**Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024**

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

# Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

## *Councillors Survey 2024*
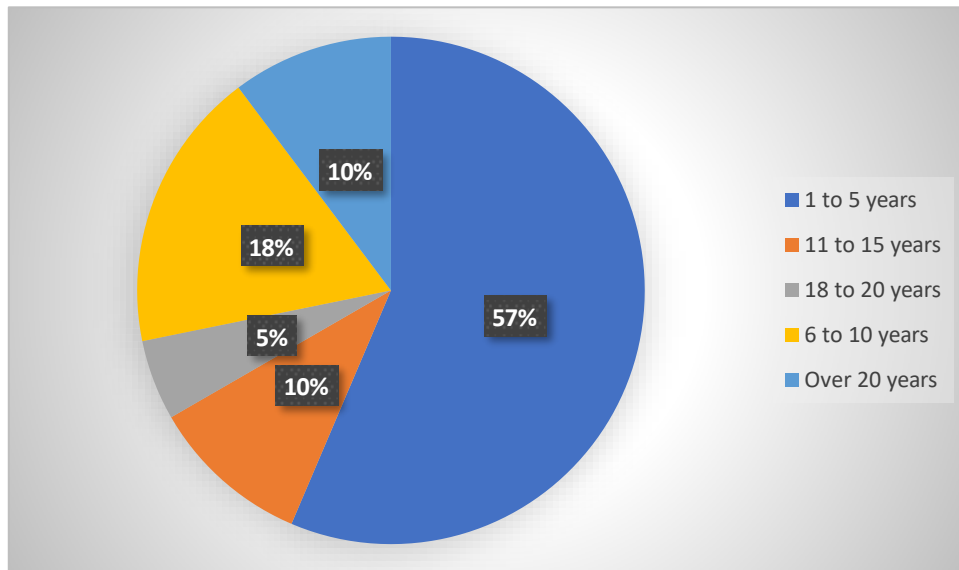
**March 2024**

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

## Question 1:

**How long have you been an Elected Member with Sandwell Council?**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 to 5 years | 22 | 57% |
| 11 to 15 years | 4 | 10% |
| 18 to 20 years | 2 | 5% |
| 6 to 10 years | 7 | 18% |
| Over 20 years | 4 | 10% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 2: In addition to your role as an Elected Member, what other positions do you hold within the Council? (Please select all options that apply.)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Cabinet Member | 8 | 18% |
| Committee Chair or Vice Chair | 2 | 5% |
| Leader or Deputy Leader | 3 | 7% |
| None | 7 | 16% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Opposition Leader | 0 | 0% |
| Other (please specify below) | 8 | 18% |
| Regulatory Committee Chair or Vice Chair | 5 | 11% |
| Scrutiny Board Chair or Vice Chair | 6 | 14% |
| Town Chair or Vice Chair | 5 | 11% |
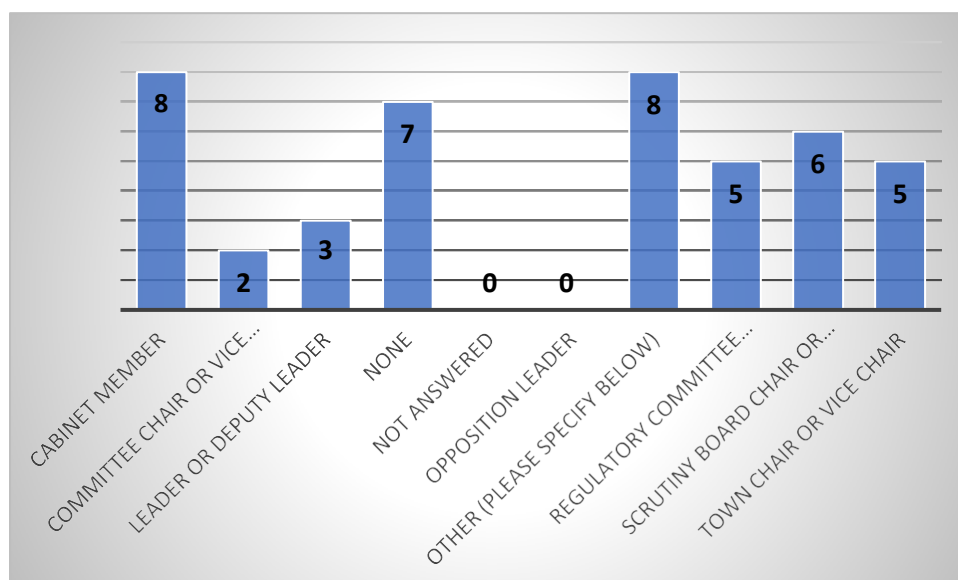
## Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| In addition to your role as an Elected Member, what other positions do you hold within the Council? (Please select all options that apply.) - If you specified other, please outline below: - |
| --- |
| Chair HWBB |
| Planning committee. Licensing committee. |
| Sit on Scrutiny Boards, Town Board and EDI Board |
| Member of various boards |
| Lead Performance Champion - Neighbourhoods |
| Performance Champion for Safer Communities and Member of Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board |
| Equality Commission, Strategic Waste Board, West Bromwich Partnership, Land and Asset Committee Member |
| Safer Neighbourhood Scrutiny, General Purpose and Arbitration Committees |
| Performance Champion our economy |

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**Question 3: Which Committees have you been appointed to?**
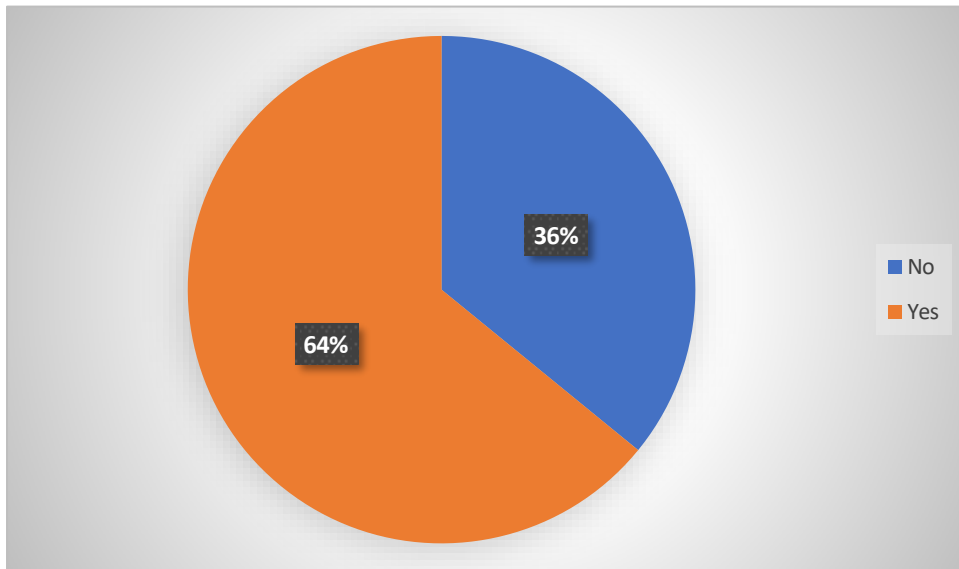**Please select all options that apply.)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Audit and Risk Assurance Committee | 3 | 5% |
| Chief Officers Terms and Conditions Committee | 11 | 20% |
| Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee | 6 | 11% |
| General Purposes and Arbitration Committee | 5 | 9% |
| Governance and Constitution Review Committee | 7 | 13% |
| Land and Asset Management Committee | 4 | 7% |
| Licensing Committee | 9 | 16% |
| Planning Committee | 11 | 20% |
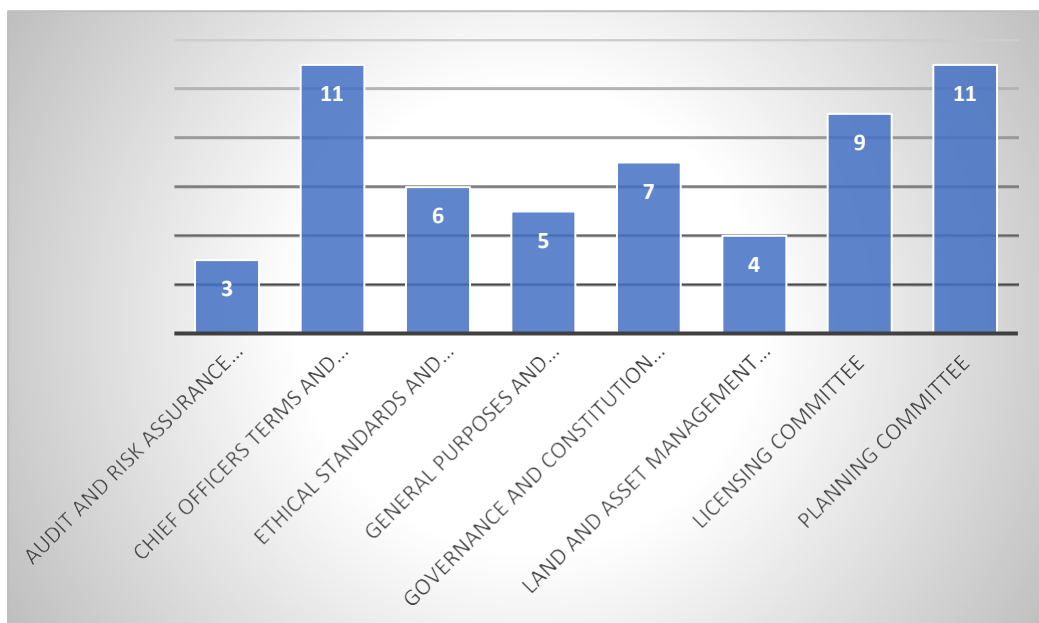
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 4: Have you been appointed by the Council to any Regional or Outside Bodies (for example, Strategic Waste Partnership Board, Scrutiny, Housing Association Boards)?**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------|
| No | 14 | 36% |
| Yes | 25 | 64% |



| Have you been appointed by the Council to any Regional or Outside Bodies (for example, Strategic Waste Partnership Board, Scrutiny, Housing Association Boards)? - Please list organisation(s) and role(s) below. |
|---|
| Harborne Parish |
| Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board |
| ADASS member HWBB regional<br>HWBB WMCA member<br>West Bromwich town deal board member |
| West Midlands Pensions Authority Board<br>Harborne Parish Council (now a housing association). |
| WM Police and Crime Panel |
| Scrutiny - Neighbourhoods. |
| West Midlands Combined Authority - Overview and Scrutiny Committee<br>West Midlands Scrutiny Network |
| Akrill Homes Trust |

| |
|---|
| WMCA Housing and Land Delivery Board West Bromwich Town Funds Board |
| Strategic Waste partnership board, Rowley Town board, West Midlands Transport |
| Waste Partnership<br>Airport Consultative Committee WMCA Economic Growth Board |
| Joint Health overview and scrutiny committee |

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| |
|---|
| Local government general assembly SIGOMA<br>Association of Black Country Associations West Midlands Rail<br>West Midlands airport Contract management Board<br>WMCA Board<br>Growth Company |
| S.I. P's Board |
| Joint health and adult scrutiny Board with Birmingham council |
| Police and Crime commissioner Panel |
| Strategic Waste Partnership Board |
| West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner's Panel (as named substitute member) |
| Equality Commission Strategic Waste Board West<br>Bromwich Partnership<br>Land and Asset Committee Member |
| Barlow homes trust |
| West Midlands fire and rescue authority |
| SMBC<br>INCLUSIVE ECONOMY & COMMUNITY WEALTH BOARD - Member ROWLEY REGIS<br>TOWN DEAL BOARD – Member<br>SMETHWICK TOWN DEAL BOARD - Member WEST BROMWICH TOWN<br>DEAL BOARD – Member<br>WEDNESBURY LEVELLING UP PARTNERSHIP BOARD – Member<br>WEST BROMWICH TOWN BID BOARD - Council Nominee REGIONAL<br>BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE – Substitute<br>Member<br>WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY (WMCA) BOARD –<br>Substitute Member<br>WMCA ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY BOARD - Member WMCA INVESTMENT<br>BOARD - Member<br>WMCA ENERGY CAPITAL BOARD - Member<br>WMCA STRATEGIC TRANSPORT BOARD - Member<br>WEST MIDLANDS RAIL EXECUTIVE BOARD LTD. – Company<br>Director NATIONAL<br>PATROL ADJUDICATION JOINT COMMITTEE (PARKING & TRAFFICREGULATIONS<br>OUTSIDE LONDON) – Substitute Member |
| Leonard Andrews Poole Trustee, |

| |
|---|
| Health and well-being Board Corporate Parenting Board children's scrutiny<br>Budget and Corporate scrutiny |
| West Midlands Combined Authority West Midlands Police and Crime Panel |
| West Midlands Combined Authority Audit and Risk Assurance Committee |
| |

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**Question 5: If you are a member of, or have been appointed to any other organisation (s), please list organisation(s) and role(s) below. (For example, school governors, charities.)**

| If you are a member of or have been appointed to any other organisation (s), please list organisation(s) and role(s) below. (For example, school governors, charities.) |
| --- |
| West Midlands fire. Governor at Birmingham women's and children's hospital NHS foundation trust |
| Action Yemen Charity |
| Tanhouse Community Centre Management Committee |
| N/A |
| Mackmillan Education Foundation |
| none |
| School governor - Perry fields Academy, National Committee (trustee) - Fabian Society |
| School Governor - Primary School. Mackmillan Educational Foundation - Trustee. |
| Two local charities. |
| N. A |
| none |
| Hateley Cross Big Local - Steering group member; Sandwell Litter Watch - member |
| N/A |
| None |
| Trustee of Spays 4 Strays |
| Board of governors at high school |
| None |
| Better Understanding of Dementia, (BUDS), Warley Woods Community Trust |
| Leonard Poole's trust trustee and Barlow Homes board member |
| Mackmillan Trust, Dudley Kidney Patients Association, LAKSH community group |
| member |
| none |
| Millennium Centre |
| No |
| None |
| None |
| None |
| Independent Governor of Sandwell College and Governor of Galton Valley Primary School |
| None |
| School governor |
| School Governor and STEPs Board Member |
| Tenant and leaseholder's scrutiny group |
| NA |
| WEDNESBURY RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB - LIFE MEMBER/DISCIPLINARY SECRETARY; ROTARY CLUB OF WEDNESBURY - JUNIOR PRESIDENT/FELLOWSHIP OFFICER/FOUNDATION OFFICER; MID COUNTIES CO-OPERATIVE - MEMBER; UNISON TRADE UNION – RETIRED MEMBER; LABOUR HOUSING GROUP [LHG] - MEMBER; CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING – ASSOCIATE MEMBER; BLACK COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST – PUBLIC MEMBER; BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY WILDLIFE TRUST – INDIVIDUAL MEMBER; FRIENDS OF TENACRE WOOD - MEMBER; FRIENDS OF |

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| |
|---|
| WOOD GREEN CEMETERY - CHAIR; ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - MEMBER; SPIRES HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP - MEMBER |
| Rotary Club, fellowship world over, service before self, part of events co-ordinating |
| None |
| Cape Primary School - School Governor |
| Akrill Trust |
| Chair of Governor's. West Bromwich Town Fund Board. Sandwell Business Ambassadors. Sandwell Children's Trust Board member |

**Question 6: On average, how many hours per month do you spend on council, region and political business?**

**Attendance at Council Committees (such as Planning, scrutiny)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 11-15 hrs | 4 | 10% |
| 1-5 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 16-20 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 21+ hrs | 13 | 33% |
| 6-10hrs | 8 | 21% |
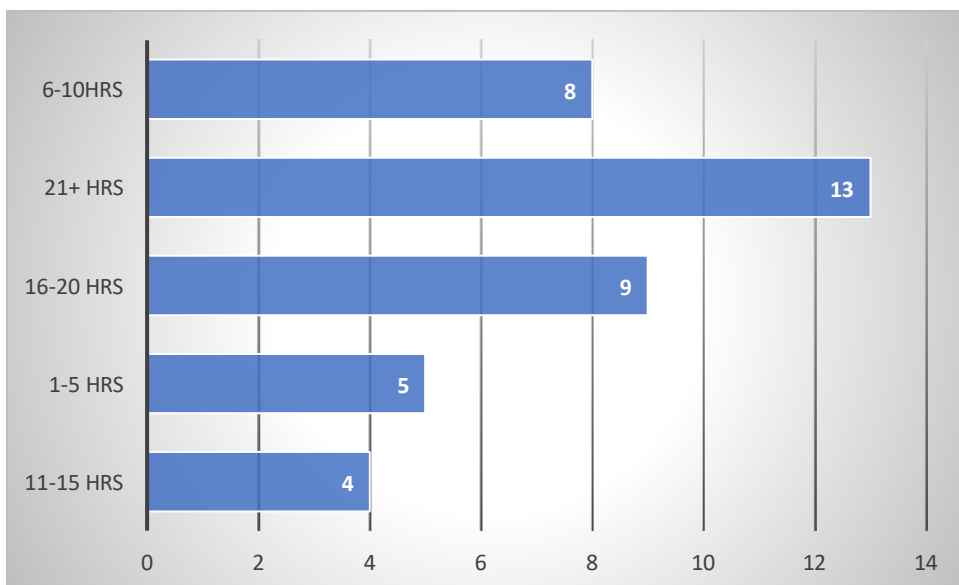
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Attendance at other Council meetings (such as meetings with officers)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 11-15 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 1-5 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 16-20 hrs | 6 | 15% |
| 21+ hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10hrs | 6 | 15% |
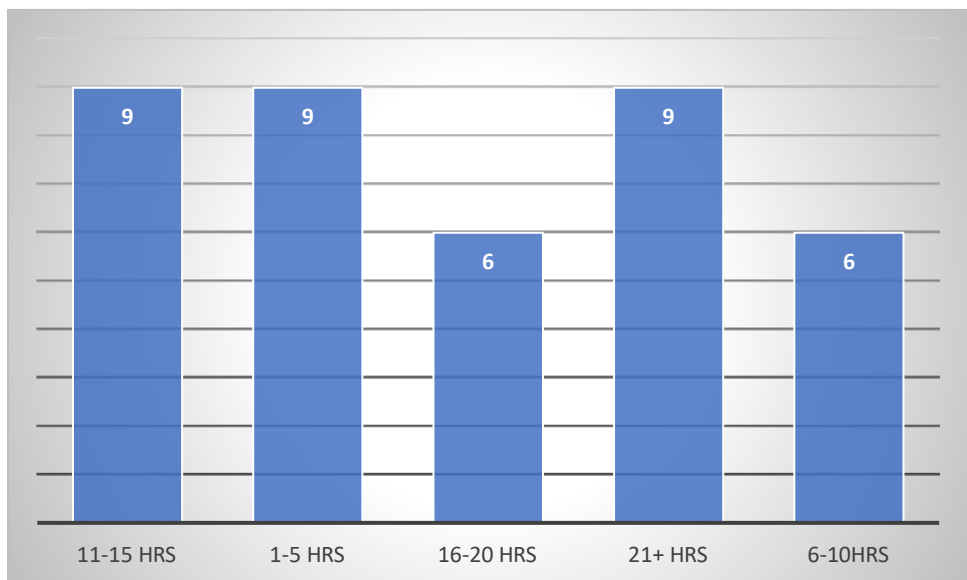


**Attendance at Regional, Local Government Association (LGA) or WMCA meetings or activities**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 13 | 33% |
| 11-15 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 1-5 hrs | 16 | 41% |
| 16-20 hrs | 1 | 3% |
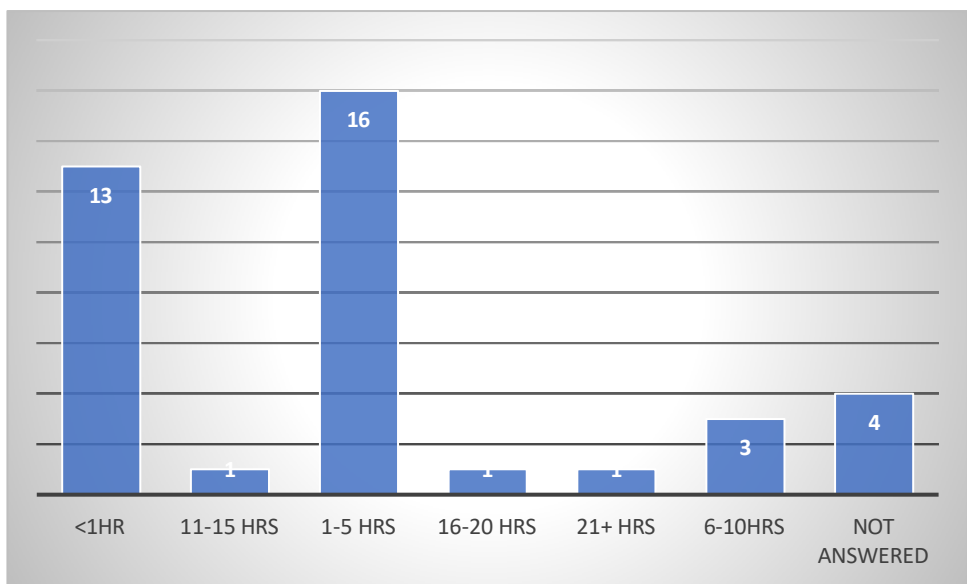
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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21+ hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 6-10hrs | 3 | 8% |
| Not Answered | 4 | 10% |

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## Time spent on party or political business

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 2 | 5% |
| 11-15 hrs | 7 | 18% |
| 1-5 hrs | 6 | 15% |
| 16-20 hrs | 4 | 10% |
| 21+ hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10hrs | 10 | 26% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |
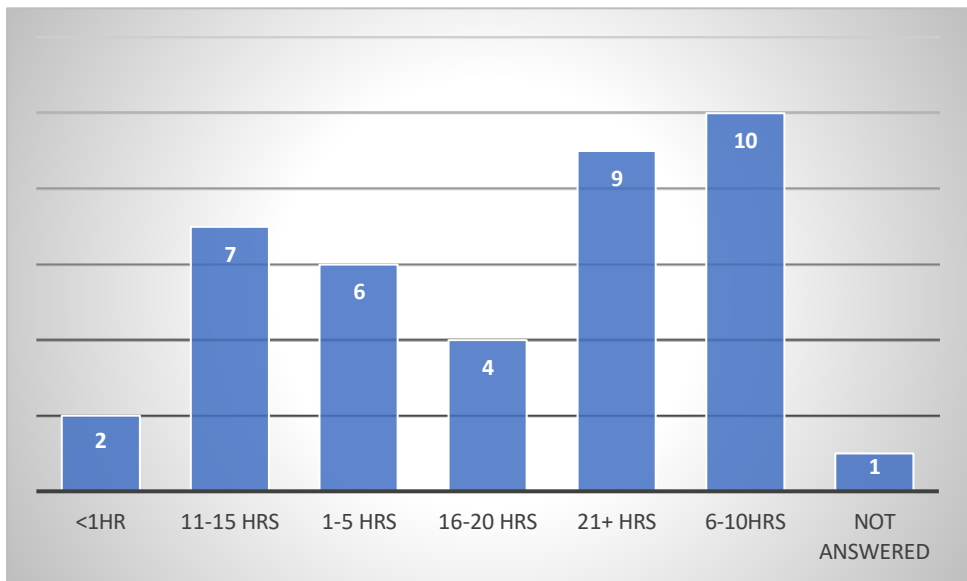


