consistent for all types of candidate, further strengthening the notion of a behavioural influence on electoral outcomes.

The data presented for this facet of the campaign is interesting and holds some serious implications for the notion of behavioural effects on the outcome of an election. For all types of candidate there is strong evidence that knocking-up and knocking-up with great intensity may be associated with electoral success. Whether this has a direct impact on voters through the efforts of the candidate themselves, or the association is merely a latent indicator of local party

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<sup>3</sup> *Though it must be noted that the frequency count in these cells for this analysis is fairly low*

organisation remains unanswered. However, knocking-up has a sound theoretical grounding as a practical way of getting voters to the ballot based both on activity on the ground and as a general indicator of popular support in the area. Though canvassing is by no means beyond the reach of Independent and minor party candidates, this group do pose a slight threat to the results. There is a possibility that this group may have an influence the result. Clearly there are a large number of independent and minor party candidates that will stand little chance of success across the country and they are perhaps less likely to have the effective means of canvassing for 'promised voters'. As a result, it may be the case that part of the association discussed above, may be influenced by this group of candidates.

The data for online campaigning presented in table 11 (below), suggests that there is relatively little evidence in favour of online campaigning having any noteworthy effect on electoral outcome. Most types of candidate fail to reach the required level of statistical significance to imply that there is a meaningful difference between the groups and for incumbents the results imply a negative association. However, of those candidates who did campaign online, they were asked which types of method they used to contact voters. Candidates who used email contact lists were more inclined suggest that this method did in fact translate into votes for them on polling day, though the number of respondents to these questions remains low. The data presented in table 11 (below) is not a strong indication for the effectiveness of online campaigning, however, some form of contact with voters via email, may prove to be the most 'promising' online method.

### **INSERT TABLE 11 ABOUT HERE**

**Results – Multivariate Binary Logistic Regression:** The univariate analysis discussed above has provided the project with an indication of some of the campaigning methods that may be effective. However, modelling them synergistically can help to provide a greater understanding of what makes a successful campaign in local elections. Regression analysis allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the variables discussed above, enabling the project to consider many of the key identified behaviours in unison. Table 12 (below) displays results from binary logistic regressions that attempt to predict the success of respondents in the survey year based on these key variables. The table displays four models, all of which utilise the principal set of survey results, spanning from the 2006 through to the 2013 elections.

Set alongside two demographic variables, age and gender (Female is coded as the reference category), Model 1 simply assesses the impact of incumbency, residential status and a candidate's community network on electoral outcome. The variable community member refers to candidates who have identified themselves as a member of a local community group before standing for election. As expected, a candidate's age and gender report no meaningful effect. However, candidate's incumbency (*incumbent*), residential (*live in ward*) and community status (*community member*) all return significant and positive coefficients,

implying that these attributes may help to positively effect electoral outcome for candidates. The pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> ranges between 0.25 and 0.37 for Model 1, whilst having an overall predictive value of 81.3%.

### **INSERT TABLE 12 ABOUT HERE**

Model 2 introduces some of the key behavioural variables discussed in the univariate analysis above, such as campaigning for 10 or more hours (*campaign10*), producing a leaflet for distribution (*leaflet*) and delivering that leaflet to all addresses in candidate's respective wards (*leafletalladdresses*). There are markedly fewer cases considered for Model 2 ( $n = 5,432$ ). Both demographic variables continue to have no meaningful influence on outcome, with corresponding  $p$ -values outside the required level of significance. Incumbency, residential and community status remain statistically significant contributors to the overall model, all with  $p$ -values below the required level. However, as odds ratios for all three variables, are notably reduced, the introduction of further variables has undoubtedly had an influence on their contribution. Though table 12 (above) suggests that *campaign10* has an odds ratio of more than 1.1, the coefficient fails to return a  $p$ -value below the required level. However, producing a leaflet and delivering that leaflet to all addresses in the ward were shown to have a significant and substantial contribution to candidate's odds of winning, with ratios of 2.9 and 4.5 respectively. Model 2 has a pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> between 0.29 and 0.40, and an overall predictive value of 77.1%.

