

Minor parties' election hope

ALTERNATIVE political parties are planning to give the big boys a run for their money in May's borough elections.

Nominations show both UKIP and The Green Party are fielding significant numbers of candidates for seats on Dudley Council, in a bid to capitalise on support draining from mainstream parties.

UKIP and The Greens say Labour, Conservative and Lib Dem politicians have let the country down and voters are ready for a change.

Green Party spokesman, Will Duckworth, said: "The reason we have got more candidates is we are growing. People are saying they don't want to vote for the big three parties, we are the best alternative."

"Before the general election we were the only party who said there is no need for cuts and we should grow the economy."

The Greens say cutting public sector jobs causes extra costs for redundancy payments and benefits.

Mr Duckworth added: "Dudley Council is looking to borrow £6m. Paying to throw people out of work seems ridiculous."

Euro-sceptics from UKIP are bullish about taking votes from mainstream parties and intend adding to



● Will Duckworth.

the seat they already hold.

Regional organiser, Derek Bennett, said: "We are going to kick them in the ballot box. This year we have more local election candidates in the West Midlands than ever before."

"We want more democracy, local referendums on major issues, we want a smaller state."

Mr Bennett dismissed suggestions the Conservatives also offer less government intervention and insisted PM David Cameron is hand-

ing more power to Europe.

UKIP says leaving the EU would save the country billions and more could be cut by getting rid of officers on high wages.

Derek Bennett said: "We should cut the chief executives, in the old days that job was done by the council clerk."

"The EU is no benefit to us, they bring in laws and the impact is to create huge expense for local councils."

Elections for Dudley Council take place on Thursday May 5, at the same time people will be asked to vote in a referendum on whether the country should adopt the Alternative Vote (AV) system for Westminster elections.

The AV system asks voters to rank candidates in order of preference and the winner is elected when they gain more than half the vote as losers are eliminated.

Will Duckworth said: "AV is a lot simpler than people are trying to make out, it is definitely more democratic."

Derek Bennett said UKIP supports AV but has reservations and would prefer a system with extra seats handed out in proportion to the distribution of votes.

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