## Attendance at outside bodies

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 9 | 23% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 1-5 hrs | 15 | 38% |
| 16-20 hrs | 2 | 5% |
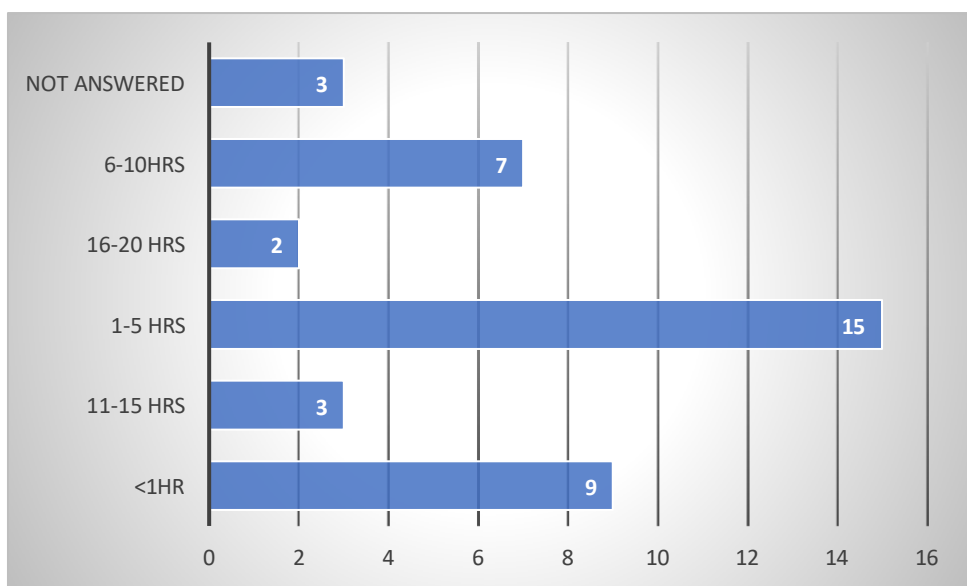
## Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21+ hrs | 7 | 18% |
| 6-10hrs | 3 | 8% |
| Not Answered | 9 | 23% |

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**Community commitments and representation (for example, community engagement such as surgeries, street surgeries, home visits, walkabouts, phone calls etc)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 4 | 10% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 1-5 hrs | 10 | 26% |
| 16-20 hrs | 13 | 33% |
| 21+ hrs | 8 | 21% |
| 6-10hrs | 1 | 3% |
| Not Answered | 4 | 10% |
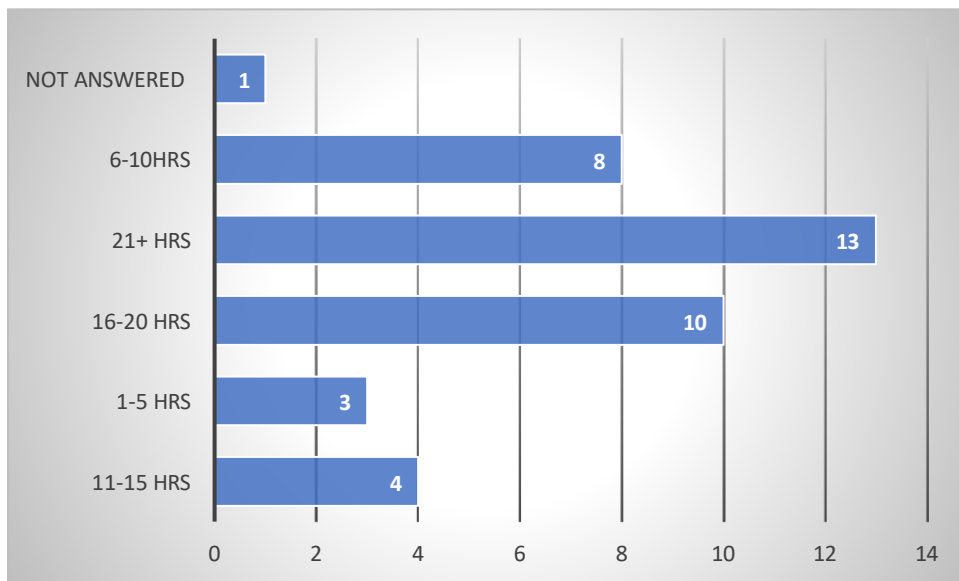


**Casework and advice**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 6 | 15% |
| 11-15 hrs | 4 | 10% |
| 1-5 hrs | 7 | 18% |
| 16-20 hrs | 13 | 33% |
| 21+ hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10hrs | 6 | 15% |
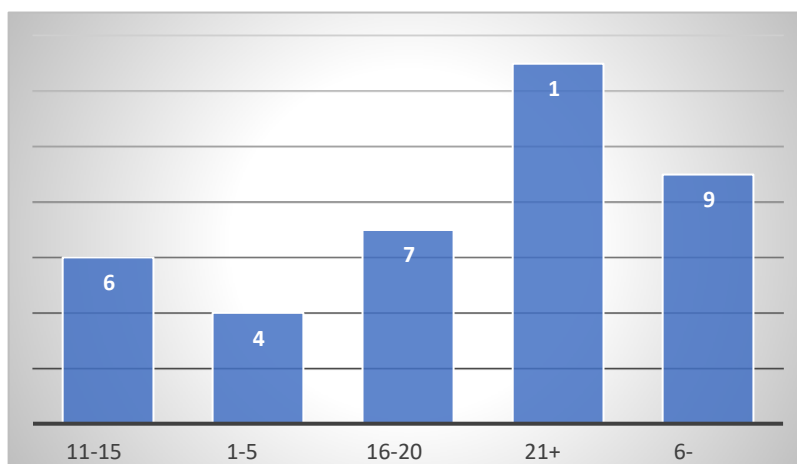
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| Not Answered | 4 | 10% |
|---|---|---|

**Preparing for meetings**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 1 | 3% |
| 11-15 hrs | 8 | 21% |
| 1-5 hrs | 8 | 21% |
| 16-20 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 21+ hrs | 4 | 10% |
| 6-10hrs | 16 | 41% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |
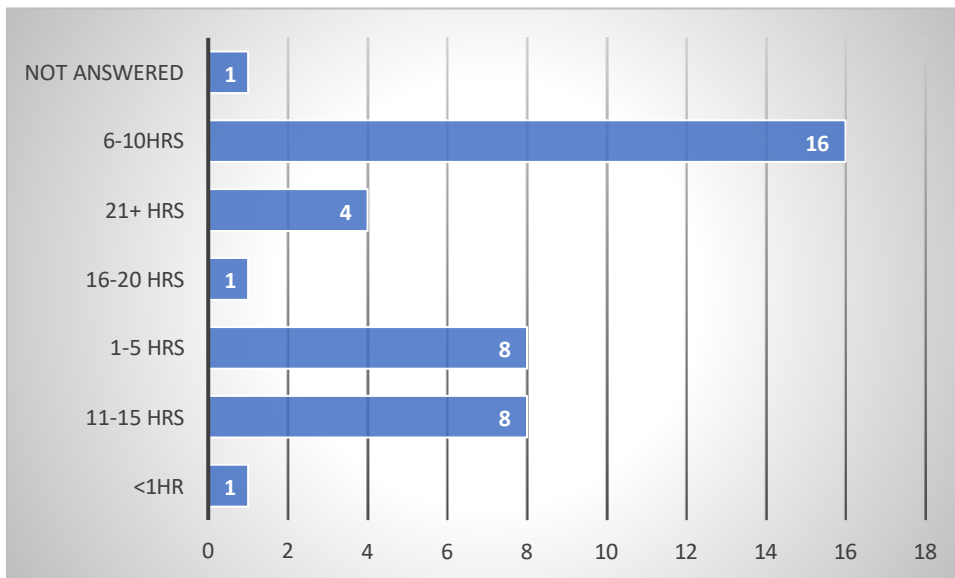


**Training, awareness and development**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 3 | 8% |
| 11-15 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 1-5 hrs | 17 | 44% |
| 16-20 hrs | 3 | 8% |
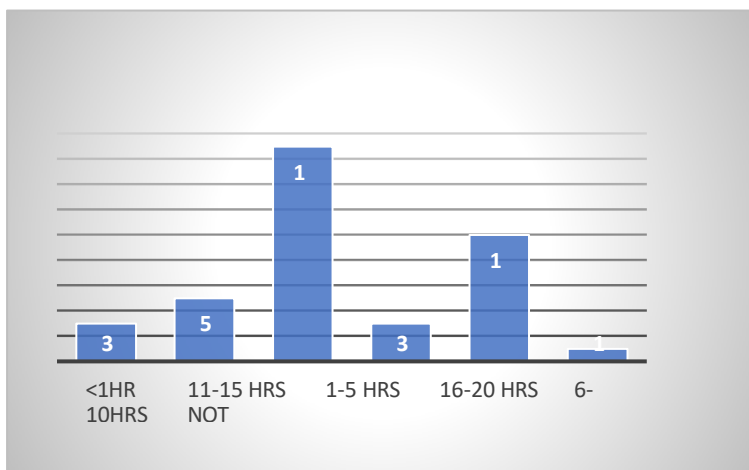
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21+ hrs | 10 | 26% |
| 6-10hrs | 1 | 3% |
| Not Answered | 3 | 8% |

**Publishing information on social media and communications with residents**
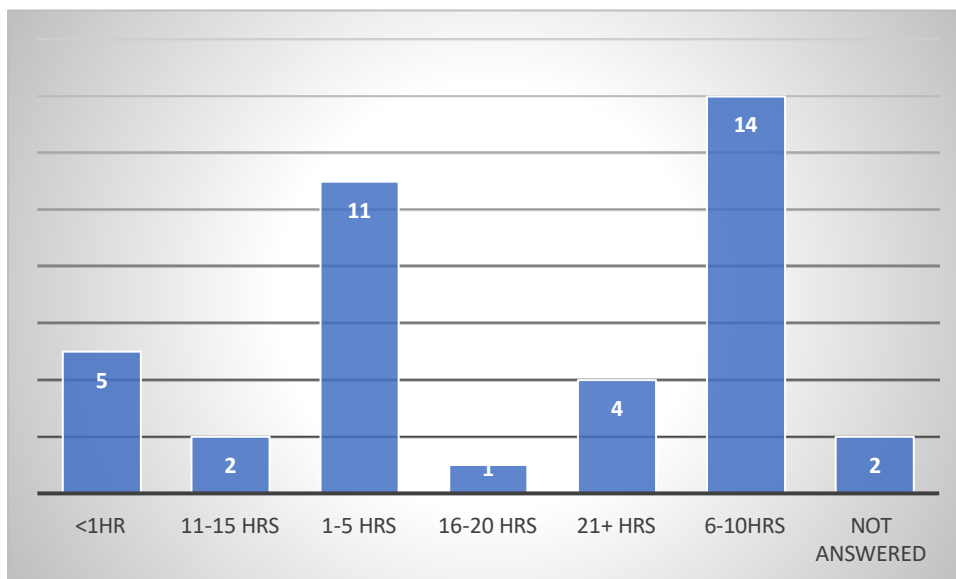


| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 5 | 13% |
| 11-15 hrs | 2 | 5% |
| 1-5 hrs | 11 | 28% |
| 16-20 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 21+ hrs | 4 | 10% |
| 6-10hrs | 14 | 36% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |

**Other**

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| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1hr | 5 | 13% |
| 11-15 hrs | 2 | 5% |
| 1-5 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 16-20 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 21+ hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 6-10hrs | 5 | 13% |
| Not Answered | 20 | 51% |



| On average, how many hours per month do you spend on council, region and political business? - Please give details of any other council activities to assist our understanding |
|---|
| As a member of the Armed Forces committee I regularly attend local veteran associations |
| Chasing unresolved casework, collaboration with community working groups, planning community engagement workshops |
| I regularly have meetings with local residents.  I take on casework for other councillors.  Also, I volunteer with the mums and tots club at my local church. |
| Helping out at local charities with my councillor hat on if needed. |
| Meetings with cabinet members, chief officers and officers of the Council. Also walk abouts and ward meetings. |
| Deputy mayor events |
| My contact and casework are direct with residents, face to face meetings, conversations, being present in the ward |
| (Please note I had to select an option on Q3 to continue with the completion of the Survey - I was not a member of the Ethical Standards Committee) |
| Home visits 20 hrs per week |
| Volunteering |
| ATTENDING COMMUNITY EVENTS/PHOTOCALLS ETC. |
| community events representation |
| Ward Walkabout. Meeting new businesses in Sandwell due to my role |
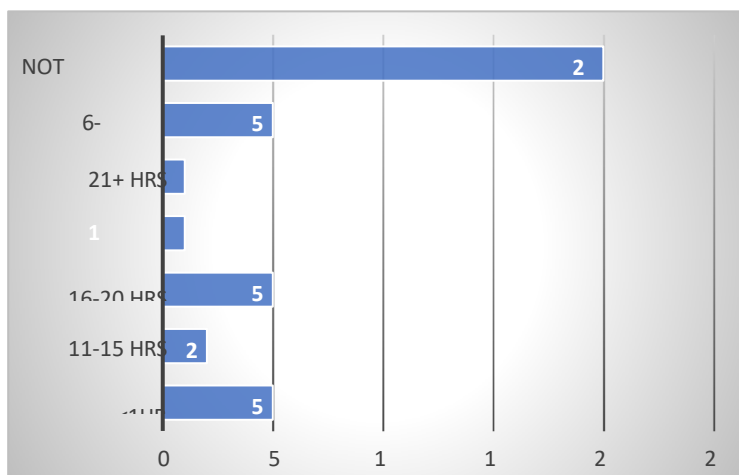
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**Question 7: On average, how many issues do you deal with from local residents each month?** Issues may include emails from residents, social media queries, phone calls, matters raised at surgery or during walkabouts in your ward. If you are dealing with a whole ward issue affecting all residents, this would count as one issue even though understandably substantial.

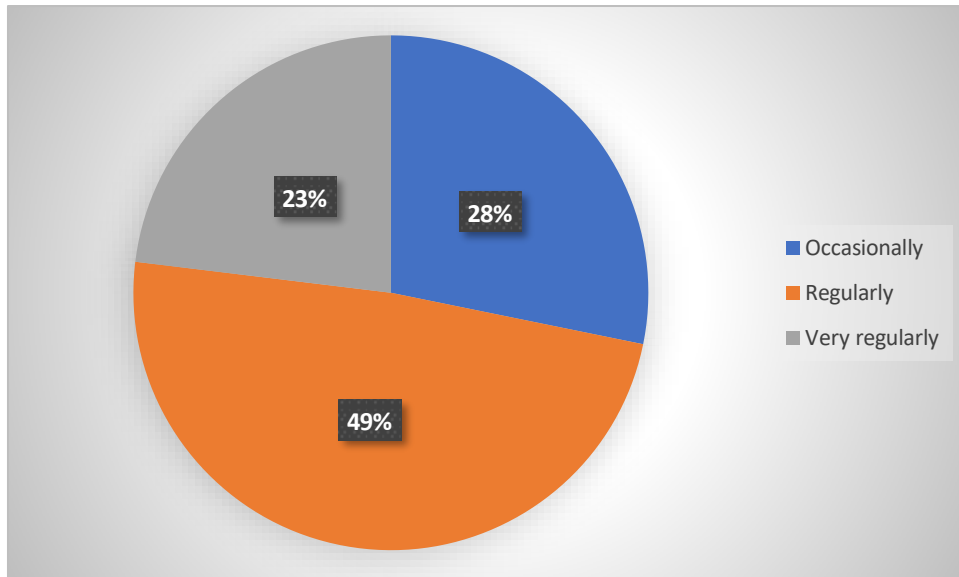| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1-100 | 26 | 67% |
| 101-200 | 13 | 33% |
| 201-300 | 0 | 0% |
| 301+ | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
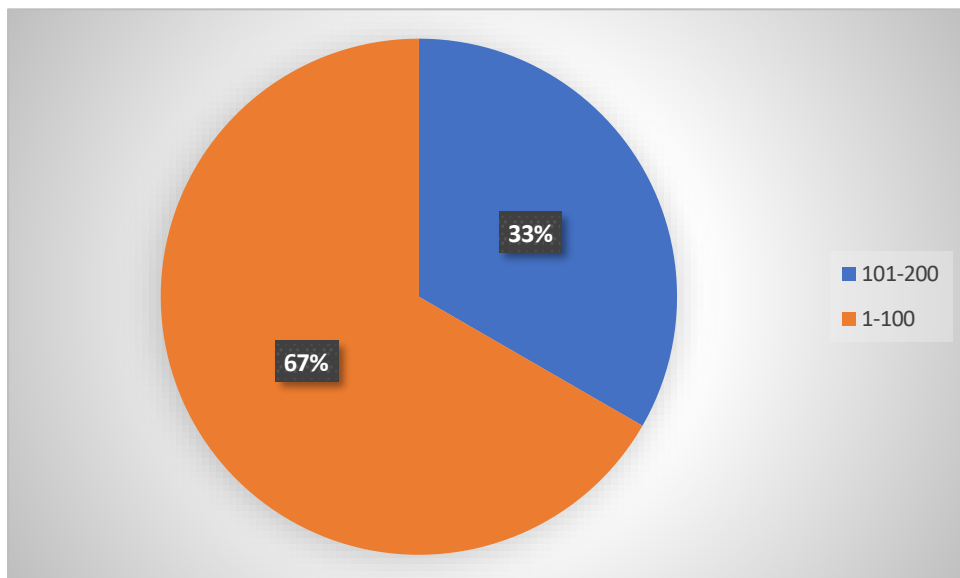
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 8: What types of casework issues do you typically deal with? (Please categorise each option as appropriate and tell us about any other issues below.)**
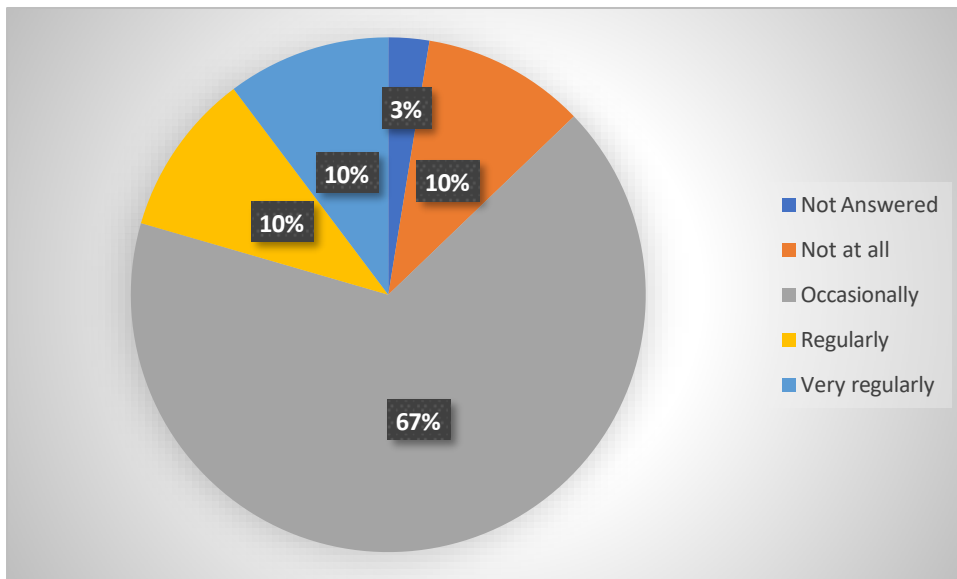
**Income and benefits issues**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very regularly | 9 | 23% |
| Regularly | 19 | 49% |
| Occasionally | 11 | 28% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |



**Employment issues**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very regularly | 1 | 3% |
| Regularly | 4 | 10% |
| Occasionally | 26 | 67% |
| Not at all | 4 | 10% |
| Not Answered | 4 | 10% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



## Schools and education

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very regularly | 7 | 18% |
| Regularly | 16 | 41% |
| Occasionally | 16 | 41% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
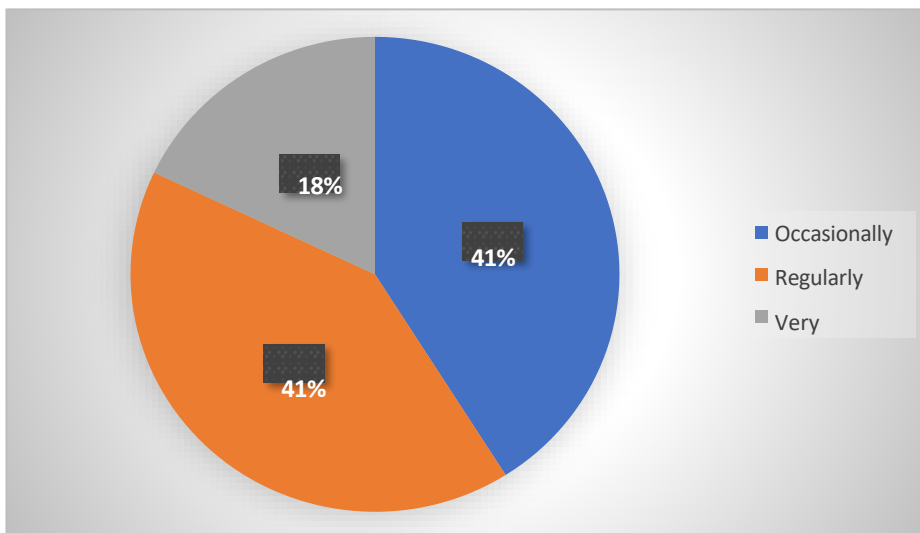