Models 3 and 4 introduce a proxy variable into the multivariate analysis in order to protect the model against marginality as an endogenous factor. As discussed earlier in this paper, unfortunately electoral data on ward-level marginality is unavailable for this set of data. In light of the assessment discussed in the data and methods section of this paper (above), candidate's estimations of the likelihood of winning (*win estimation*) are taken as a proxy variable of ward marginality in order to take the relative 'partisan position' of all candidates into consideration. The introduction of *win estimation* serves to bolster the model, with Model 3 reporting a pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> between 0.39 and 0.53, and an overall predictive value of 79.3%.

By comparison, the introduction of the behavioural practices of councillors, introduced in Model 4, serve to increase the predictive power of the model by a very modest degree. The binary variable *leaflet once a month+* refers to councillors' responses to the question, "During your time as a councillor, how frequently did you circulate a newsletter?" If respondents indicated once a month or more than these are coded as 1. Data is coded in exactly the same manner the binary variable *receive emails once a month+*. Responses to the question, "During your time as a councillor, how frequently did you receive emails from residents?" are coded as 1 when councillors indicated that they received emails more than once a month. The introduction of these coefficients, though significant, adds very little to the predictive value of the model, with Model 4 reporting a pseudo-

R<sup>2</sup> between 0.40 and 0.54, and an overall predictive value of 79.5%<sup>4</sup>. The modest increase is perhaps due to the endogenous nature of candidate's incumbency to this question and this is supported by the notable reduction in the incumbency coefficient between models 3 and 4.

Finally, table 13 (below) displays results for Model 5, which is also a binary multivariate logistic regression for the prediction of a candidate's election in the survey year. However, in this instance the model considers data from the secondary set (2013 only). As for previous models discussed, incumbency and community status are reported as both positive and significant coefficients. Residential status does not meet the required significance in Model 5. Unlike other previously discussed models, simply producing a leaflet for distribution does not produce a significant, nor positive coefficient. As for the previously discussed models, whether candidates leaflet all addresses in the ward (*leafletalladdresses*) also has a positive and significant effect on electoral outcome, with an odds ratio of 2.2. Knocking-up and the number of hours attributed to canvassing activities were also found to be both positive and significant, with respective odds ratios of 1.7 and 1.02. Interestingly the use of email contact lists also drew a blank in Model 5, reporting a negative coefficient and failing to report a *p*-value below the required level. As the secondary dataset is used for Model 5, there are relatively few cases considered compared to other models (*n* = 701). However, the predictive power of entire model appears to have been elevated by comparison, with a pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> between 0.45 and 0.66, and the overall percentage of correct classifications reported as 90.1%.

### **INSERT TABLE 13 ABOUT HERE**

**Discussion:** The results presented above serve as a useful illustration of the potential efficacy of many campaign practices that are common to local electoral campaigns. Perhaps the most interesting facet of the results is the personal nature of many of the methods found to be influential in the prediction of electoral outcome. There is a clear distinction between the efficacies of some of the practices examined when compared to others, and this may be associated with the likelihood of candidates having some form of personal contact with voters. Door-knocking and canvassing activities are strongly associated with winning, and though membership of a local community group is not regarded as a campaigning activity, it is interesting to note that this group stood a significantly greater chance of election than others. To somewhat strengthen this assertion, that candidates who make more personal contact with voters put themselves in better stead on polling day, the results for whether or not councillors frequently circulated newsletters (i.e. once or more a month) also implied a strong association with electoral success. Although there remains an endogenous factor of incumbency to consider for this specific question (i.e. that the question is only put to incumbents), the results are at least a mild indication

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<sup>4</sup> In Model 4, the number of cases considered increases because *campaign10* is dropped from the analyses. This frees up extra cases to be considered

that the effect of the activities of councillors, particularly those that have some form of contact with voters, are worthy of further research.

