

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION UNIT
NEWS RELEASE
RELEASE IMMEDIATE: 8 October 2004

Looking for the love of the Commons people

Local democracy think tank the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) is asking Members of Parliament to show their support for public service.

Clive Betts, MP for Sheffield Attercliffe, has tabled a House of Commons Early Day Motion (EDM) supporting the aims of the LGIU's Perilous Democracy campaign. The motion reads

"That this House values the importance of public service by councillors, school governors, magistrates and other community representatives; recognises the need for further support for public service; and welcomes the Local Government Information Unit's call for the Government to introduce measures to attract, encourage and support more people, including those from under-represented groups, to consider standing for election and public office, and to ensure that local public service is valued, open and accessible for all."

The EDM has so far been supported by MPs from all the main political parties, but the LGIU is encouraging all backbench MPs who value local democracy and voluntary public service to sign it.

Dennis Reed, LGIU Chief Executive, said: "One important way of countering the apathy that is seeping through Britain's political system is to strengthen the role of public service at the grassroots. Apart from giving more power to local government, it is also vital that we take specific steps to attract and retain more volunteers for various local public service roles such as councillors, school governors and magistrates.

"The LGIU has been promoting a range of measures to boost public service and there are signs of progress in achieving some of them, particularly on the candidacy age and on reforming the draconian political restrictions that prevent many talented people from being active in local politics. This is therefore a good time for all the House of Commons supporters of local democracy and public service to declare their backing for the LGIU's campaign. This EDM is an excellent way for them to do this."