## Children's social care

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very regularly | 7 | 18% |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Regularly | 7 | 18% |
| Occasionally | 24 | 61% |
| Not at all | 1 | 2% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
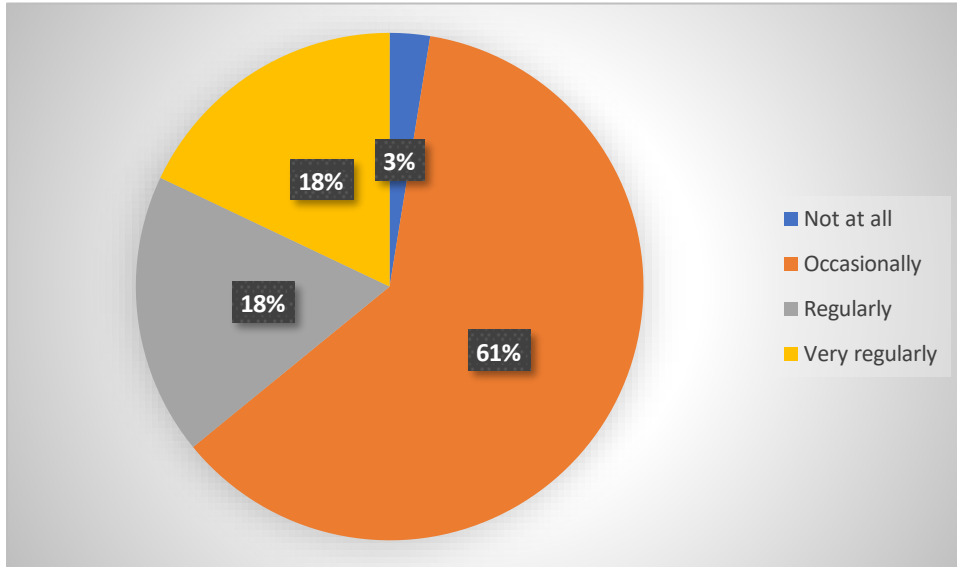
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Adults' social care**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very regularly | 7 | 18% |
| Regularly | 17 | 44% |
| Occasionally | 15 | 38% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
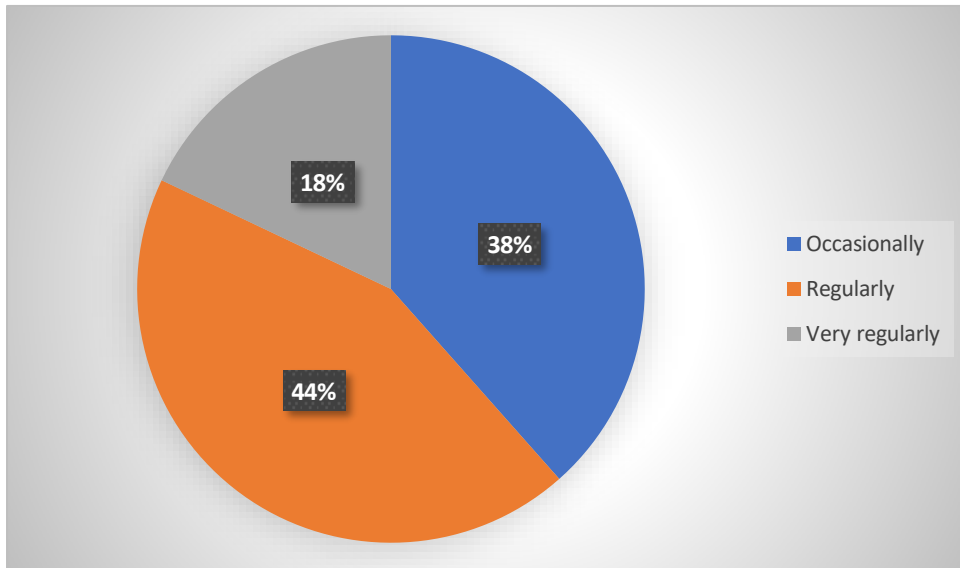
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Mental health issues and support**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very regularly | 7 | 18% |
| Regularly | 14 | 36% |
| Occasionally | 18 | 46% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
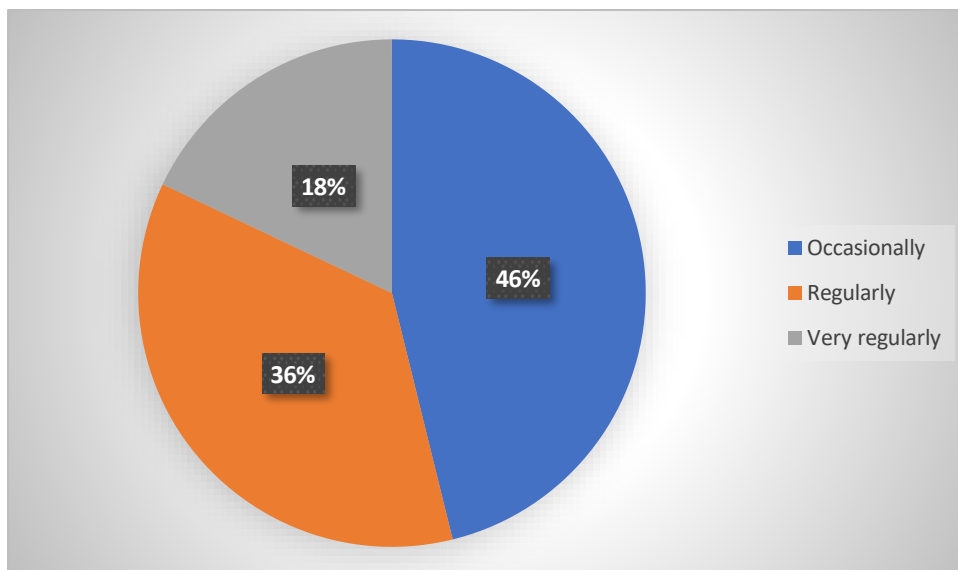


**Physical health issues and support**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |
| Not at all | 1 | 3% |
| Occasionally | 16 | 41% |
| Regularly | 17 | 44% |
| Very regularly | 3 | 8% |

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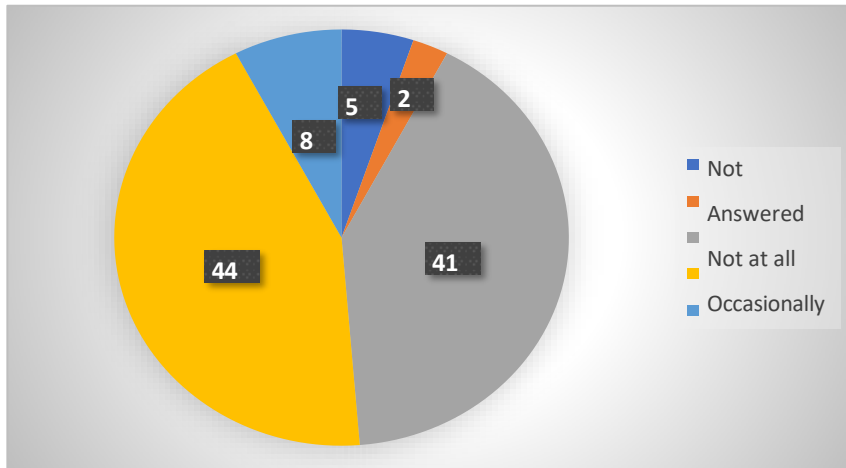
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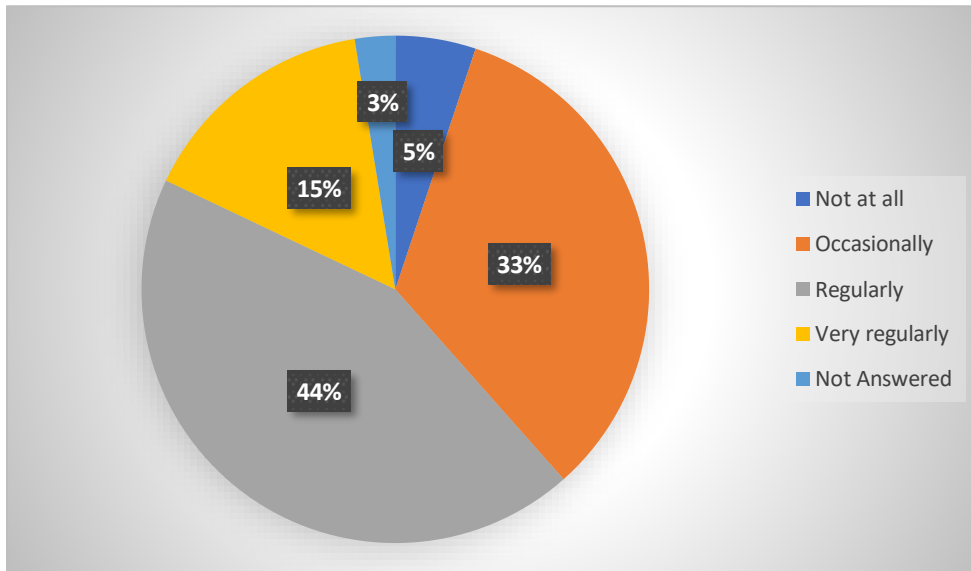
**Homelessness**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 2 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 6 | 15% |
| Regularly | 15 | 38% |
| Very regularly | 16 | 41% |
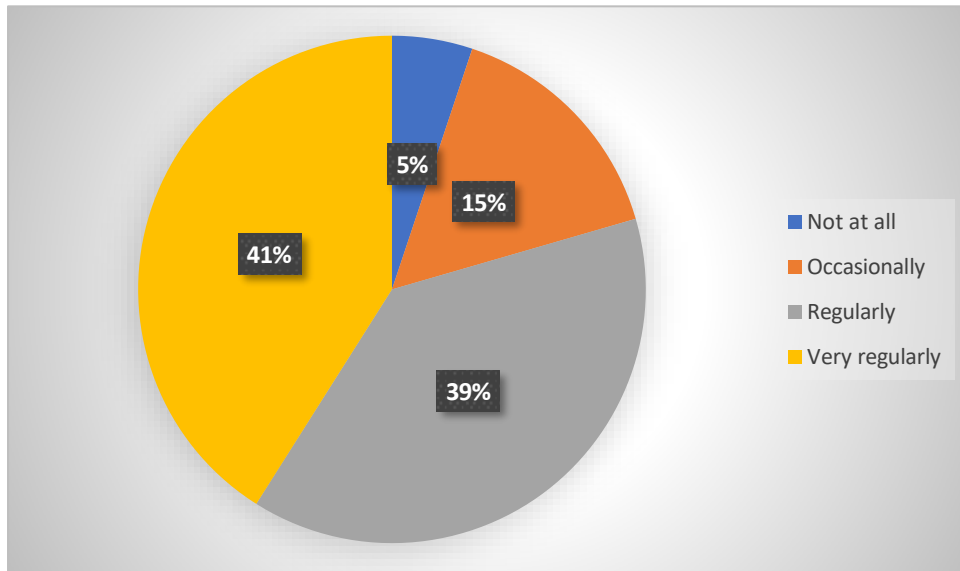
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Planning issues (for example, applications, objections, disputes)

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |
| Not at all | 2 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 13 | 33% |
| Regularly | 17 | 44% |
| Very regularly | 16 | 15% |

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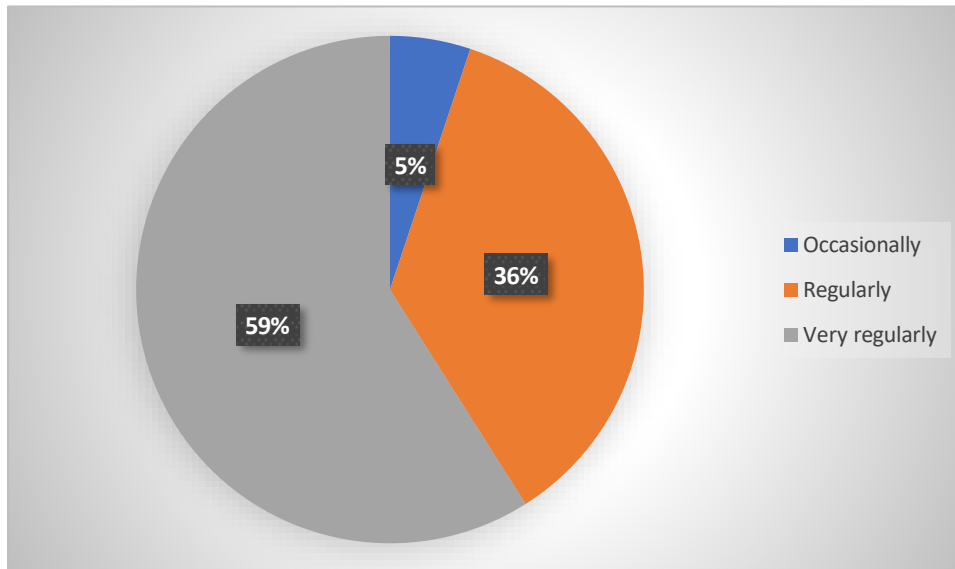**Licensing issues (for example, complaints over applications)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 3 | 8% |
| Not at all | 3 | 8% |
| Occasionally | 24 | 62% |
| Regularly | 6 | 15% |
| Very regularly | 3 | 8% |
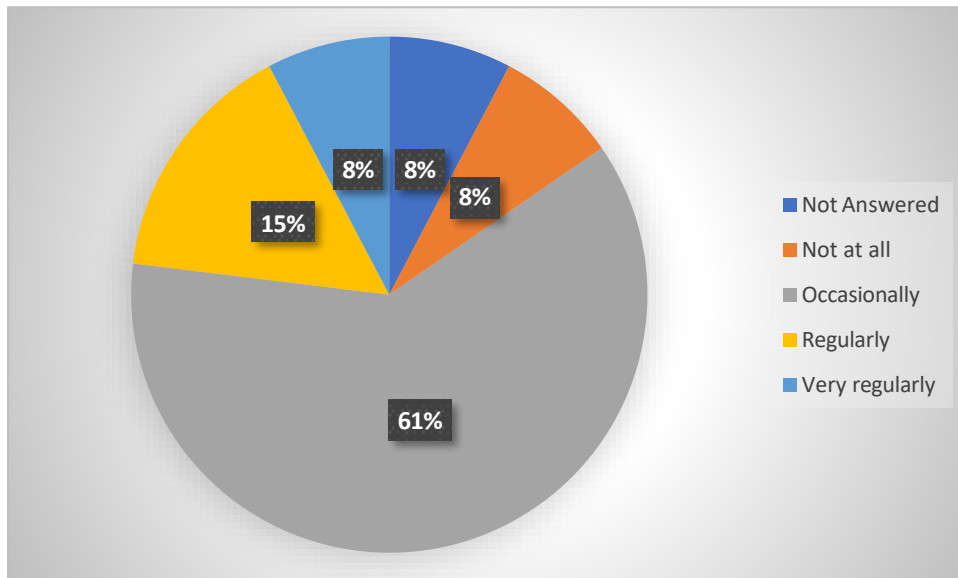
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
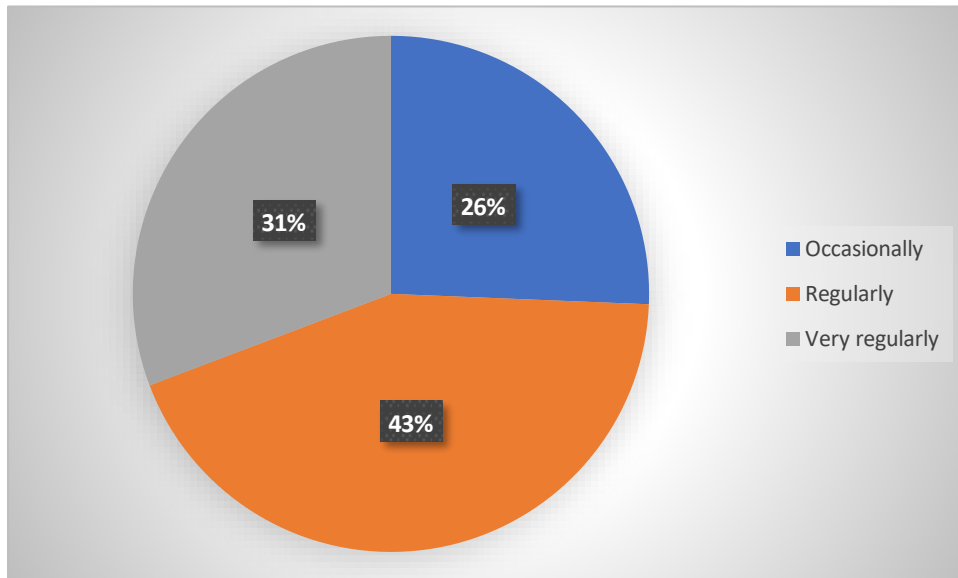
**Highways complaints (for example, road maintenance)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 2 | 5% |
| Regularly | 14 | 36% |
| Very regularly | 23 | 59% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

## Home waste and recycling collections

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 10 | 26% |
| Regularly | 17 | 44% |
| Very regularly | 12 | 31% |



## Street waste and recycling

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 8 | 20% |
| Regularly | 19 | 49% |
| Very regularly | 12 | 31% |

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Legend:
- **Occasionally** — 20%
- **Regularly** — 49%
- **Very regularly** — 31%
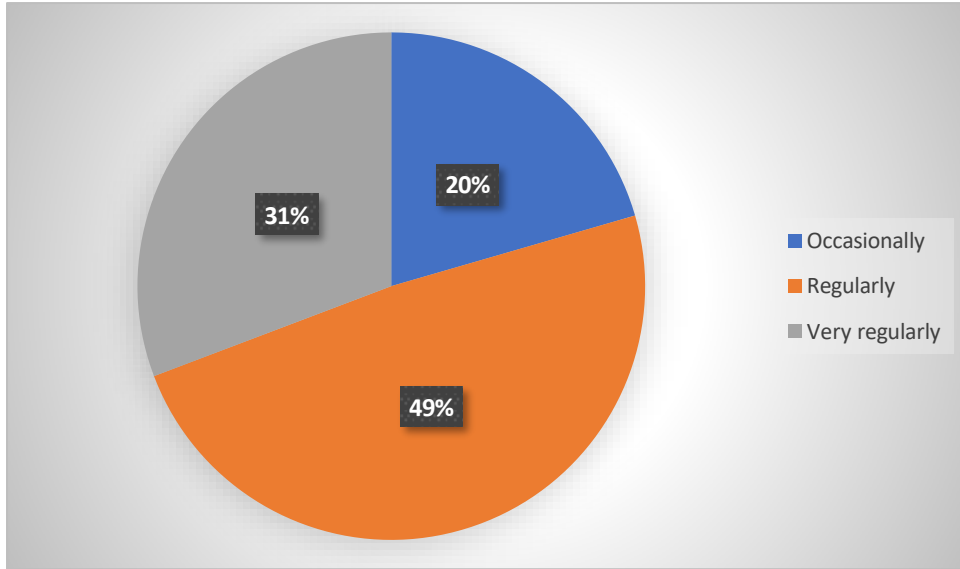
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Illegal dumping**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 2 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 4 | 10% |
| Regularly | 18 | 46% |
| Very regularly | 15 | 39% |
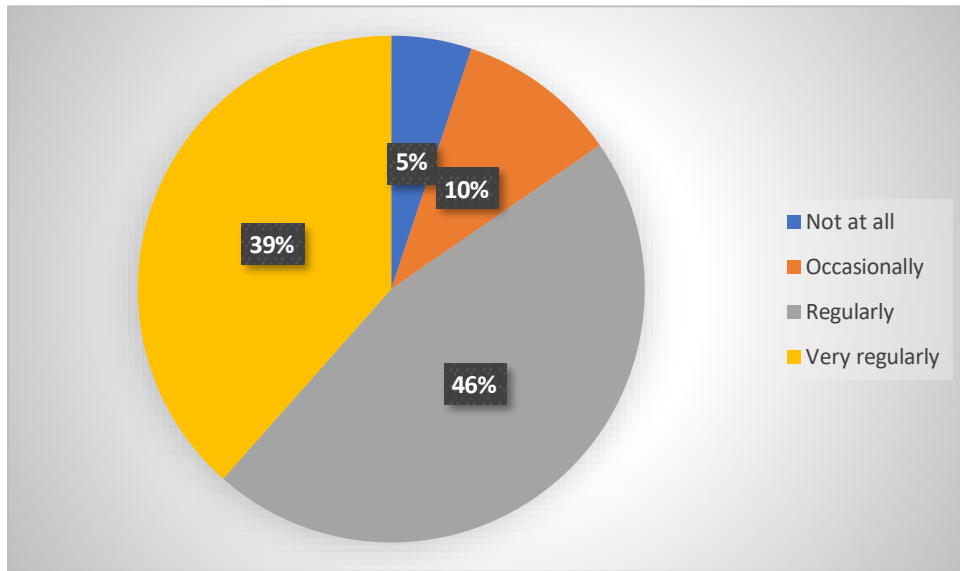
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Alley gates**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 5 | 13% |
| Not at all | 6 | 15% |
| Occasionally | 17 | 44% |
| Regularly | 7 | 18% |
| Very regularly | 4 | 10% |
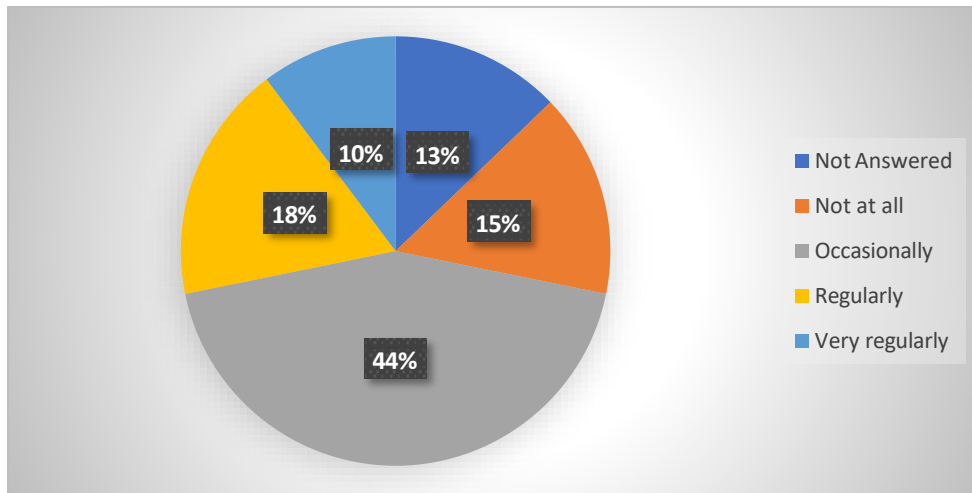
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Streetlights**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |
| Not at all | 2 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 18 | 46% |
| Regularly | 10 | 26% |
| Very regularly | 7 | 18% |
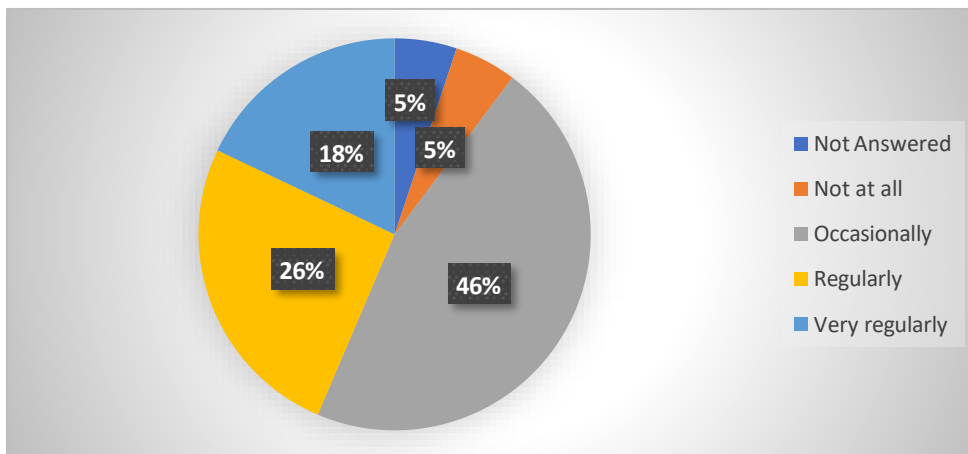