The distinction between types of leafleting practice has implied that simply producing a leaflet may not be enough to have a meaningful impact on a candidate's chances of electoral success, unless it is delivered to all addresses within the ward. In the same view, the effect of a candidate's campaigning activity, in terms of the hours they spend delivering leaflets, has perhaps a more subtle relationship with electoral outcome than cumulative effects. Issues of campaigning quality and the types of method used may play a more important role in determining electoral outcome than the quantity. What may also support this assertion is the notion that the organisation of the local party as well as the quality of candidate's campaigning behaviour may also mean that some candidates simply have to campaign for fewer hours to receive the same effect. It is easily foreseeable that candidates will vary in their ability to interact with voters, in their ability to produce engaging campaign material or differ even in the speed it takes them to deliver all their leaflets. These factors can perhaps be described as 'candidate quality' effect that may need to be considered in any further research.

Surprisingly, the evidence presented regarding the help that candidates received during the campaign period drew something of a blank. Univariate analysis found that *First Time* and *Serial Candidates* experienced large and statistically significant increases in the chance of election, when they indicated that they had help delivering leaflets. However, there was with no meaningful effect on electoral outcome for the most likely winners, *Incumbents* and *Former Councillors*. It may be as a result of the information being collected from candidates being too simplistic. The vast majority of candidates, particularly *Incumbents & Former Councillors*, had some form of help during the campaign and so it becomes harder to distinguish them. Unfortunately, other than the average number of hours from volunteers, it is difficult from the data collected, to equate the actual level of help received by candidates (i.e. in total man-hours), and thus distinguish any difference in a more accurate way. Greater detail will be required for further research especially in terms of the number and experience of these volunteers and perhaps even a score for their ability and/or enthusiasm.

Door-knocking and canvassing activity returned the most convincing results. The practice is strongly associated with electoral success in both the univariate and multivariate analysis. These results are supported well by the existing literature on campaign effects, which argues that face-to-face contact during the campaign is a crucial facet of local elections, particularly given their severe restrictions on campaigning methods and spending (Denver & Hands, 1992; Whitely & Seyd, 1994). But the relative influence of 'knocking-up' on the rate of success can be interpreted in a slightly different way to simple notions of 'enthusiastic campaigners' are more likely to be winners. As Denver & Hands explain, canvassing "is a complicated exercise which involves noting electors' polling numbers as they enter the polling station and feeding them back to committee rooms to be recorded, and then sending out teams of workers to

roust out the backsliders. Only the best organised campaigns are able to carry out this exercise smoothly” (Denver & Hands, 1992, pp. 536). As such, there is a chance that the results discussed, may in some part be a reflection of the strength and organisation of the local party. Considering this, though the results remain promising, they must be interpreted with a little caution.

There remains plenty of scope for improvement to the research design. Clearly the research would benefit from an expansion of the merged data. Including candidate-level election results, as well as ensuring that marginality figures are extended to all years that the survey has been conducted would greatly serve the dataset. This would enable an expansion in the number of cases available for analysis and the type of analysis that is available for consideration. For instance, instead of a simple binary assessment of campaign behaviour effects, greater utility of the candidate-level election results may allow an evaluation of any marginal gains from candidate-level behaviour, by comparing the effect of behaviours on ward-level party swing.

## Appendix:

**Table 1: Linear Regression of 2009 party ward marginality on candidate estimation of winning (0-10)**

Coefficients	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	5.093	0.098		51.912	.000
Ward Marginality (2009 party vote share)	0.079	0.003	0.702	26.812	.000

  

	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-Squared	S.E of Estimate
Model Summary	0.702	0.493	0.492	2.288

*n* = 741

**Table 2: Candidate Categorisation**

	<i>n</i>	Share of Cands (%)
First Time	3,517	33.5
Incumbent	2,503	23.9
Former Councillor	1,104	10.5
Serial Candidate	3,237	30.9
Unidentified	130	1.2
Total	10,491	100.0

**Table 3: Success by Candidate Electoral Status**

	<i>n</i>	Elected in survey year? (%)
First Time	3,499	21.2
Incumbent	2,499	76.7
Former Councillor	1,102	23.0
Serial Candidate	3,233	11.1
Total	10,333	31.7

