

Be a vocal local!

You spend a lot of your day either in school, or getting to and from school, so you know the area pretty well, probably better than some of the councillors in charge. Here's your chance to help the councillors out. Can you be a *vocal local* – identifying problems or issues in the area around your school, and offering solutions?

Task

Using www.election-maps.co.uk find a map of your school and its surrounding area. To do this, type in the name of your Parliamentary constituency, then the school postcode. You might need to zoom the map in or out until you get the right scale. You should be able to see the school buildings and the surrounding area clearly. You will need to print this map out or copy it into another document (your teacher may have done this for you).

Think of three to five issues that concern you in your locality. Brainstorm with somebody else to come up with lots of ideas. For example, is there an area with no street lighting that is creepy in the dark? Is there a road covered in dog poo? Is there another school you have to walk past that you don't like passing? Your concerns will probably be different to the person who sits next to you.

Annotate your concerns on your map around the edge (put an arrow to the area if you like). An annotation is a bit like a label but it gives an explanation. For example, a label might just say 'litter', whereas an annotation might say 'litter from pupils along Marine Walk creates an eyesore for tourists and is dangerous to wildlife, especially seabirds'.

Underneath each annotation write a solution to the issue. How could it be improved or made better? For example, 'check that the litter is from pupils, then close the tuck shop and make pupils pick up litter in their break time. Get the RSPB to explain how litter can kill birds so pupils understand the problem'.

Now prioritise these concerns

This means put your concerns in order from the most important to the least important. You might give each concern a number from one to five, or you might think of a more creative way of prioritising.

Can you give some reasons why you put the issues in this order? Why is number one your top concern? Why is number five your least important concern? Do this wherever you have room, maybe on a separate sheet.

Extension: How else could you be a *vocal local*?

List as many ways (sensible and wacky) that you could get your voice heard, or your message across, about one of the local topics that you identified above. For example, a letter? A full orchestral piece entitled Symphony Number 2 in D Minor – ode to litter picking?



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