**Parking problems**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 5% |
| Not at all | 2 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 4 | 10% |
| Regularly | 15 | 38% |
| Very regularly | 18 | 46% |
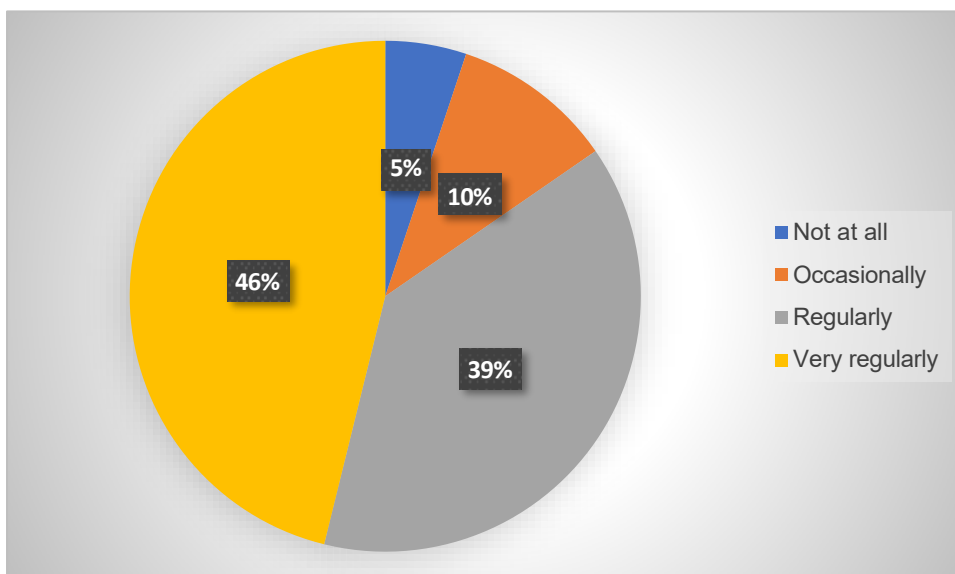
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Anti-social behaviour**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 5% |
| Not at all | 0 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 2 | 5% |
| Regularly | 15 | 39% |
| Very regularly | 22 | 56% |
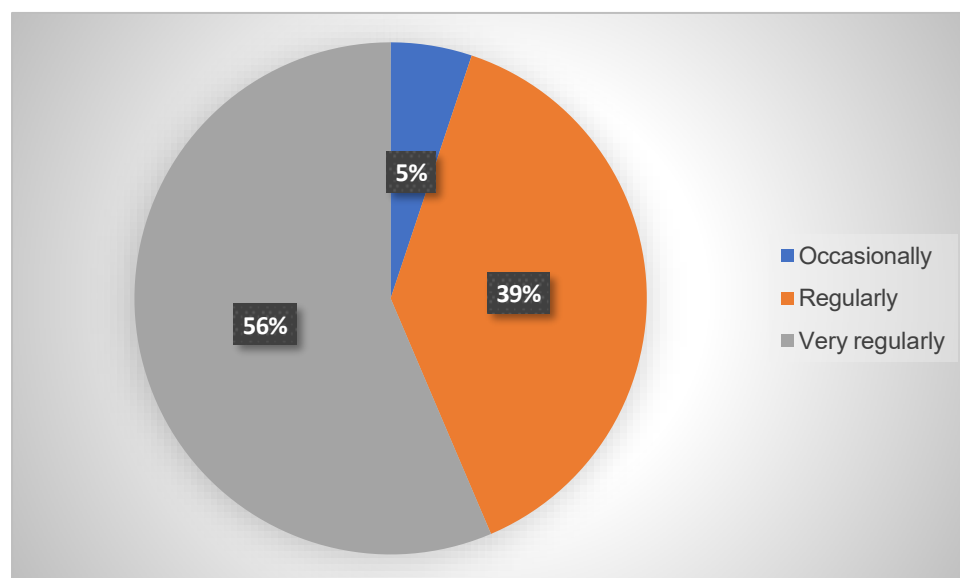


**Noise and nuisance issues**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 10 | 26% |
| Regularly | 19 | 48% |
| Very regularly | 10 | 26% |

**Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024**



Pie chart legend:
- Occasionally (blue) – 26%
- Regularly (orange) – 48%
- Very regularly (grey) – 26%
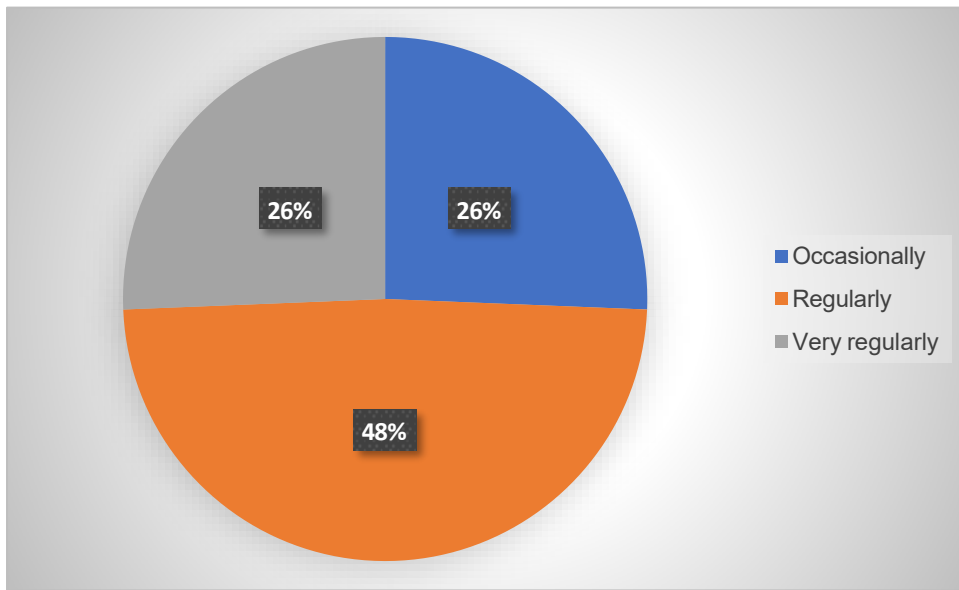
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Parks and greenspace issues**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 11 | 28% |
| Regularly | 20 | 51% |
| Very regularly | 8 | 21% |
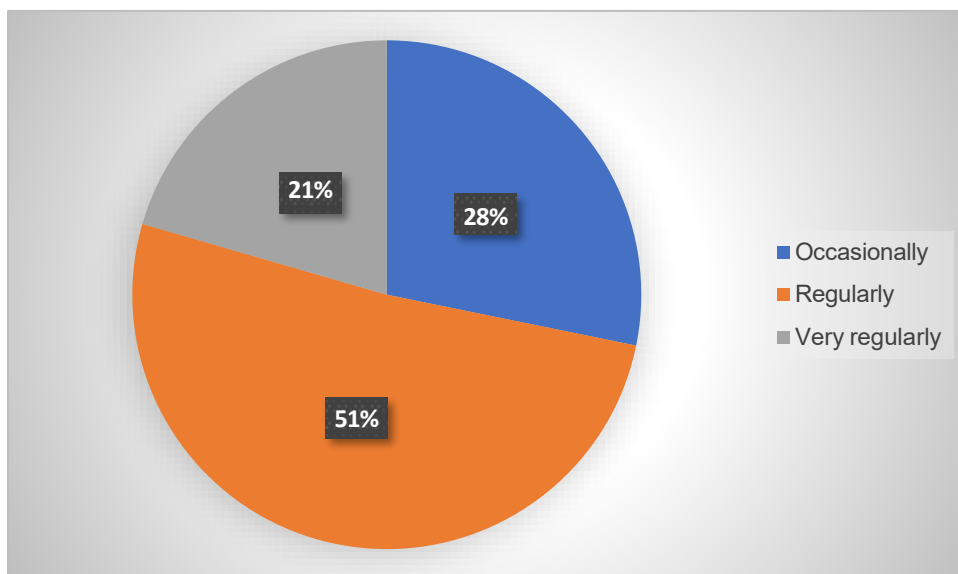


**Verge cutting and leaf collection**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Not at all | 2 | 5% |
| Occasionally | 14 | 36% |
| Regularly | 18 | 46% |
| Very regularly | 5 | 13% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
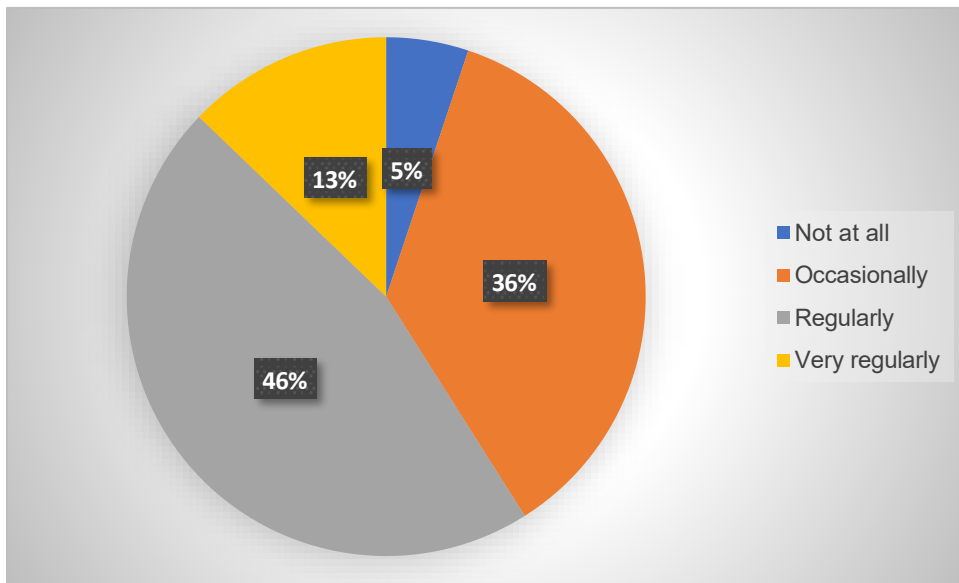
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Other**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 12 | 31% |
| Not at all | 0 | 0% |
| Occasionally | 10 | 26% |
| Regularly | 9 | 23% |
| Very regularly | 8 | 21% |
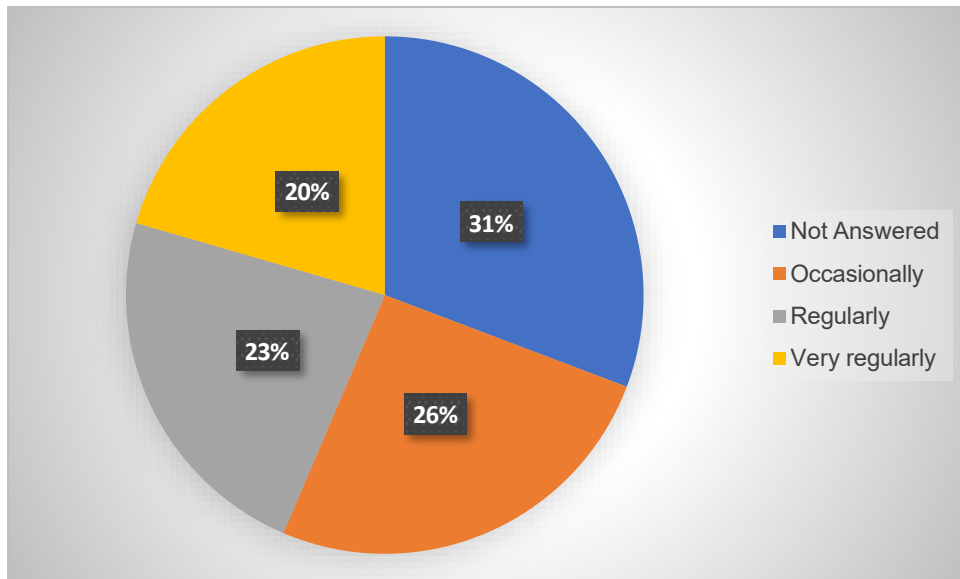
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 9: Based on your experience, is the time you spend on Council work each week what you expected when you first agreed to stand for Election?**

Based on your experience, is the time you spend on Council work each week what you expected when you first agreed to stand for Election?

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 11 | 28% |
| No, I spend more time than I expected | 28 | 72% |
| No, I spend less time than I expected | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
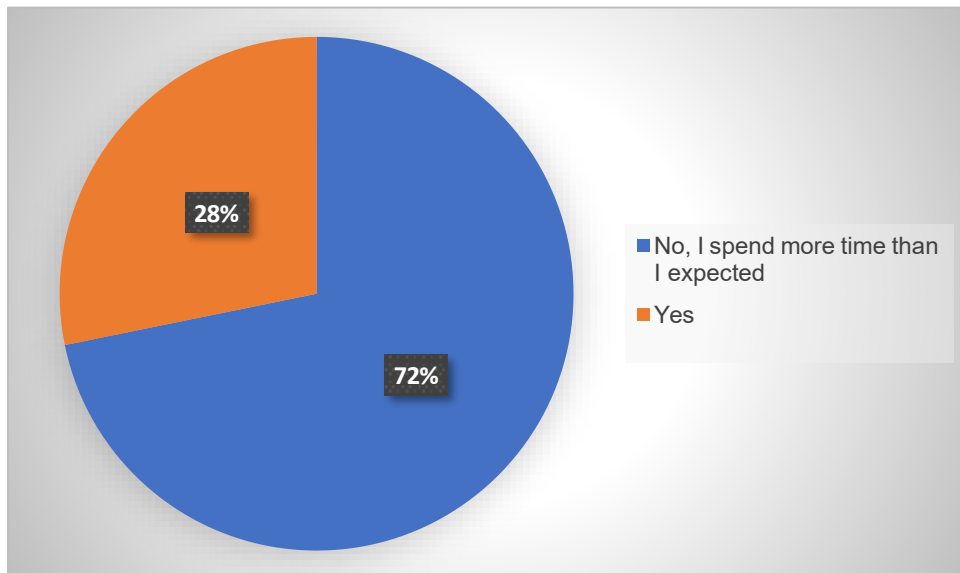
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 10: Has the time you spend on Council work increased since you were first elected?**

Has the time you spend on Council work increased since you were first elected?

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 37 | 95% |
| No | 2 | 5% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
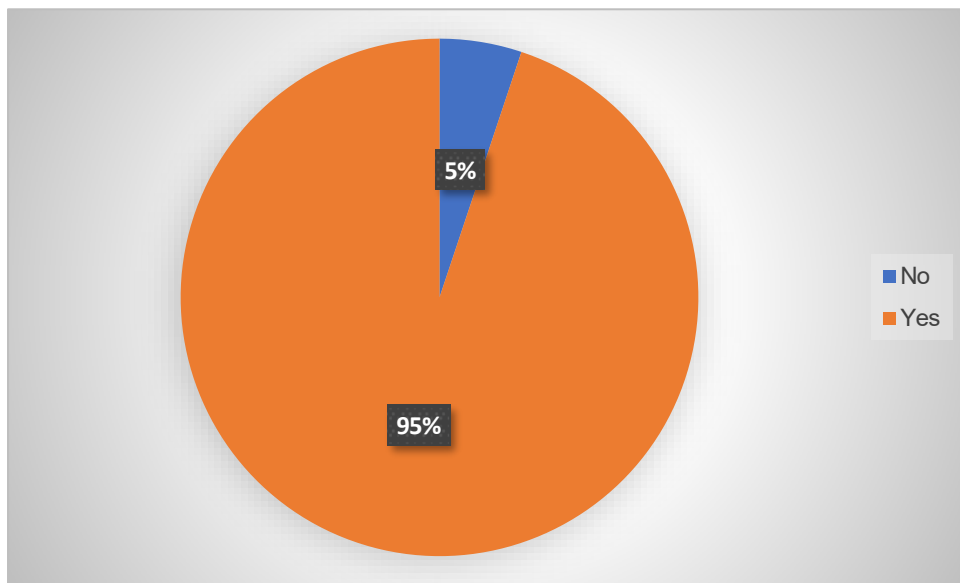
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 11: Which aspects of your role as an Elected Member have changed the most? (Please categorise each option as appropriate and tell us about any other aspects that have changed below.)**

**Attendance at Council Committees (such as Planning, Scrutiny)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 15 | 39% |
| Most change | 22 | 56% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |
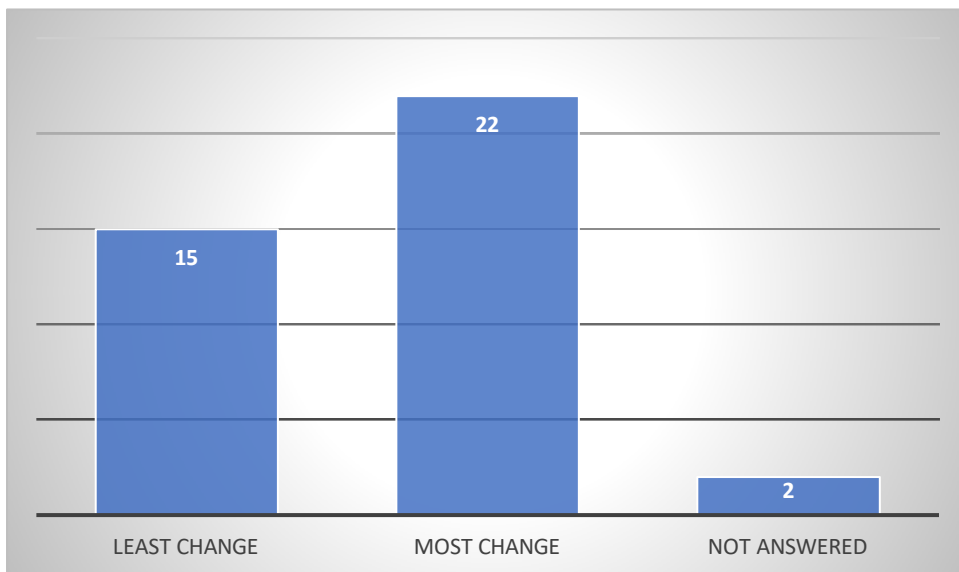


**Attendance at other Council meetings (such as meetings with officers)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 12 | 31% |
| Most change | 27 | 69% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



| | |
|---|---|
| LEAST CHANGE (12) | MOST CHANGE (27) |
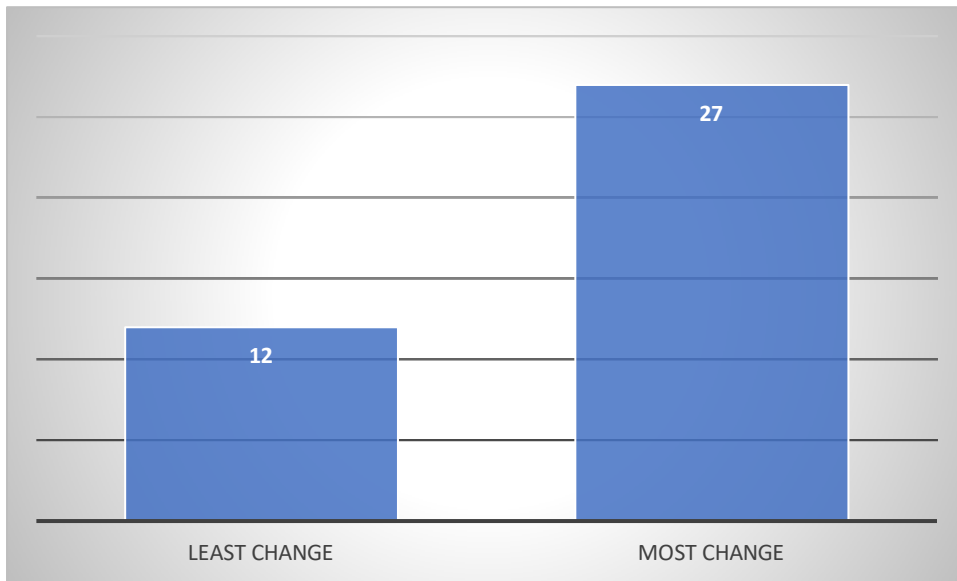
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Attendance at Regional, Local Government Association (LGA) or WMCA meetings or activities**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 23 | 59% |
| Most change | 12 | 31% |
| Not Answered | 4 | 10% |
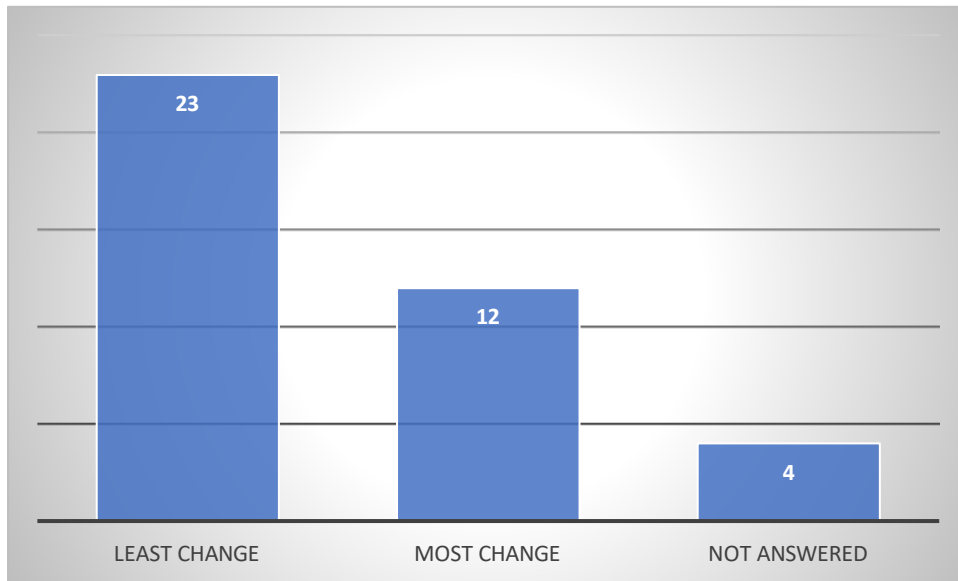