**Table 4: Did you produce a campaign leaflet for distribution?**

Candidate Type	Leaflet?	Total <i>n</i>	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	808	3.8	0.000
	Yes	2,338	28.4	
Incumbent	No	99	45.5	0.000
	Yes	2,205	79.2	
Former Councillor	No	185	1.1	0.000
	Yes	816	29.2	
Serial Candidate	No	1,147	0.7	0.000
	Yes	1,798	18.2	
Total	No	2,239	3.8	0.000
	Yes	7,157	41.6	



**Table 5: Did you deliver this leaflet to all addresses in the ward?**

Candidate Type	Leaflet?	Total <i>n</i>	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	941	7.2	0.000
	Yes	1,834	35.1	
Incumbent	No	215	57.2	0.000
	Yes	2,161	80.0	
Former Councillor	No	229	8.7	0.000
	Yes	702	32.6	
Serial Candidate	No	878	3.5	0.000
	Yes	1,327	23.9	
Total	No	2,263	10.7	0.000
	Yes	6,024	48.4	

**Table 6: Did you have any help delivering these leaflets?**

Candidate Type	Leaflet?	Total <i>n</i>	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	130	6.9	0.000
	Yes	1,018	28.7	
Incumbent	No	45	75.6	0.363
	Yes	642	71.1	
Former Councillor	No	15	33.3	0.597
	Yes	267	34.1	
Serial Candidate	No	75	4.0	0.000
	Yes	723	20.2	
Total	No	265	19.2	0.000
	Yes	2,650	37.4	

**Table 7: Did you spend more than 10 hours campaigning per week?**

Candidate Type	Leaflet?	Total <i>n</i>	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	1,296	22.8	0.000
	Yes	878	31.0	
Incumbent	No	812	77.7	0.511
	Yes	985	77.8	
Former Councillor	No	376	23.7	0.004
	Yes	311	33.1	
Serial Candidate	No	1,057	13.8	0.001
	Yes	604	20.0	
Total	No	3,541	32.8	0.000
	Yes	2,778	45.4	

**Table 8: Were you a member of a local community group before standing?**

Candidate Type	Leaflet?	Total <i>n</i>	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	2,470	20.4	0.000
	Yes	745	28.1	
Incumbent	No	1,720	77.3	0.162
	Yes	620	79.4	
Former Councillor	No	761	23.0	0.282
	Yes	260	25.0	
Serial Candidate	No	2,324	10.6	0.020
	Yes	652	13.7	
Total	No	7,275	31.0	0.000
	Yes	2,277	37.5	

**Table 9: Did you 'knock-up', fetch out or telephone voters on polling day using lists of promises?**

Candidate Type	Knock-up?	Total n	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	541	6.3	0.000
	Yes	135	26.7	
Incumbent	No	204	54.9	0.051
	Yes	184	63.6	
Former Councillor	No	142	7.0	0.000
	Yes	56	41.1	
Serial Candidate	No	509	5.3	0.000
	Yes	114	25.4	
Total	No	1,396	13.1	0.000
	Yes	489	41.9	

**Table 10: Average weekly hours spent canvassing and fetching-up voters on polling day**

Candidate Type	Elected?	Mean	N	Std.
				Deviation
First-time candidate	Not elected	3.84	541	11.718
	Elected	10.06	61	18.137
	All	4.47	602	12.644
Incumbent	Not elected	10.00	139	20.085
	Elected	14.67	215	23.811
	All	12.84	354	22.510
Former councillor, non-incumbent	Not elected	4.76	140	9.826
	Elected	14.53	32	23.474
	All	6.55	172	13.851
Serial but never elected candidate	Not elected	3.87	484	10.517
	Elected	10.93	52	13.624
	All	4.55	536	11.041
Total	Not elected	4.60	1304	12.427
	Elected	13.33	360	21.694
	All	6.49	1664	15.345