**Time spent on party or political business**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 16 | 41% |
| Most change | 22 | 56% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



| LEAST CHANGE | MOST CHANGE | NOT ANSWERED |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 16 | 22 | 1 |
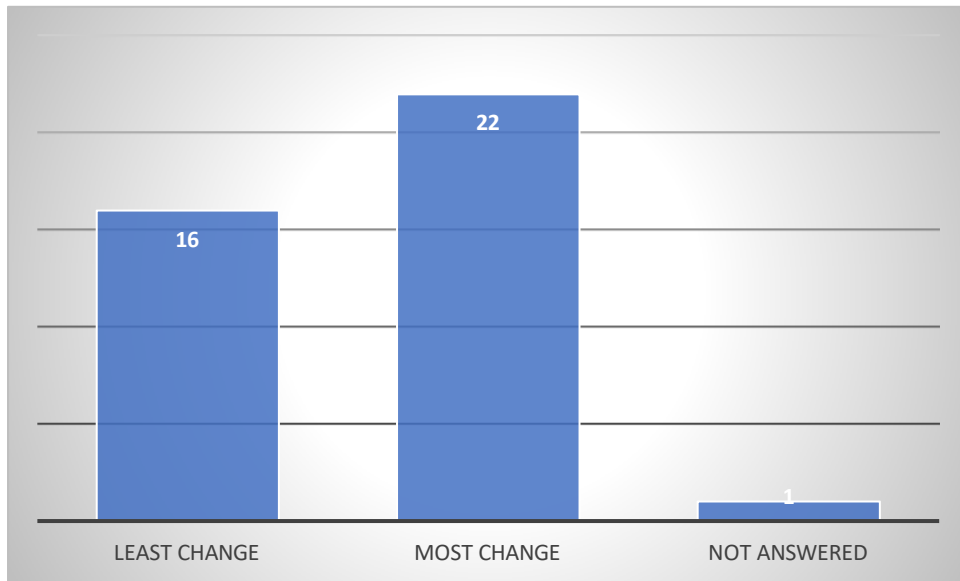
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Attendance at outside bodies**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 25 | 64% |
| Most change | 12 | 31% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |
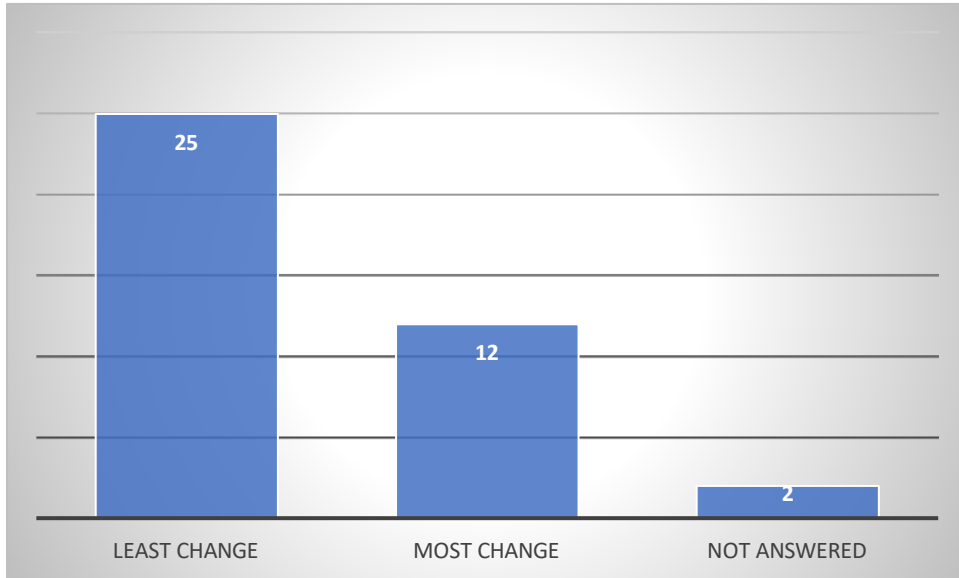


**Community commitments and representation (for example, community engagement such as surgeries, street surgeries, home visits, walkabouts, phone calls etc.)**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 5 | 13% |
| Most change | 32 | 82% |
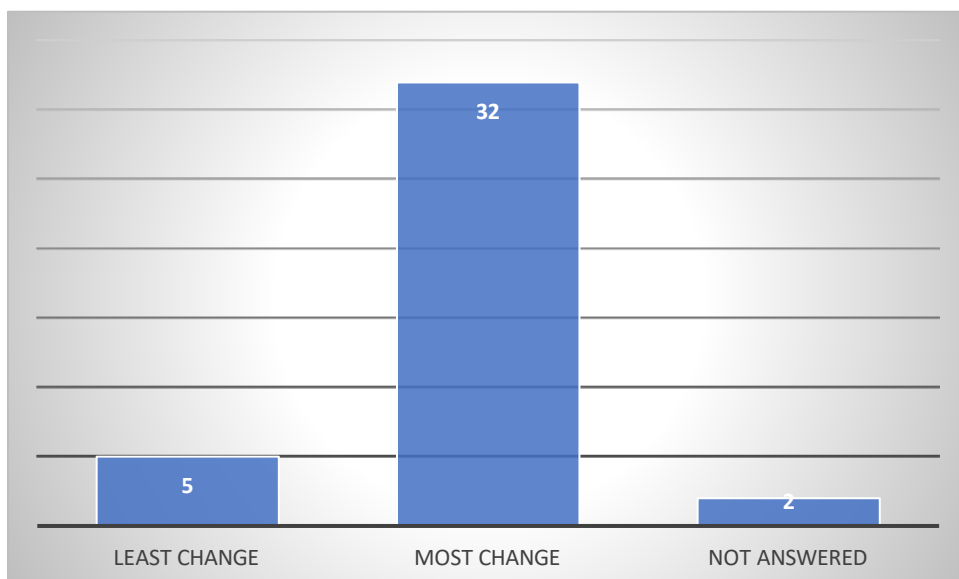
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |

## Casework and advice

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 4 | 10% |
| Most change | 34 | 87% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |
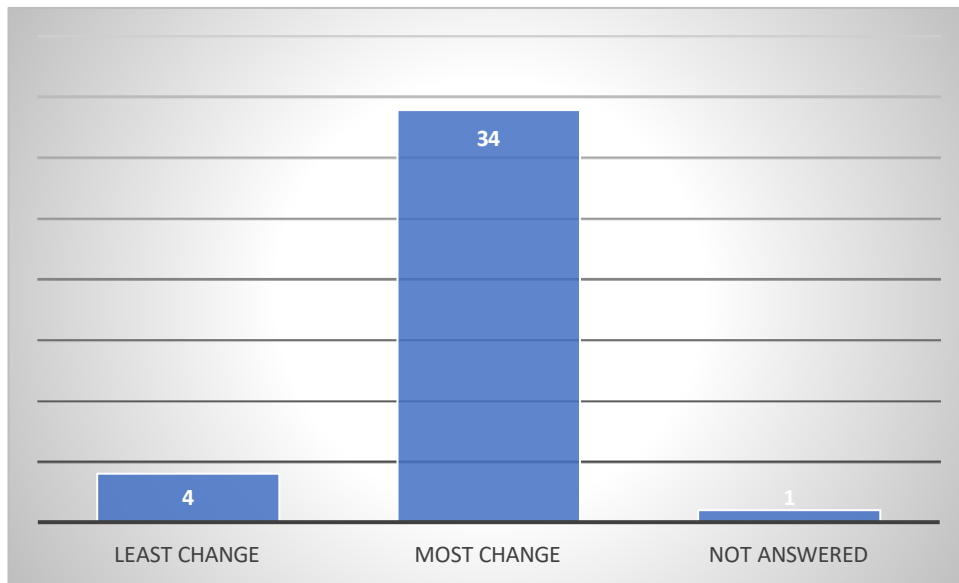


## Preparing for meetings

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 10 | 26% |
| Most change | 26 | 67% |
| Not Answered | 3 | 8% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



| LEAST CHANGE | MOST CHANGE | NOT ANSWERED |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 10 | 26 | 3 |
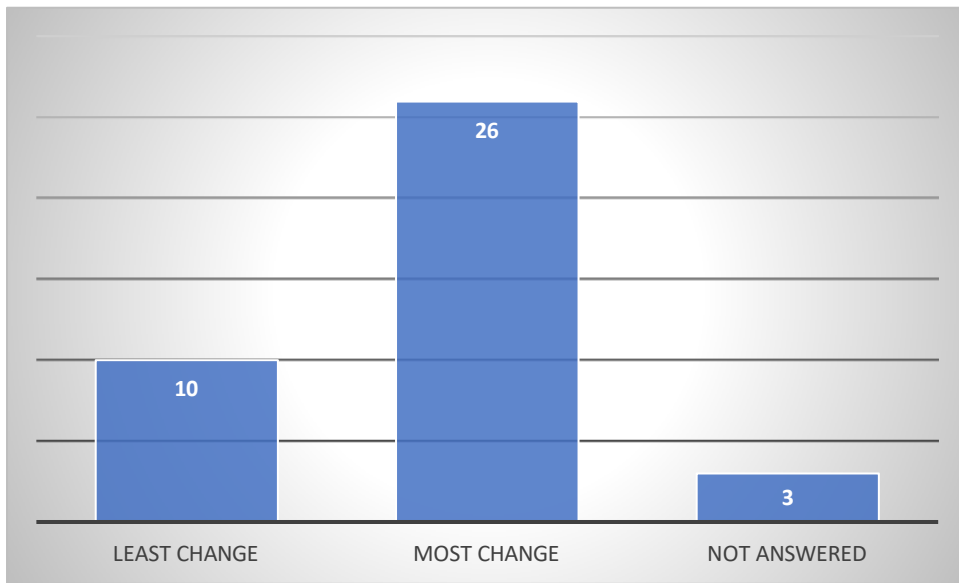
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

## Training, awareness and development

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 10 | 26% |
| Most change | 26 | 67% |
| Not Answered | 3 | 8% |
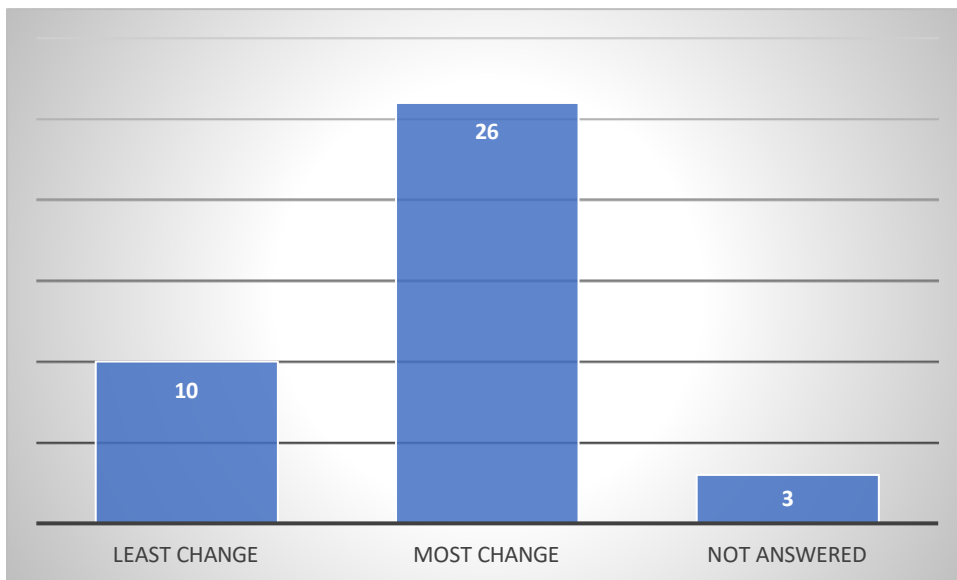


## Travel relating to your role as an Elected Member

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 15 | 38% |
| Most change | 23 | 59% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
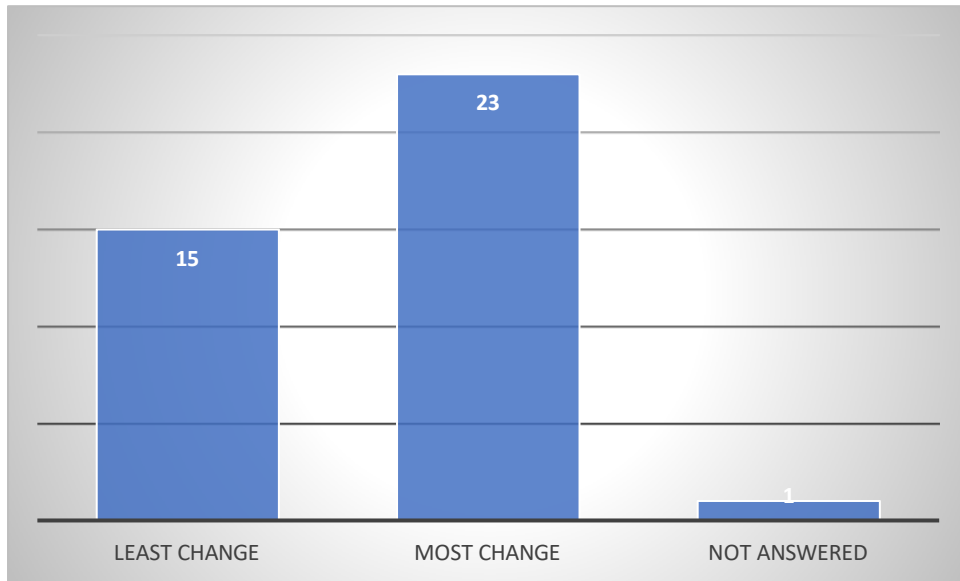
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Publishing information on social media and communications with residents**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 16 | 41% |
| Most change | 21 | 54% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |



**Other**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Least change | 12 | 31% |
| Most change | 6 | 15% |
| Not Answered | 21 | 54% |
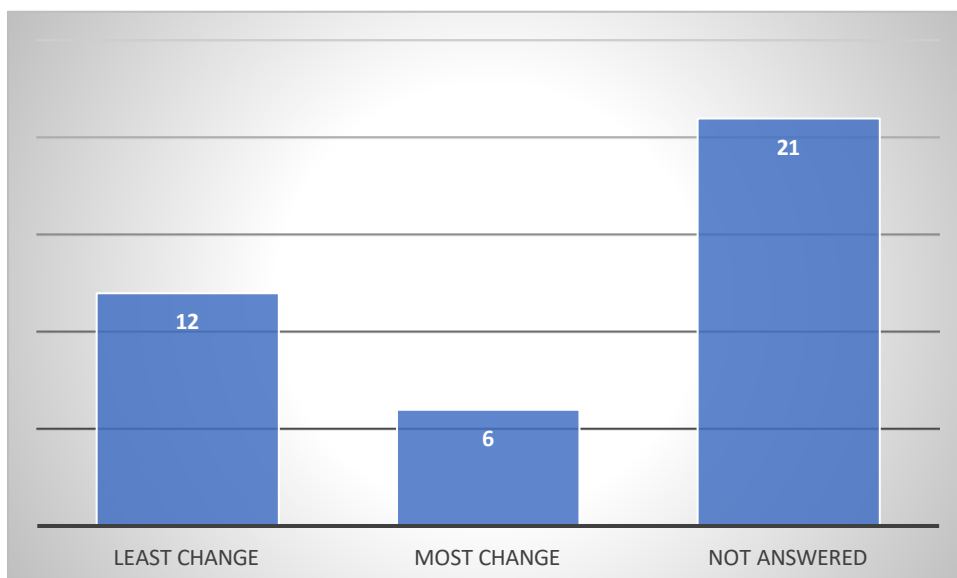
## Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Please tell us about any other aspects of your role that have changed:**

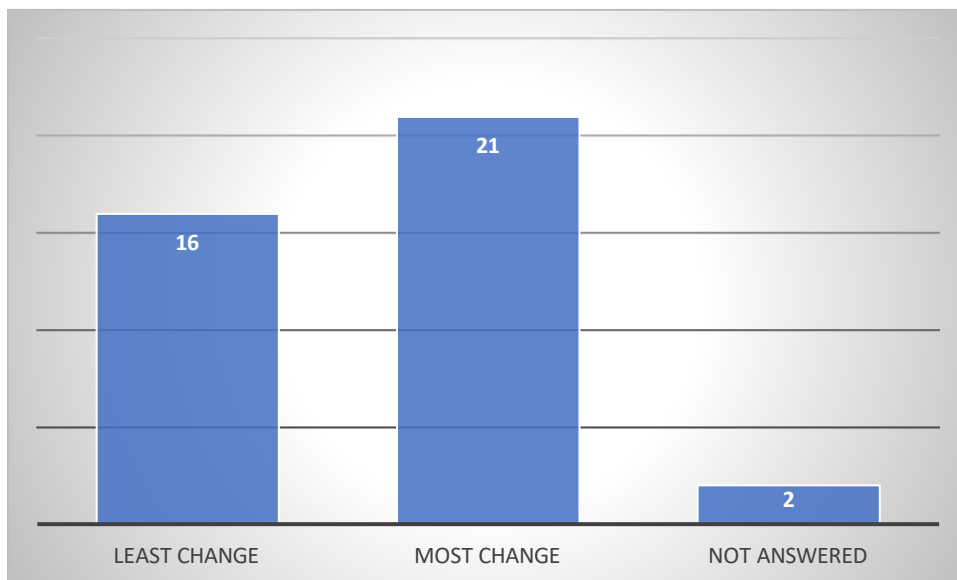| Which aspects of your role as an Elected Member have changed the most? (Please categorise each option as appropriate and tell us about any other aspects that have changed below.) - Please tell us about any other aspects of your role that have changed: |
| --- |
| I'm newly elected hence I have no comparison |
| Seems to be an increase in ASB incidents. Increase in help needed during the cost of living. Both lead to more one to one appointment. |
| I deal with anything up to 1000 casework enquiries a year which is increasing each year. |
| As a career backbencher I have found the demands on a Cabinet member have been massive in terms of time commitment. I am fortunate that having two other Ward members who are both capable enables me to concentrate on Cabinet commitments while they assist greatly with casework. Party work and campaigning can mostly be dealt with in the evenings or weekends, but after a particularly busy week it can leave you exhausted. |
| A lot more evening work meaning 8-hour days are now 12-hour days.  I live in the ward, so I frequently have residents knock the door for a 'chat'. |
| Council work is an all year-round commitment |
| People's lives have changed, the problems increased, pressures of money, housing, neighbourhoods, drugs |
| The cost of living crisis has meant that residents have more complex needs. |
| Overall as I have become more established and experience more time has been necessary to fulfil my council duties |
| Volunteering |
| MEDIA & COMMS WORK; PUBLIC SPEAKING; ATTENDANCE AT EXTERNAL MEETINGS/CONFERENCES AS SPEAKER; SPEECH PREPARATION; EMAIL TRAFFIC IS ENORMOUS |
| community support and networking |
| Engaging in more ways to meet hard to reach communities |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 12: On average, how many hours per month do you spend on the following methods to engage with residents and your community?**

**In Person**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------|
| <1 hr | 0 | |
| 1-5 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 6-10 hrs | 7 | 18% |
| 11-15 hrs | 8 | 20% |
| 16-20 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 21+ hrs | 10 | 26% |
| Not Answered | 0 | |
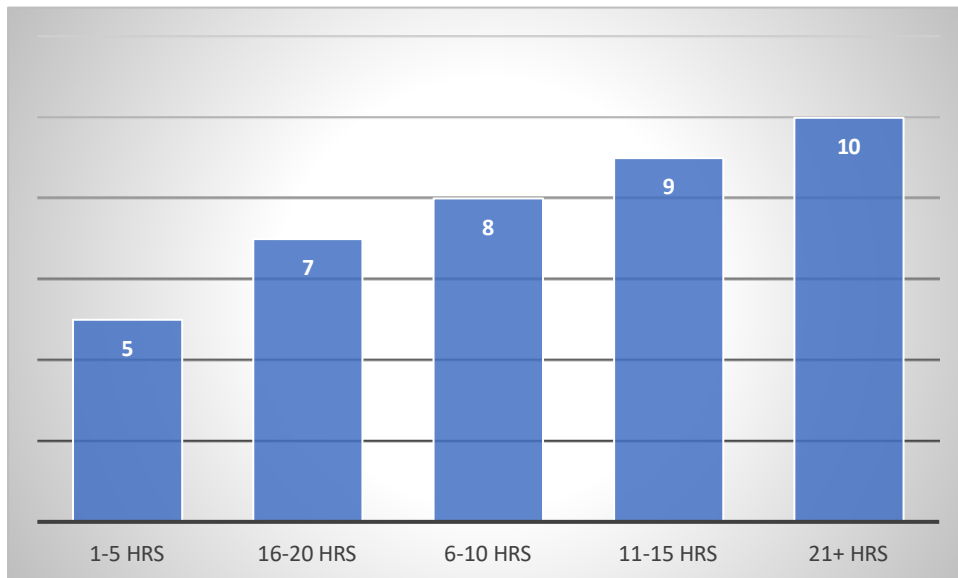
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Phone**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 1 | 3% |
| 1-5 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10 hrs | 12 | 31% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 16-20 hrs | 6 | 15% |
| 21+ hrs | 8 | 20% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0 |
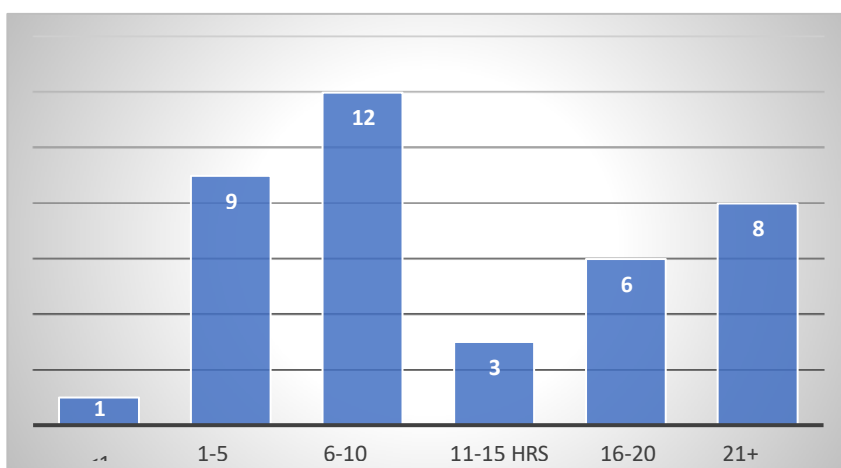


**Text**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 4 | 10% |
| 1-5 hrs | 17 | 43% |
| 6-10 hrs | 10 | 26% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 16-20 hrs | 2 | 5% |
| 21+ hrs | 3 | 8% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0 |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
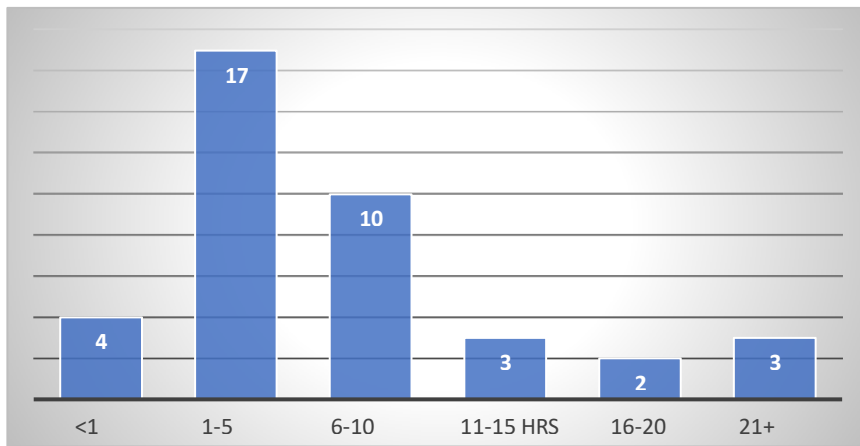
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Email**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 0 | 0% |
| 1-5 hrs | 6 | 15% |
| 6-10 hrs | 13 | 33% |
| 11-15 hrs | 7 | 18% |
| 16-20 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 21+ hrs | 8 | 21% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |
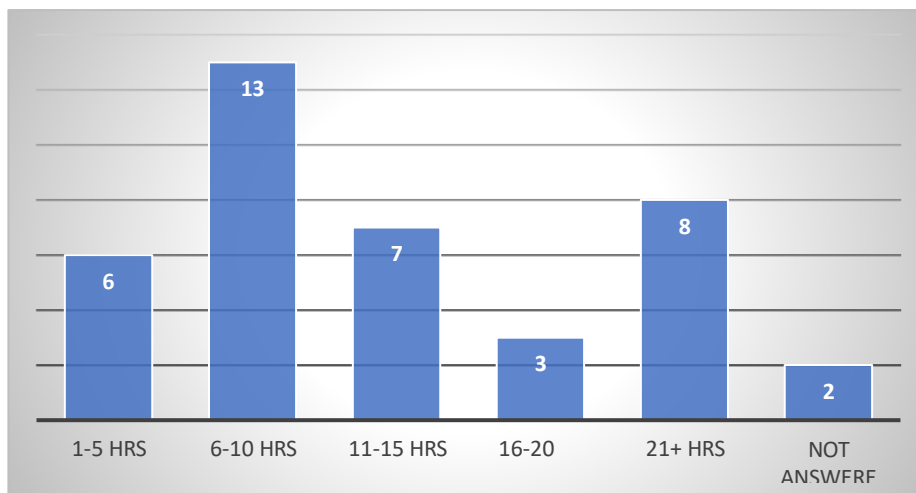


**Newspaper or magazine notice**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 28 | 72% |
| 1-5 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 6-10 hrs | 2 | 5% |
| 11-15 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 16-20 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 21+ hrs | 1 | 3% |
| Not Answered | 3 | 8% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



| | <1 | 1-5 | 6-10 | 21+ | NOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 28 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
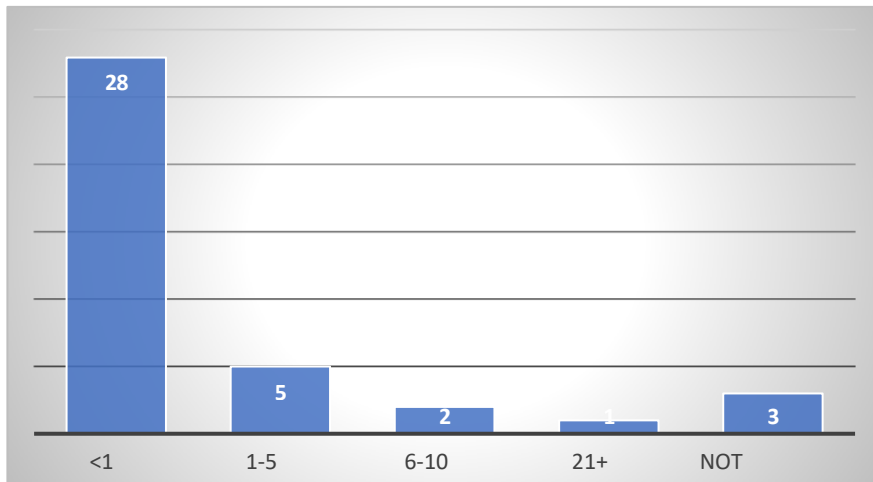
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Letter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 23 | 59% |
| 1-5 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 16-20 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 21+ hrs | 1 | 3% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 5% |
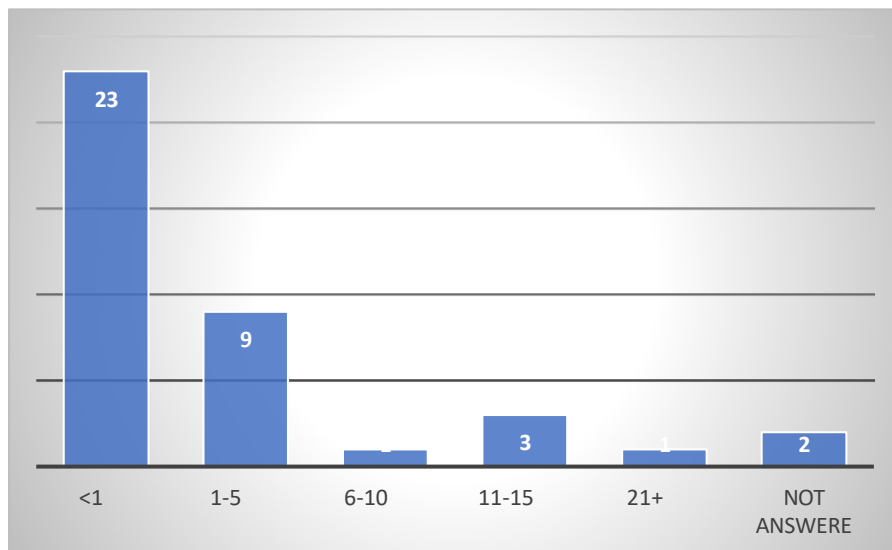
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Street Letter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <1 hr | 19 | 49% |
| 1-5 hrs | 13 | 32% |
| 6-10 hrs | 3 | 7% |
| 11-15 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 16-20 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 21+ hrs | 1 | 3% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |
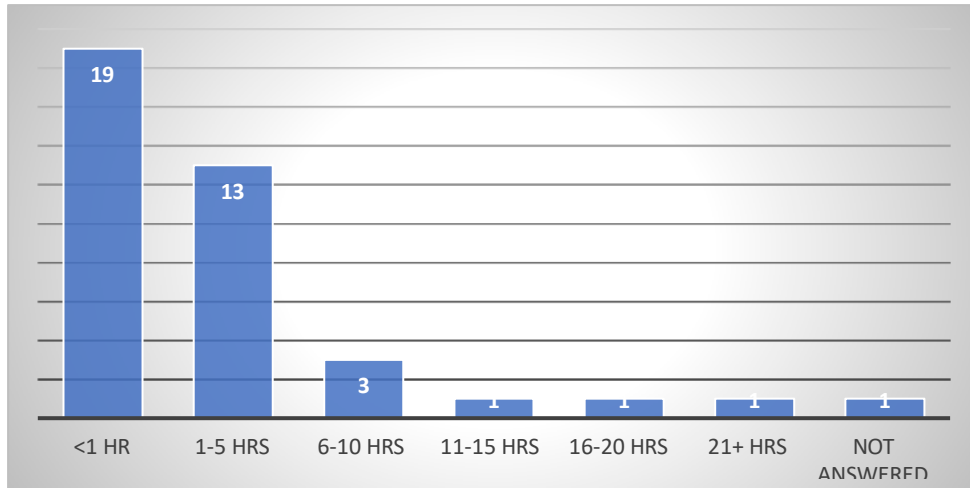


**Facebook**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <1 hr | 8 | 21% |
| 1-5 hrs | 11 | 28% |
| 6-10 hrs | 8 | 21% |
| 11-15 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 16-20 hrs | 1 | 3% |
| 21+ hrs | 4 | 10% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 4% |

## Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
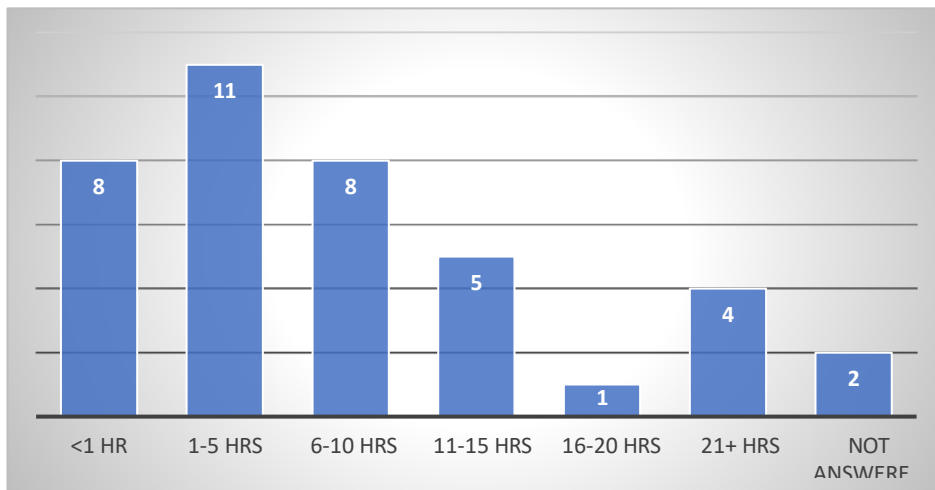
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Twitter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| <1 hr | 19 | 49% |
| 1-5 hrs | 10 | 26% |
| 6-10 hrs | 5 | 13% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 16-20 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 21+ hrs | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 4% |
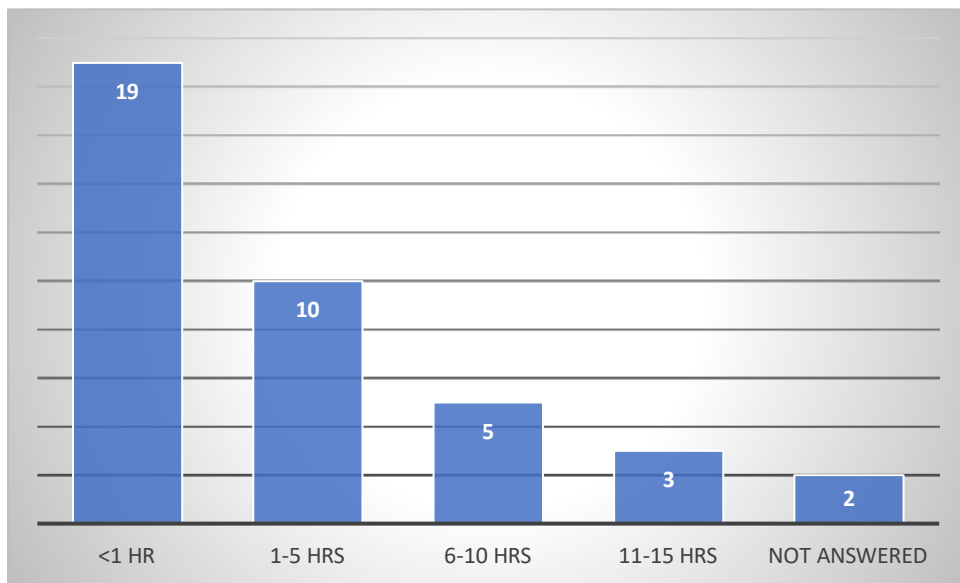
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Twitter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 28 | 72% |
| 1-5 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 6-10 hrs | 2 | 4% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 16-20 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 21+ hrs | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 2 | 8% |
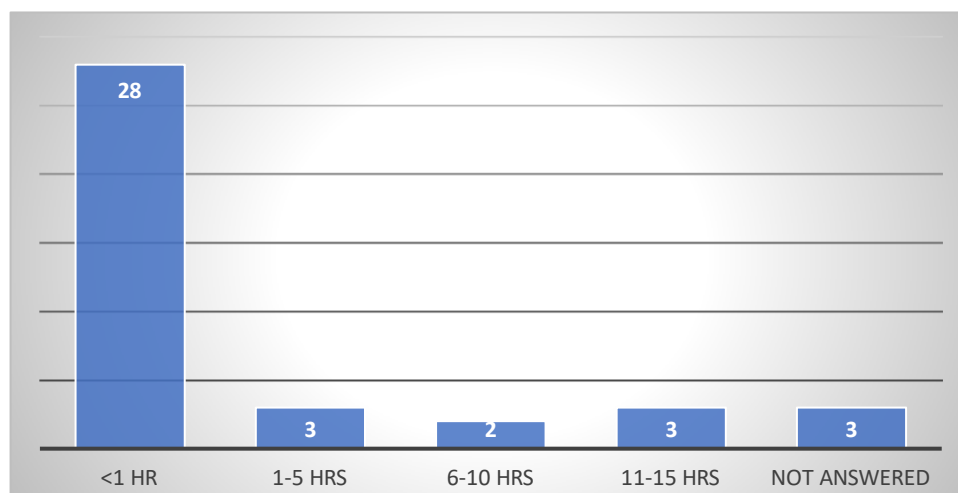


**Newsletter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 15 | 38% |
| 1-5 hrs | 10 | 26% |
| 6-10 hrs | 8 | 21% |
| 11-15 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 16-20 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 21+ hrs | 2 | 4% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



Bar chart showing Councillors Survey 2024 responses:
- <1 HR: 15
- 1-5 HRS: 10
- 6-10 HRS: 8
- 11-15 HRS: 3
- 21+ HRS: 2
- NOT ANSWERED: 1
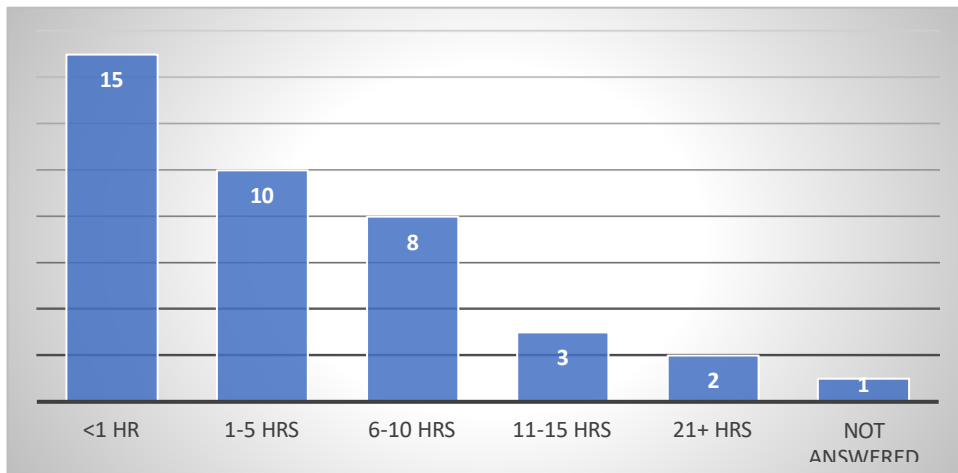
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Walkabout**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------|
| <1 hr | 0 | 0% |
| 1-5 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10 hrs | 18 | 46% |
| 11-15 hrs | 4 | 10% |
| 16-20 hrs | 3 | 8% |
| 21+ hrs | 5 | 13% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
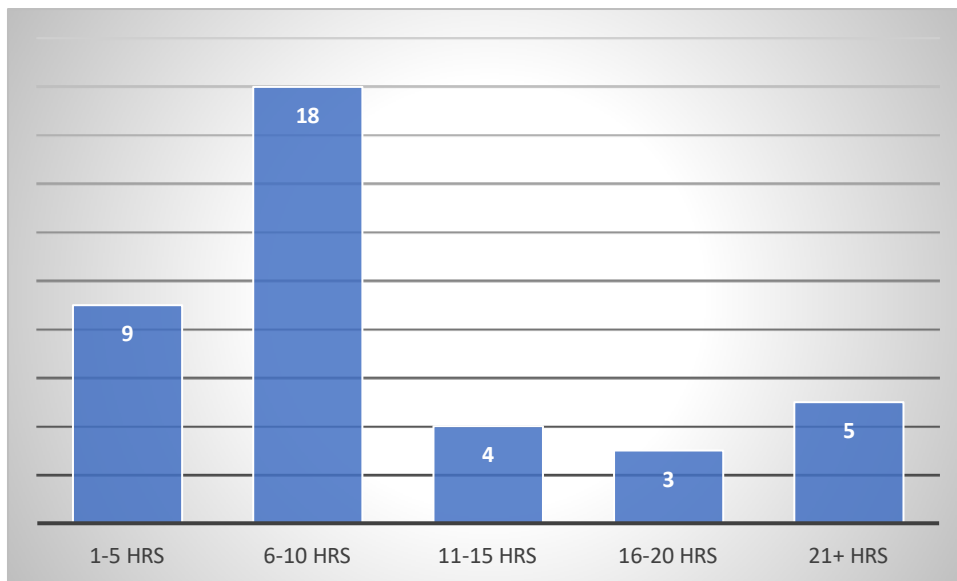


**Poster**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------|
| <1 hr | 26 | 67% |
| 1-5 hrs | 10 | 26% |
| 6-10 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 11-15 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 16-20 hrs | 0 | 0% |
| 21+ hrs | 1 | 3% |
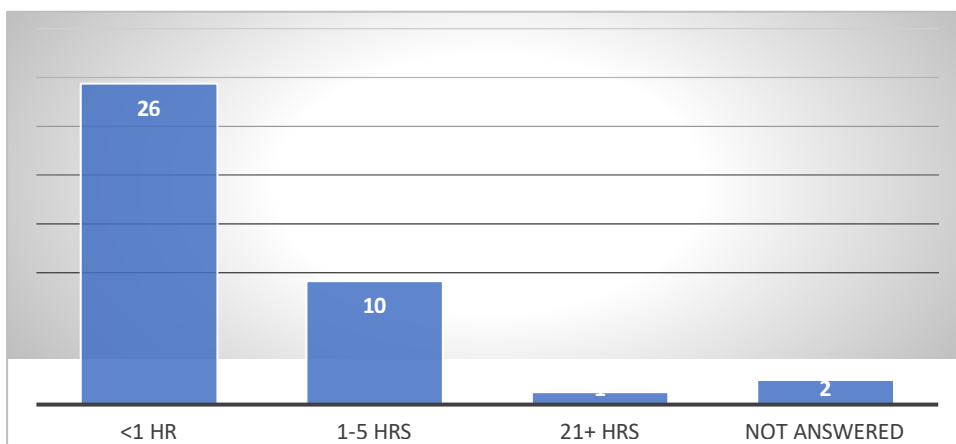
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 2 | 4% |

**Meetings**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| <1 hr | 4 | 11% |
| 1-5 hrs | 9 | 23% |
| 6-10 hrs | 7 | 18% |
| 11-15 hrs | 6 | 15% |
| 16-20 hrs | 6 | 15% |
| 21+ hrs | 6 | 15% |
| Not Answered | 1 | 3% |
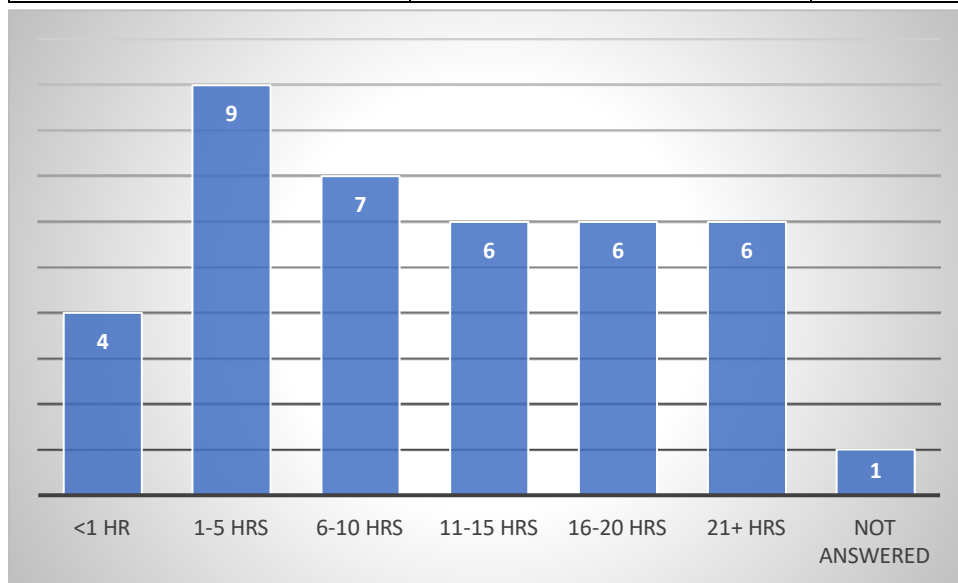
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Please give details of any other engagement methods you are using:**

| On average, how many hours per month do you spend on the following methods to engage with residents and your community? - Please give details of any other engagement methods you are using: |
| --- |
| Being seen in the local community, talking with residents (of any age) |
| Advice surgeries and community events |
| None |
| I live in my ward and frequently have residents knock on the door for a 'chat'. |
| Residents What's App groups. |
| My connection with residents is based on personal service and delivering results, that's why I'm so busy |
| I am constantly out in the ward. Representation matters. |
| My 'day job' is located within my ward, residents often seek me out there for advice and to discuss local issues |
| STATIC SURGERIES/STREET SURGERIES |
| Street surgeries resident meetings |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 13: Have you noticed any significant changes in the amount of time you communicate via these methods in the last 2 years?**