**Table 11: During the recent election, did you do any of your campaigning online?**

Candidate Type	Leaflet?	Total n	Elected (%)	Fisher's Exact Sig. 1-sided
First Time	No	415	8.9	0.126
	Yes	250	12.0	
Incumbent	No	224	65.2	0.011
	Yes	155	52.9	
Former Councillor	No	116	14.7	0.160
	Yes	75	21.3	
Serial Candidate	No	375	7.7	0.074
	Yes	233	11.6	
Total	No	1,130	20.3	0.242
	Yes	713	21.7	

**Table 12: Binary Logistic Regression Models for Elected in Survey Year 2006-2013**

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)
Constant	-1.651 (0.117)***		-3.339 (0.244)***		-5.663 (0.257)***		-5.698 (0.241)***	
Men (binary)	0.046 (0.59)	1.048	-0.033 (0.071)	0.968				
Age (years)	-0.03 (0.002)	0.997	-0.004 (0.002)	0.996				
<b>Electoral &amp; Local Status</b>								
Incumbent (binary)	2.807 (0.061)***	16.567	2.271 (0.073)***	9.694	1.705 (0.078)***	5.501	1.587 (0.089)***	4.889
Live in ward (binary)	0.299 (0.055)***	1.349	0.198 (0.066)**	1.219	0.146 (0.072)*	1.157	0.137 (0.065)*	1.147
Member of local group (binary)	0.270 (0.062)***	1.311	0.146 (0.070)*	1.158	0.106 (0.077)	1.112	0.061 (0.073)	1.063
<b>Campaign Behaviours</b>								
Campaign 10hrs+ (binary)			0.102 (0.065)	1.108	-0.005 (0.072)	0.995		
Produce a campaign leaflet (binary)			1.058 (0.205)***	2.881	0.578 (0.234)*	1.782	0.618 (0.223)**	1.855
Deliver leaflets to all addresses(binary)			1.502 (0.094)***	4.491	0.964 (0.106)***	2.623	0.994 (0.097)***	2.703
Knocking-up (binary)								
Canvassing (hours)								
Contacted voters by email								
<b>Ward Marginality</b>								
Win estimation (collapsed 3cat, 0-10)					1.432 (0.054)***	4.187	1.403 (0.048)***	4.067
Ward marginality (party vote share)								
<b>Councillor Behaviour</b>								
Leaflet once a month+ (binary)							0.385 (0.224)*	1.470
Receive emails once a month+ (binary)							0.327 (0.088)***	1.387
<b>Model Information</b>								
n		8,124		5,432		5,369		6,666
Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup>		0.26		0.29		0.39		0.4
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		0.37		0.4		0.53		0.54
% Correct Classifications		81.3		77.1		79.3		79.5

**Table 13: Binary Logistic Regression for Elected in Survey Year 2013**

	Model 5	
	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)
Constant	-2.219 (0.631)***	
Men (binary)		
Age (years)		
<b>Electoral &amp; Local Status</b>		
Incumbent (binary)	1.750 (0.261)***	5.756
Live in ward (binary)	-0.344 (0.265)	0.709
Member of local group (binary)	0.574 (0.264)*	1.775
<b>Campaign Behaviours</b>		
Campaign 10hrs+ (binary)		
Produce a campaign leaflet (binary)	-0.087 (0.692)	0.917
Deliver leaflets to all addresses(binary)	0.785 (0.335)*	2.192
Knocking-up (binary)	0.517 (0.300)*	1.677
Canvassing (hours)	0.014 (0.008)*	1.015
Contacted voters by email	-0.093 (0.319)	0.911
<b>Ward Marginality</b>		
Win estimation (collapsed 3cat, 0-10)		
Ward marginality (party vote share)	0.063 (0.007)***	1.065
<b>Councillor Behaviour</b>		
Leaflet once a month+ (binary)		
Receive emails once a month+ (binary)		
<b>Model Information</b>		
n		701
Cox & Snell R <sup>2</sup>		0.45
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		0.66
% Correct Classifications		90.1

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