**In Person**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 10 | 26% |
| More Time | 9 | 22% |
| Significantly More Time | 19 | 49% |
| Significantly Less Time | 1 | 3% |
| Less time | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
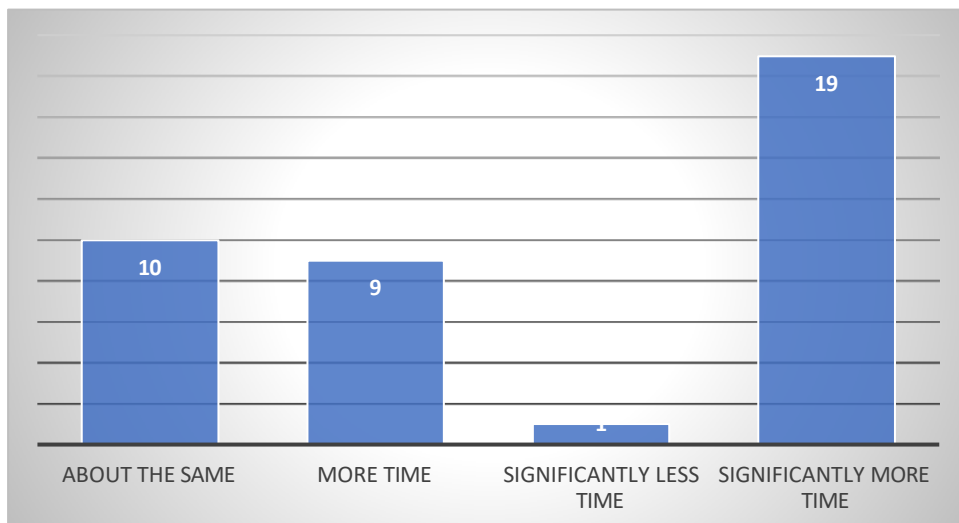


**Phone**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 8 | 21% |
| Less time | 2 | 5% |
| More Time | 10 | 26% |
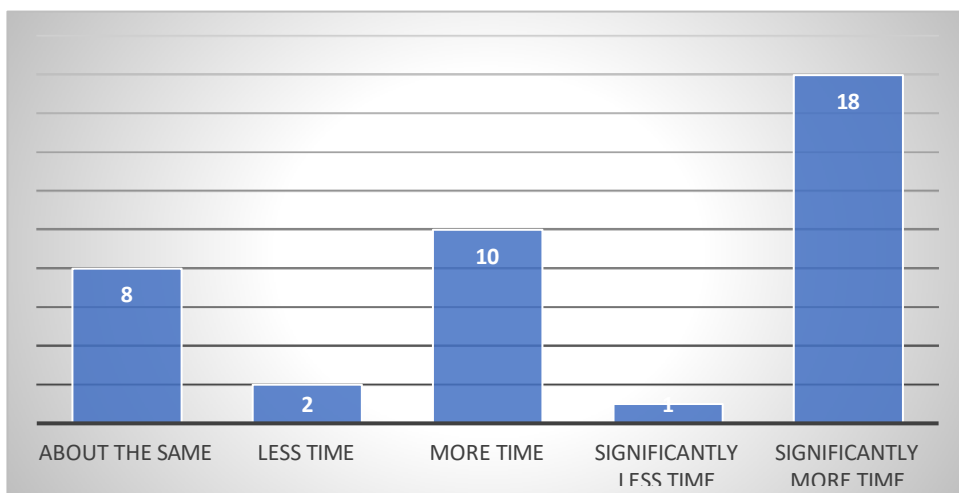
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 18 | 46% |
| Significantly Less Time | 1 | 3% |

**Text**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 16 | 41% |
| Less time | 2 | 5% |
| More Time | 8 | 21% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 11 | 28% |
| Significantly Less Time | 2 | 5% |
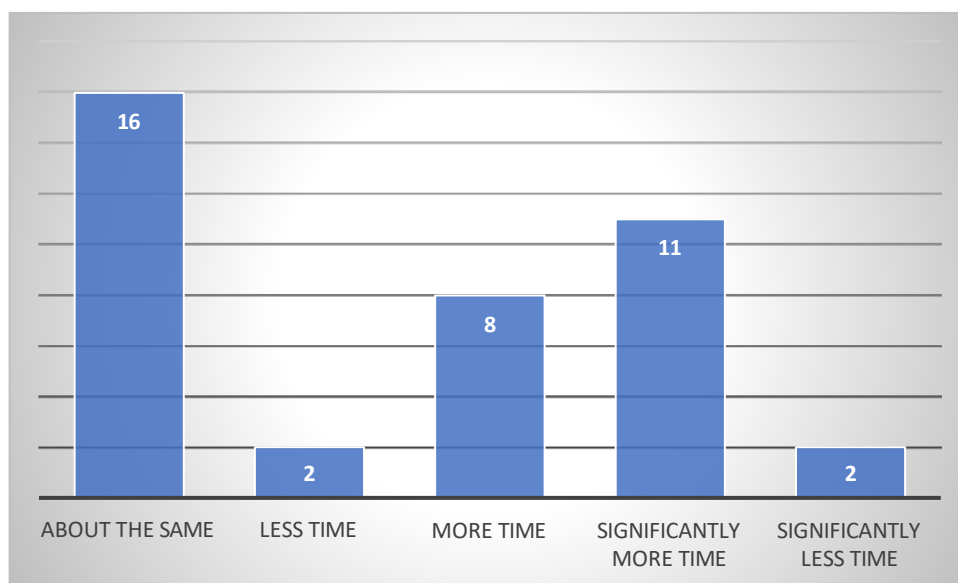


**Email**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 7 | 18% |
| Less time | 1 | 3% |
| More Time | 11 | 28% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 1 | 3% |
| Significantly Less Time | 19 | 49% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



Bar chart showing: ABOUT THE SAME = 7, LESS TIME = 1, MORE TIME = 11, SIGNIFICANTLY LESS TIME = 1, SIGNIFICANTLY MORE TIME = 19
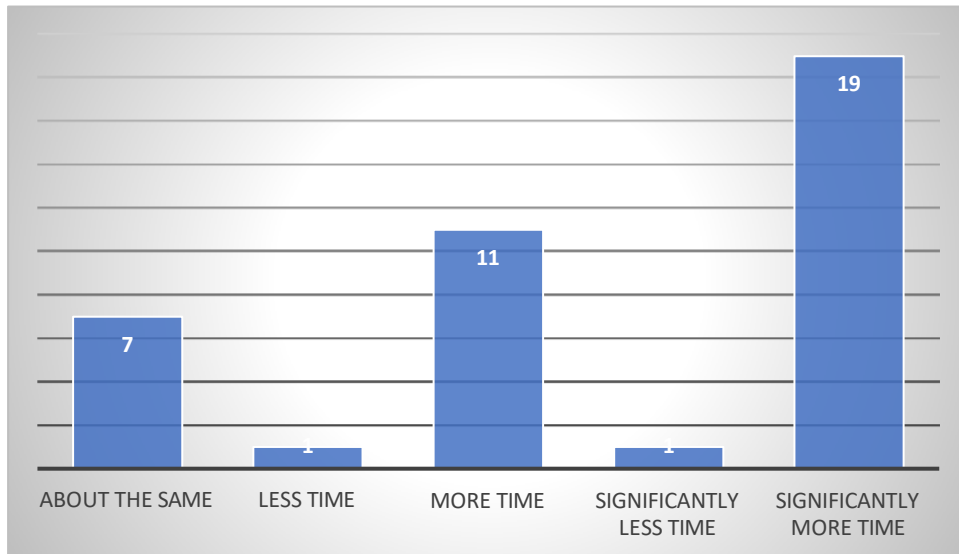
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Newspaper or magazine notice**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 20 | 51% |
| Less time | 8 | 21% |
| More Time | 0 | 0% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 9 | 23% |
| Significantly Less Time | 2 | 5% |
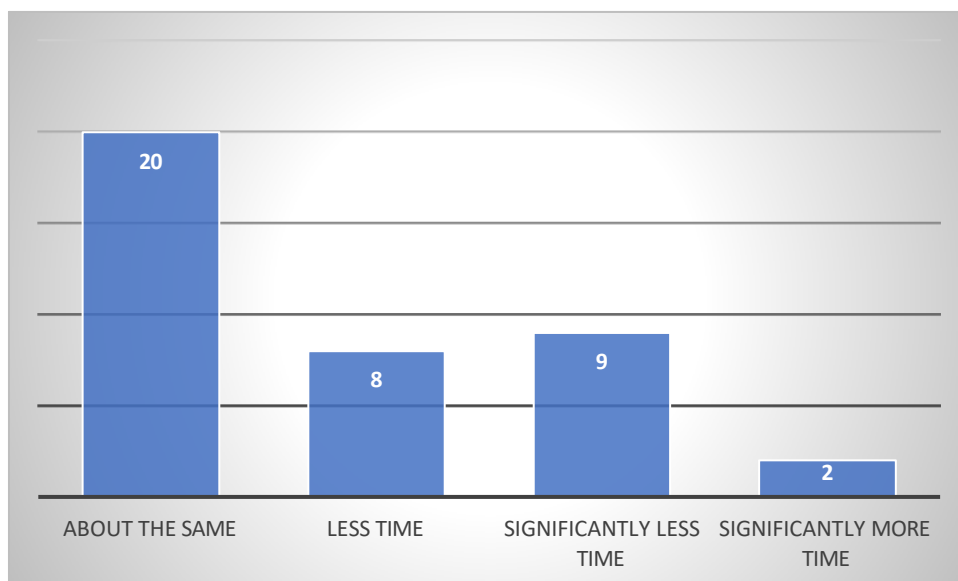


**Letter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 19 | 49% |
| Less time | 7 | 18% |
| More Time | 2 | 4% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 8 | 21% |
| Significantly Less Time | 3 | 8% |

## Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
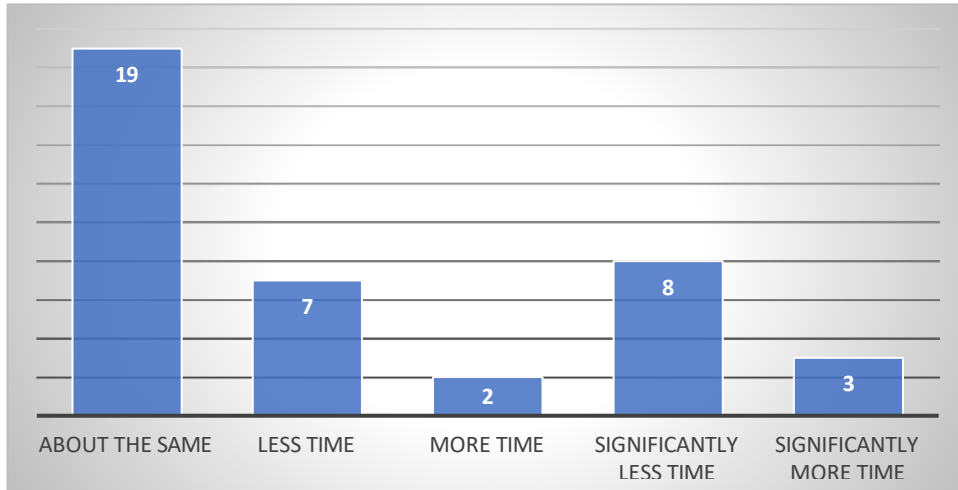
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Street Letter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 22 | 56% |
| Less time | 6 | 15% |
| More Time | 9 | 23% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 1 | 3% |
| Significantly Less Time | 1 | 3% |
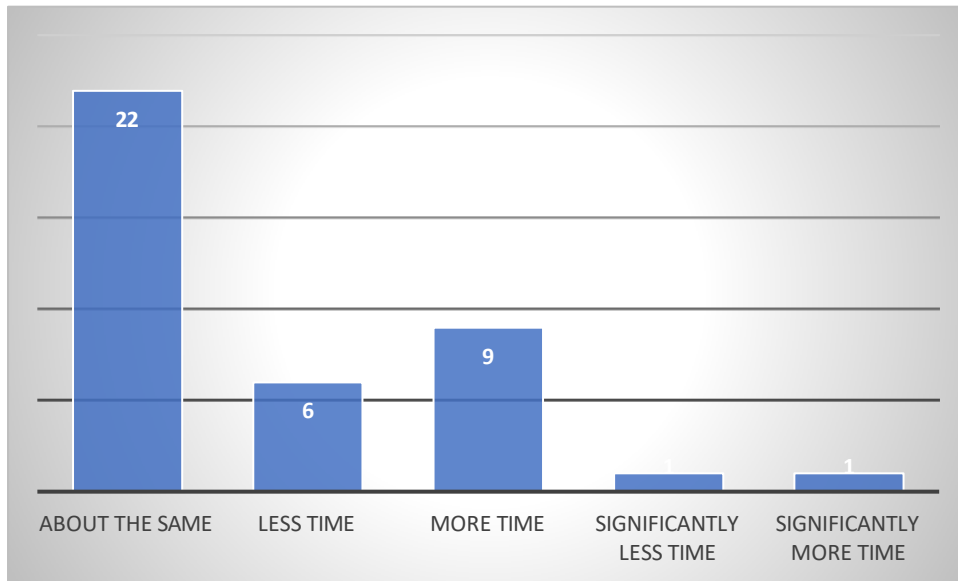


**Twitter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 17 | 44% |
| Less time | 5 | 13% |
| More Time | 8 | 21% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
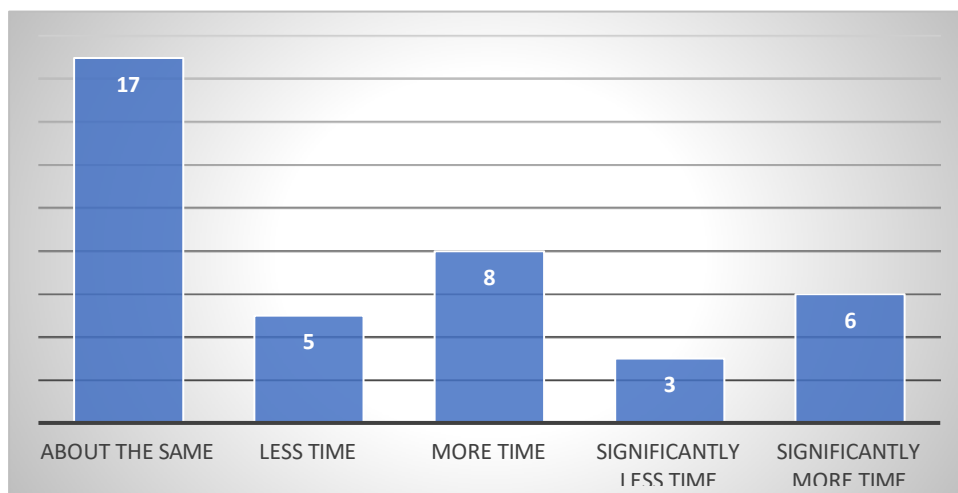
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Significantly More Time | 3 | 8% |
| Significantly Less Time | 6 | 15% |

**Facebook**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 14 | 36% |
| Less time | 2 | 5% |
| More Time | 13 | 33% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 3 | 8% |
| Significantly Less Time | 7 | 18% |
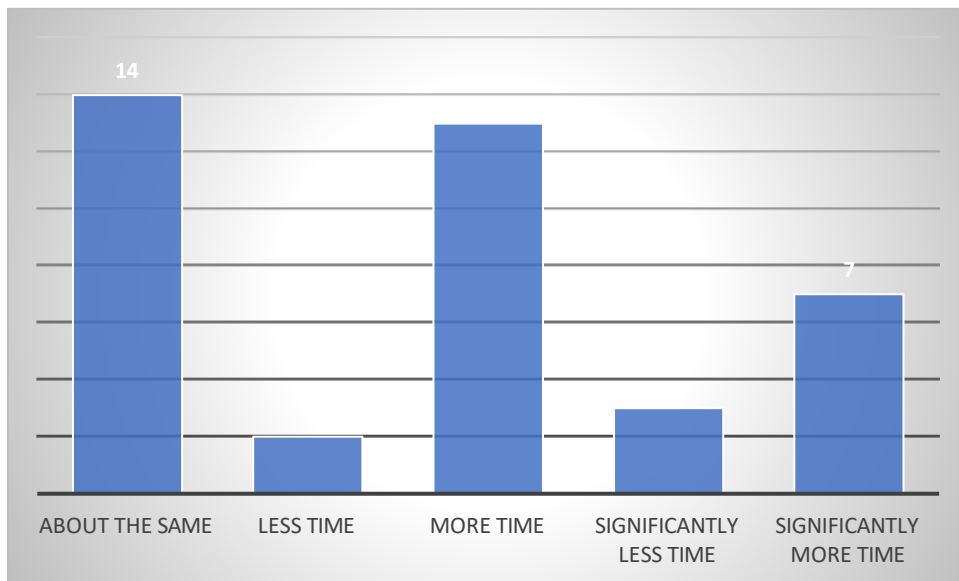


**Other Social Media**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 18 | 46% |
| Less time | 6 | 15% |
| More Time | 3 | 8% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 6 | 15% |
| Significantly Less Time | 6 | 15% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024
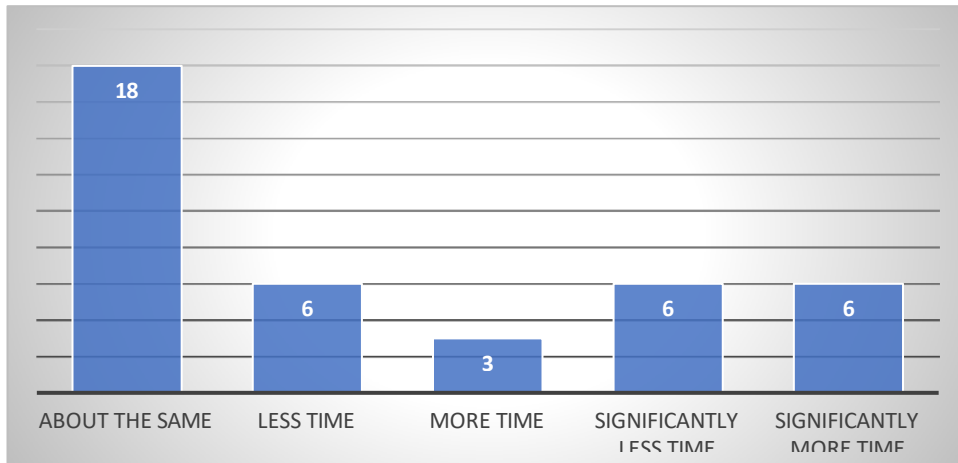
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Newsletter**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 18 | 46% |
| Less time | 2 | 5% |
| More Time | 12 | 31% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 2 | 5% |
| Significantly Less Time | 5 | 13% |
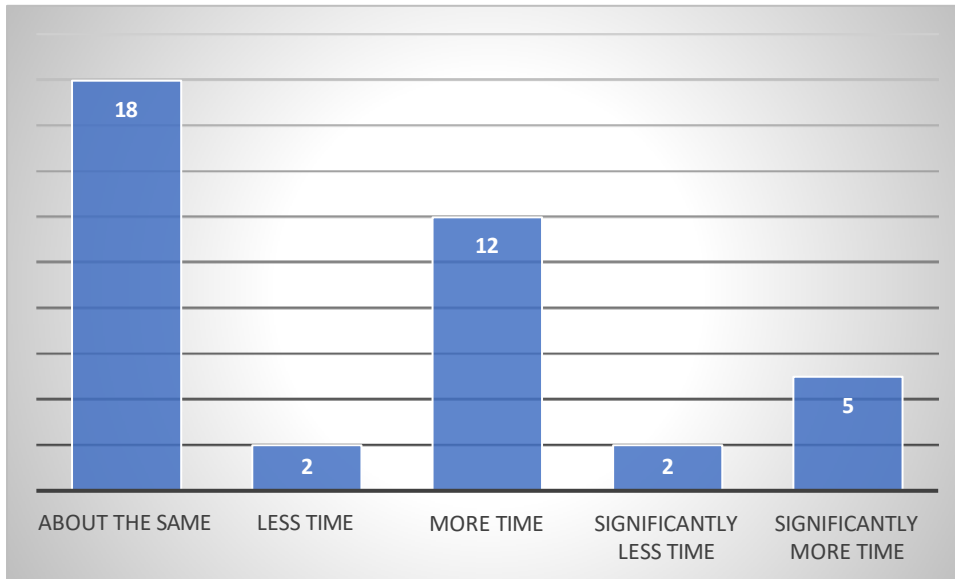


**Walkabout**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 10 | 26% |
| Less time | 1 | 3% |
| More Time | 15 | 38% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
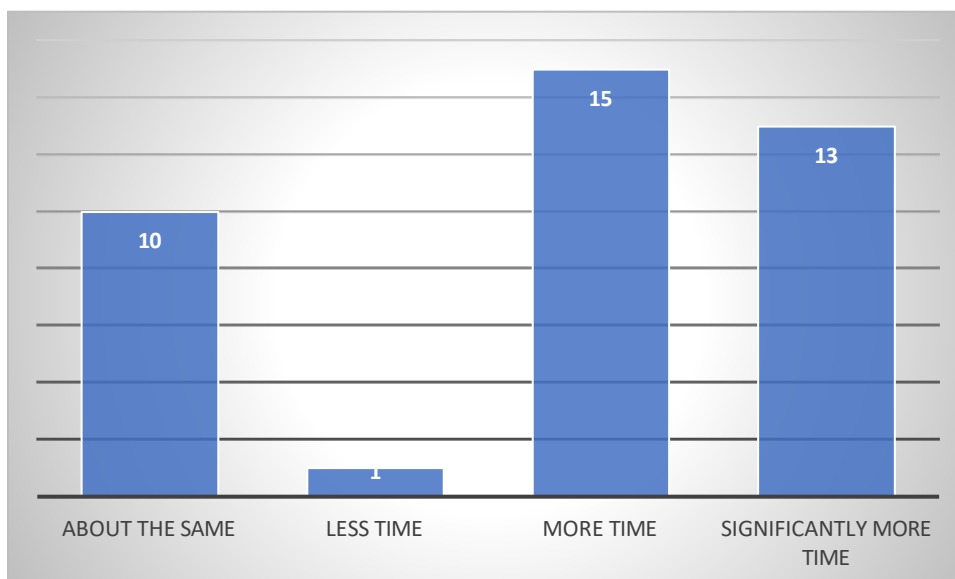
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Significantly More Time | 13 | 33% |
| Significantly Less Time | 0 | 0% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Poster**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 23 | 59% |
| Less time | 1 | 3% |
| More Time | 5 | 13% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 7 | 18% |
| Significantly Less Time | 3 | 8% |
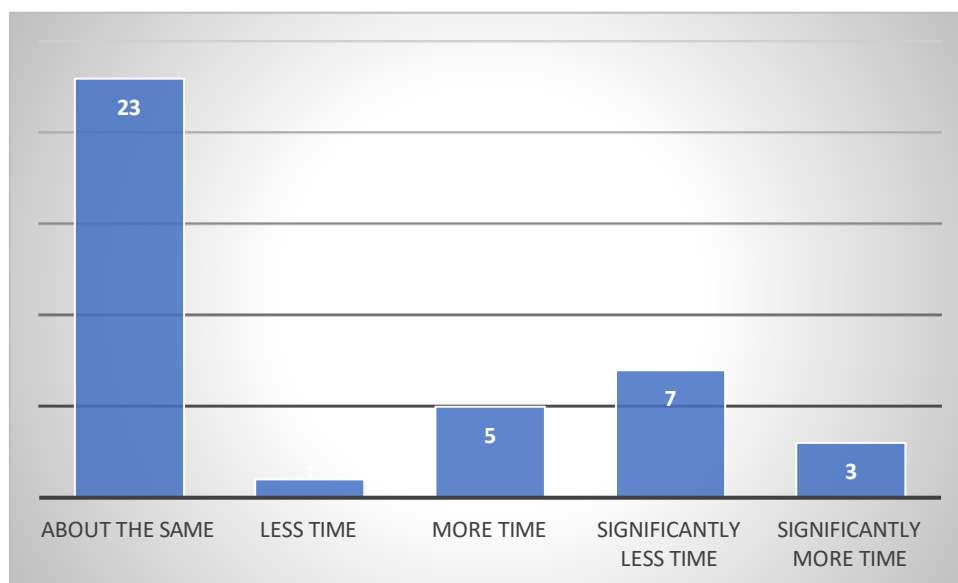


**Meetings**

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| About the Same | 12 | 31% |
| Less time | 4 | 10% |
| More Time | 12 | 31% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |
| Significantly More Time | 11 | 28% |
| Significantly Less Time | 0 | 0% |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024



| ABOUT THE SAME | LESS TIME | MORE TIME | SIGNIFICANTLY MORE TIME |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 12 | 4 | 12 | 11 |
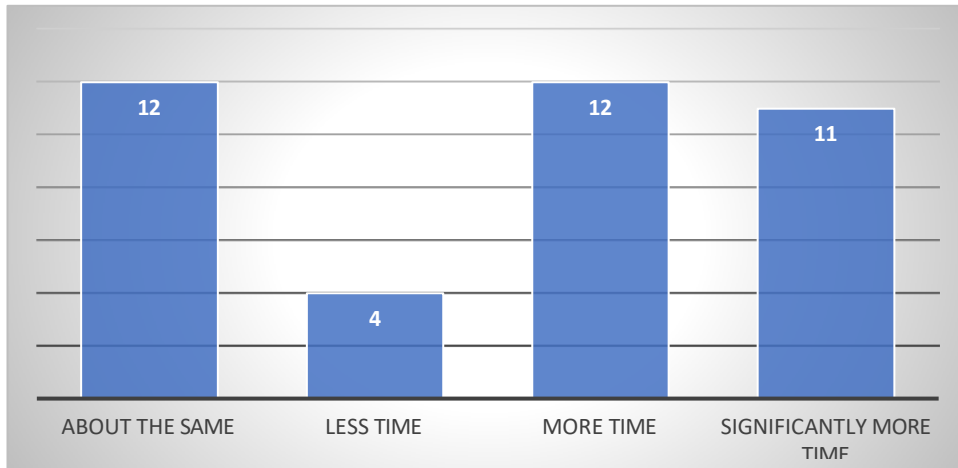
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Have you noticed any significant changes in the amount of time you communicate via these methods in the last 2 years?** - Please give further details about any other methods to assist our understanding:

| Have you noticed any significant changes in the amount of time you communicate via these methods in the last 2 years? - Please give further details about any other methods to assist our understanding: |
|---|
| In person via street surgery style door knocking, also use phone banking through party engagement system |
| I am newly elected member hence I have no comparison |
| NA |
| I have found social media, especially Twitter, to be exceedingly poor as a tool to communicate, leading only to aggressive responses. In person engagement is more effective, so I have deliberately reduced my social media output and increased in person output. |
| My workload has grown significantly |
| None |
| I choose not to use social media; I don't have the time. It doesn't detract from my popularity re-election votes- people know who I am |
| Teaching English to residents |
| This year I have spent less time dealing with individual case work issue as my ward colleague has been focusing on that aspect, this has freed up time to focus on strategic ward problems and council functions |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 14:**

| How has social media, and instant communications such as email, impacted on how you undertake your role and on your life outside of the Council? |
|---|
| Massive impact as it takes away allot of family time |
| Its become part of life. |
| Face to face surgery contact has decreased, although I have replaced with more door knocking street surgeries that has significantly increased my contact rate with residents. |
| Most of my free time is taken up by councillor duties |
| Seen I was elected onto the council, this has been a significant increase in the use of ICT |
| more impact on time pressure but positive way of communication |
| Social media negatively. It is aggressive and I am concerned about it, especially over the gaza crisis, with the anger directed at councillors and especially as my address (and therefore my child's address) has to be published in the register of interest. Email use is high, it seems to be the preferred method of communication for the residents, so I check them on my lunch break and after work regularly. |
| You feel like the role is 24/7, 365 days a year |
| I get far more emails. I use FB mainly to advertise events and give useful info. |
| N.A |
| I can be contacted at any time of the day or day of the week |
| Being a councillor is now a 24 hour job with a huge growth in online communications and residents often expecting quick replies. I am very active on social media and accessible. This contributes to my huge casework of up to 1000 enquiries a year before undertaking any other work. I receive hundreds of emails a week and the volume is vast. |
| There is never an evening/day off. |
| Yes |
| There is an expectation that councillors are available to respond instantly 24/7 which means often responding to messages and enquiries during time spent with family/friends. |
| Increase in time and planning. And responses required. Need to practice and learn. |
| Some weeks I feel I can't catch my breath with the sheer amount of casework that can come in a one go. |
| It often impacts on your private and family life. Whereas in the past people may be reluctant to phone if it was inconvenient, now they feel happy to fire off an email or social media post at any time of the night or day. You can try to be discerning, but I find I worry I may miss a constituent in need of urgent help or advice. |
| Most enquiries are through my emails, nothing from social media so far |
| Impacted greatly - if a notification is received i always take time to read it instantly as it could be a person who requires urgent help.  Urgent help to me is not just about a non-flushing loo, it is about the mom who has run out of nappies, the family who need food for the next day - it is therefore not an option not to check on any notification. |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| |
|---|
| They have made me more accessible to residents and able to communicate to them, but also more open to abuse. |
| it has made us more accessible to residents but it has also made us more vulnerable to abuse as well. |
| We are easily accessible 24/7. |
| It takes up a lot of time    I am not used to technolog. |
| Constant communication and expectation of instant response |
| Difficult to distinguish at times, life inside and outside the Council |
| Additional communication which is great but can be open to trolls |
| Constituents' expectations increased, they demand instantaneous response. Therefore, this has put pressure on personal time spent outside of council duties. It has become of paramount importance respond to queries even in unsociable hours. |
| None |
| More visible |
| Social media is very helpful. But a diverse ward as mine is very much tactile. Requiring a visible Councillor |
| Community groups on facebook are a great place to engage the community, however I made the decision not to have a personal councillor page to avoid online abuse and so encourage people to call or email me |
| Yes |
| YO HAVE TO CONSTANTLY BE ON TOP OF YOUR EMAILS & AS THERE IS SUCH A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF EMAIL TRAFFIC, IT CAN BE VERY STRESSFUL; SOCIAL MEDIA HAS LED TO 'TROLLING' AND I HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF THIS, AS WELL AS SPURIOUS FOI REQUESTS LEADING TO LIBELLOUS MISINFORMATION BEING PUT INTO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN WHICH HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT ON MY MENTAL HEALTH. |
| increased exposure, supporting residents changing lives in some cases, supported quicker response time |
| We can be contacted more easily we get a clear outline of the issue |
| As a councillor, this has been useful for getting additional context such as images and videos for issues the constituents raise. However, as a result, this means that I often get phone calls or cases which require rapid attention during personal occasions in my life outside of the council, etc. |
| Social media can be useful to disseminate information quickly, however instant communication often means that resident feel that they can contact you at unsociable hours and expect a quick response. I've found it harder to protect tie for my family. Social media also makes i much easier for people to spread misinformation about you, your family or Party. Anonymous accounts (particularly in X) don't just carry acceptable criticism but can be very insulting or hurtful. |
| Good & bad depending on issue |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 15: From your experience, do you think the balance of communication methods you are using is effective?**
From your experience, do you think the balance of communication methods you are using is effective?

| Option | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Don't Know | 3 | 8% |
| No | 1 | 2% |
| Yes | 35 | 90% |
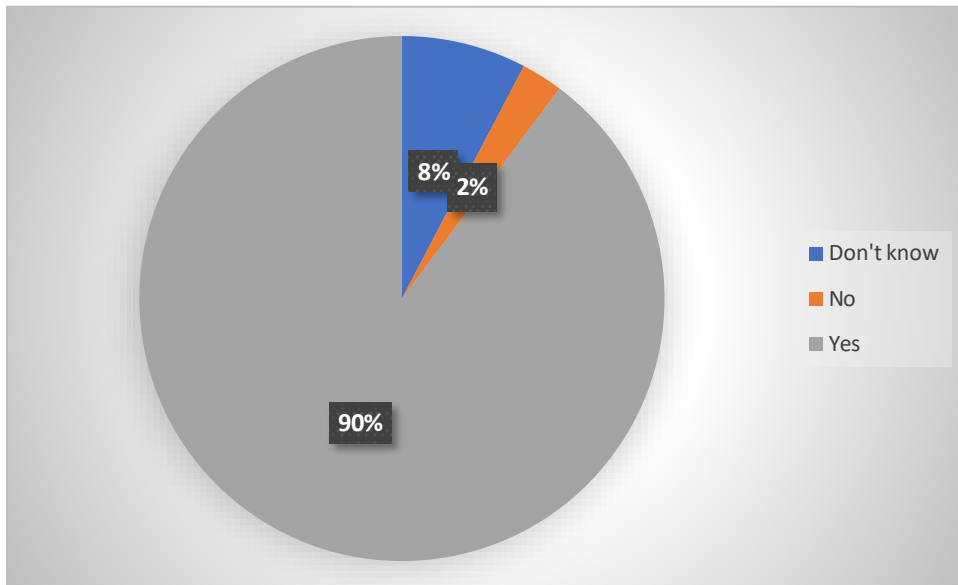
# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

**Question 16: In relation to the Council's submission on council size, are there any other comments you'd like to make or issues you'd like to raise based on your experience as an Elected Member?**

| In relation to the Council's submission on council size, are there any other comments you'd like to make or issues you'd like to raise based on your experience as an Elected Member? |
|---|
| Councillors need to start getting active as allot of pressure on me |
| The ward requires 3 councillors due to the workload- if the number is reduces i would consider stepping down. |
| Casework levels have significantly increased since the pandemic and the increased use of email and social media means that the role is know 24/7 and has moved away from fixed surgery meetings |
| Not sure what this means |
| The has been a significant increase in the population, which is covered by the Local Authority since I was originally elected onto the council |
| in my ward i rely on my 2 ward cllrs due to the volume of commitments / meetings i participate in, |
| First, we have a highly deprived Borough. This means we have more casework, but we also need to spend time digging it up as residents are less likely to come to us. This increases our workload. We also have a very diverse Borough in terms of the Towns, we are the Misc. drawer of the West Midlands. It is vital we keep sub-Borough structures to recognise the different communities we serve. It is also important to keep three members per ward, in case of sickness or other absence. |
| I believe it is important to keep three members per ward in case somebody is unwell, away, or has a conflict of interest. |
| At any one time a colleague can be unwell, on annual leave or have a conflict of interest. So we do really need three cllrs per ward to enable us to keep our standards high. |
| I think that the amount of members could be reduced by a third. Single member wards |
| We need a broad ethnic mix of councillors to reflect the diversity of the population. |
| We need to maintain three member wards and the current number of councillors. The amount of casework, meetings and work I am doing every year is growing and makes this a full-time job. It would be completely unmanageable to have fewer ward colleagues or a larger ward to manage in an area like mine. I represent an area with a high level of deprivation and poverty which generates up to 1000 enquiries a year. I also deal with many other enquiries that I have to signpost to others or the local MP. The area I represent is also distinct with a strong focus on the town itself, West Bromwich. Moreover, the work I do chairing a scrutiny committee, and the Council's overall scrutiny function, is time consuming. This involves meeting members, cabinet members, directors and outside auditors. Increasingly, the combined authority takes up a large proportion of my time with usually two meetings a month and large amounts of papers to read. |

## Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

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| Maintaining the structure and identity of its six distinct Towns is crucial for the governance structure of Sandwell. Residents feel a strong sense of attachement and pride to their town.  This must be reflected in the boundaries of the wards of each town.  As with neighbouring Dudley, Sandwell struggles with widespread deprivation, resulting in a significant workload for councillors. Three councillors per ward allows this burden to be shared and enables better represention of - and engagement with - the residents.  Sandwell is also very diverse. Therefore effective representation of its residents requires diversity in the councillors.  This can only be achieved when there are sufficent number of councillors across all wards of all the towns.  Diversity in the makeup of the various commitees and boards is also vital.  Again, this can only be achieved when there are sufficent number of councillors from which to form representative groups. Three member wards allow for cover and contingency and also enable instititional knowledge to be more easily maintained across the Council. |
| Sandwell is very deprived borough and residents needs lots of councillor contact |
| The time required to adequately fulfil duties should not be underestimated. On top of reducing my work hours by 15 hours a week and regularly doing council activities on evenings and weekends, as a cabinet member, I also had to use in the region of 20 annual leave days last year to attend additional council meetings/engagements. |
| Committed to flexible working at full time job due to demands of councillor responsibility |
| Given the strain on council resources which have got worse year upon year i would be reluctant to see a change in the ratio of members to constituents. It is unreasonable to expect members who work in full-time jobs to take on an increased burden of meeting commitments and providing accessible representation. |
| I feel I've so far been able to handle the workload and am lucky with the help from officers. Tends to be workload increases when I go door knocking asking people for any help. Reaching it out, residents so far tend to go to my other fellow councillors |
| It is difficult to define exactly how busy it is being a councillor  - the expectations and reliance on the council since the cost of living is a strain and can be difficult to manage the work-load as well as coping mentally with the desperation that is seen.  I would not be able to manage in my ward with the demands without the support of my two ward colleagues.  I also live in my ward so i frequently have people knocking on the door or a note through the letter box.  I also believe that we have balanced gender and diverse wards where members of the public can relate to at least one of us.  Our nearest neighbour Dudley and based in the Black Country has recently undergone a review and has retained 24 wards and 72 council seats to ensure that the community is well represented - i believe that we as boroughs are not dissimilar but Sandwell has a larger and growing population and also has a greater  proportion of deprivation which can be difficult to manage. The casework has grown since the cost of living crisis began and reliance on our councillors is significant.  Blackheath has recently been chopped up in the parliamentary review and Rowley Regis removed - residents are proud of their culture, heritage and have a sense of belonging and have not warmed to this - so another review of Blackheath would not go well with the residents. |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

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|---|
| Scrutiny is a vital part of a council function and its important that there are is a diverse amount of voices on that theme. |
| Sandwell, like Dudley, is a borough of high deprivation and this means a higher level of casework which three councillors per ward ensures that the needs of the residents are met. With meeting increasing it ensures that someone is always available to assist it also ensures that councillors can have some me time for holidays and family, unlike MP's we have no staff to research or answer complaints we have to do it alone. |
| Sandwell is one of the most deprived areas in the country. Residents require a significant amount of help and support. Having 3 councillors per ward and 24 wards spreads this work load. Sandwell is very diverse. We need councillors who represent this diversity. To have effective scrutiny we need a broad range of voices. Sandwell is six towns This is important to retain. Finally having 3 councillors per ward means there is cover if unwell, away, conflict of interest issues or unable to do a piece of casework. |
| We need 3 councillors per ward  So we can take our holidays off            Or sickness cover also for safe when going home |
| The more councillors the better for the community as you can be overwhelmed but what is expected |
| My ward is one of the most 'deprived' wards in Sandwell and indeed the Country. It is a diverse neighbourhood with multiple challenges. Casework levels are high and people depend on their Councillors to be there to fight their corner. That requires me to work 7 days a week at times. We need Councillors who offer a personalised service to residents and are committed to making the area an indeed area better. Each town in Sandwell is different and distinct. |
| I believe that it works well as it is. There is depredation and this equates to more casework. Scrutiny is vital to the improvement of any council, the more diverse voices the better. Sandwell is made up of 6 towns, each uniquely different needing slightly different decisions. |
| Sandwell is a borough with a lot of deprivation, (12th) within the 10% most deprived local authority areas in the country. This means there is more casework for councillors compared to other local authorities. at least 50% of the residents do not have the skills or confidence in tackling their own issues or access services they need.  Having more councillors means we can spread the workload more and get more done for the residents. Our diverse Councillors are able to relate to residents issues, cultural/linguistic barriers and be their voice to address multiple issues faced by the residents. We have a very diverse Borough, which means we have a lot of communities with different cultures. It is important for our communities to be represented by a similarly diverse group of councillors, which means we need a bigger pool of them. Also, having more Councillors mean we are able to represent our communities in different forums within and outside Council by sharing our workload effectively. We have a lot of new migrants in the borough who are not familiar with local services and need more intensive support to fulfil their potential or make positive contribution to the local economy. Councillors are well positioned to enable them to help integrate into their local communities. |
| Sandwell is poor borough |
| Council needs more councillors as demand in area is high |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

| |
|---|
| Representation matters. Sandwell Council has at present 5 Black ( African/Caribbean) . Councillor before I became a councillor there was none . Representation does matter and with this in mind there are many people out of my ward who will make contact with me and I have to refer them to their Councillors in other areas.. |
| A reduction in ward members would greatly impact our ability to focus on all areas of council business, unless I were to become unemployed, this would have a serious financial impact on my family. Sandwell as a borough is diverse, it has very distinct towns with their own local culture, no two towns are the same, any changes that impacted on the town structure would have a detrimental effect of the residents in each area. |
| It is important that we have diversity within our ward and Sandwell Council. As a Councillor for Smethwick Ward, I Represent different faith groups ie Sikhs, and Muslims. I need to understand, and speak their language when they have concerns with the ward. |
| I THINK TO DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF MEMBERS PER WARD WILL INSTANTLY PUT EXTRA BURDEN ON THE REDUCED NUMBER OF ELECTED MEMBERS CONCERNED. TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF MEMBERS ACROSS THE BOARD WOULD ALSO MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO FILL THE EXTENSIVE AMOUNT OF RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS WITHIN THE COUNCIL (PARTICULARLY THE QUASI-JUDICIAL COMMITTEES AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF SCRUTINY BOARDS).ALSO REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES (SUCH AS WMCA & ITS NUMEROUS BOARDS; ABCA; TfWM; FIRE AUTHORITY; POLICE & CRIME PANEL ETC.) WOULD BE IMPACTED CONSIDERABLY. BOTH EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS & LGA PEER REVIEWS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCRUTINY IN SANDWELL, AS WELL AS THE NEED FOR SANDWELL MEMBERS TO HAVE MORE REGIONAL VISIBILITY, IN TERMS OF ATTENDANCE AT KEY DECISION-MAKING BOARDS ETC. TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF MEMBERS WOULD REDUCE THE COUNCIL'S EFFICACY IN THESE AREAS, AND WOULD DIRECTLY IMPACT ON THE REAL IMPROVEMENTS ACHIEVED IN THESE AREAS OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO, WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS THE COMMISSIONERS' VIEW ON THE COUNCIL COMING OUT OF INTERVENTION. |
| My opinion on the decrease of required Members per ward is that this would most definitely add extra pressures to provide a quality of service to residents and I believe most definitely without doubt would increase the work load and pressures for reduced members. Further concerns around a reduction in members would also make it rather challenging to fill substantial amount of responsible positions within the council, especially the important role of scrutiny boards also the representation of external bodies would be at risk of detrimental impact. It feel it would also raise concerns in the area of key decision making boards. To reduce the members I believe it would directly impact and reduce the councils efficacy in key areas which would impact on the improvements achieved over the past year or so, which have contributed towards the commissioner views on the council's progression of coming out of intervention. |
| Continue  yearly elections. 3 Cllrs in each ward up for election each year |

# Appendix 1 – Councillors Survey 2024

Given Sandwell is a deprived area, especially in certain wards, it results in there being more issues to tackle, and some wards require additional support as a result of the higher poverty and unemployment rates in comparison to Dudley. If the council size was to reduce, this would put an increased pressure on councillors who are already doing their best to make their area a better place. This would make things more difficult for councillors and reduce the number of issues being resolved. It would also increase the risk of burnout, given with three councillors per ward, it means on occasions when one of the councillors is not available due to ill health, etc, there are at least two other councillors available to cover the third councillors work. If there were only two councillors and one councillor was not available due to ill health, etc, this would put all of the burden on a single person, which is not sustainable at any capacity. A reduction in the council would also mean there is less representation in what can be described as a very diverse community, which is especially important in being representative when there are council decisions being made and on scrutiny panels, ensuring all voices of the community are heard. For example, from my experience on scrutiny boards I have witnessed how diversity allows for wider perspectives during scrutiny meetings, resulting in widening inclusion. As a woman from a minority ethnic background, I have also seen the impact this representation has on the community, with more women from a minority ethnic background reaching out to myself and finding it easier to bring up the issues they are facing. Moreover, if there were only two councillors in a ward, this would reduce the level of representation for that ward. It's also important to understand that every town is different, with each community having different levels of diversity resulting in different types of culture representative of the community. As a result, it is necessary for each town having the structure and ability to make some local decision themselves, in understanding of their culture.

I feel the Council should retain 72 members. Being a local councillor is a part time job, it can often feel much more than that. I work full time for the NHS, I fear that a reduction in the numbers of members would make the workload too big for any working age person in full time employment to consider being a Councillor. It is also important to consider that, given the levels of deprivation in Sandwell, councillors here will likely spend more time dealing with casework than the average councillor in England. Finally, Sandwell is a borough of six distinct towns, each with their own identities and priorities, a reduction in councillors risks diluting the voice of the towns within the Council.

Continue with 3 Cllrs to cover each other, diverse to service community & gender balance