

Council Size Submission Waverley Borough Council

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How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal.
2. The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses are should unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

About You

3. The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, or an individual.

This is the Council's official submission. It has been prepared with the assistance of a cross-party Working Group of Councillors supported by officers. The full Council approved this submission on 25 February 2021.

~~Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)~~

- ~~4. Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*~~

Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:
 - Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraint for example that may affect the review?
 - Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
 - Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transitional populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
 - Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

PROFILE OF WAVERLEY BOROUGH

Waverley Borough has a population of 126,137 and is located in the south west corner of Surrey. It is the largest of the Surrey districts at around 345 sq km (133 sq miles) and is predominantly rural. The Borough contains four principal urban settlements of varying size, each with its own distinctive character and strong local identity. About 70% of the population lives within one of the four main centres. Waverley has a large number of villages of varying size and character, and the borough is fully parished with 21 separate parish councils.

The distinctive natural environment in Waverley is generally of a very high quality. Approximately 92% of the Borough is rural; 61% (21,137 hectares) lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and 31% (10,653 hectares) is designated as Countryside Beyond the Green Belt. 77% of the Borough's countryside is also designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and/or Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The high level of constraint in planning terms results in high land values and resilient house prices, cushioned from recessionary effects, and as a consequence there are high levels of planning appeals.

Waverley has an ageing population, with a relatively high proportion of people above retirement age. In 2019, 22.3% of Waverley's population was over 65, compared with the national figure of 18.5%. A significant percentage increase is forecast in the number of people over 65 and over 85 and could mean that potentially by 2032, 27% of Waverley's population will be over 65, and 6% over 85. Whilst 65% of Waverley's population are employed in managerial, professional or technical occupations compared to 49% nationally only 58% of population is of working age which is the lowest of the Surrey districts.

Some 96% of the Borough is white. There is a relatively large and long-standing Gypsy and Traveller community in Waverley. Waverley is generally an affluent place with high employment; 83% of the 16-64 age group are economically active. However, there are areas within the Borough that are relatively deprived. There are issues about access to services, particularly for those living in the more remote parts of the Borough and those without access to a car. Waverley has retained its housing stock and currently has 4,750 council properties.

The main road connections in Waverley are north-south, with relatively poor connections east-west. There are no motorways within the Borough and the only national trunk road is the section of the A3 between Grayshott and Milford which includes the Hindhead Tunnel. Much of Waverley's road network is rural and narrow. Bus services are relatively frequent within the main urban areas, but services are more patchy and infrequent in rural areas. Services generally are reduced at evenings and weekends. In terms of rail links, Farnham is on the London to Alton line; with Farncombe, Godalming, Milford, Witley and Haslemere all on the London to Portsmouth line. Cranleigh does not have a rail link and there are no direct east-west rail links in the Borough.

The Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1 (2018) supports the delivery of at least 11,210 additional homes in Waverley in the period 2013 to 2032 (an average of 590 homes a year). In determining the amount of housing proposed at each settlement, account has been taken of the Waverley Settlement Hierarchy. Most new development is directed to the main settlements of Farnham (including Badshot Lea), Godalming, Haslemere, and Cranleigh. Moderate levels of development are promoted in larger villages (Bramley, Chiddingfold, Elstead, Milford, and Witley), with more limited growth in/around other villages (Alfold, Churt, Dunsfold, Ewhurst, Frensham, Tilford, Shamley Green, Blackheath and Wonersh). Dunsfold Aerodrome has been identified as a suitable brownfield site for a mixed use Garden Village development of 2,600 dwellings. (see LPP1 2018,

Policies ALH1, SS7). In the summer of 2020, Surrey County Council launched a bid for a single county-unitary council, which was declined (for now) by the Government. The Leaders of the Surrey district and borough councils in the meantime commissioned KPMG to work up potential alternative unitary models. Once the Government declined the SCC bid (for now), the district/borough project's scope shifted slightly to emphasise options for collaboration. The collaborative discussions this year and the increasing pressure of imminent financial challenges has prompted Waverley and Guildford Councils' Leaders and Deputy Leaders to discuss informally whether and how the two councils could collaborate. Because of geography, local economy and other reasons, the two boroughs could have an alignment that is immediately obvious for Waverley. A bilateral partnership does not exclude further partners in future, should they be willing and should a business case make sense.

Council Size

6. The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

7. Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified.

Topic									
Governance Model	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other?</i> ➤ <i>The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require?</i> ➤ <i>If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you have represents is most appropriate for the authority.</i> 							
	Analysis	<p>The Council operates a Strong Leader/Executive model of governance. It is not envisaged that there will be a change from the Strong Leader/Executive model of governance in the near future.</p> <p>The May 2019 Local Borough Elections returned a No Overall Control Council after 12 years of a large Conservative majority.</p> <p>The political proportionality on the Council is currently:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Conservative</td> <td style="text-align: right;">22 (38.60%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Farnham Residents</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15 (26.32%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liberal Democrat</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15 (26.32%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2 (3.51%)</td> </tr> </table>	Conservative	22 (38.60%)	Farnham Residents	15 (26.32%)	Liberal Democrat	15 (26.32%)	Green
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		<p>Labour 2 (3.51%) Independent 1 (1.74%) 57</p> <p>In May 2019, an Executive was established comprising representatives of the four smaller Groups, with the Conservatives becoming the Principal Opposition Group.</p> <p>In the autumn of 2019 a cross-party Governance Review Working Group of Councillors explored alternative governance models, particularly in relation to how non-Executive councillors are engaged in policy development. The Working Group concluded that there were no benefits to be gained from changing to a Committee System that could not be achieved within the Strong Leader/Executive model by working with the Overview & Scrutiny function to enable Non-Executive councillors to participate fully in policy development.</p>
Portfolios	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Executive is made up of a Strong Leader, and nine Executive members. The Executive has comprised of 8-10 Members since May 2007. None of the positions are full-time, and in order to spread the work load it is envisaged that an Executive of 8-10 members will be required into the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The Executive carries out all of the local authority's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the authority. Some of these decisions / plans / policies / strategies require the approval of Full Council e.g. Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Local Plan.</p> <p>The Executive operates a model of collective decision-making, and there is no delegation to individual Portfolio Holders. The Executive has eleven scheduled meetings each year, with ad hoc Extraordinary meetings scheduled as required.</p>
Delegated Responsibilities	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>There is a scheme of delegation for senior officers. Matters which are the responsibility of the Executive are delegated to officers by the Leader and non-executive functions are delegated by the Full Council.</p>

		The current Scheme of Delegation was adopted in April 2017 and is based on an exceptions approach, with officers authorised to take all actions relating to a function with the exception of certain decisions that are reserved to a specific Committee or the Council.
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Accountability

8. Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role.

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
Analysis	<p>The O&S committees were last reviewed in 2015/16, and a new structure was introduced with effect from May 2017, comprising four committees aligned to the corporate priorities current at the time (Value for Money and Customer Service; Housing; Environment; and Community Wellbeing). Each O&S committee has nine non-Executive Members. The previous arrangement was two O&S committees of 19 members each, so the current maintains the high level of non-Executive councillor involvement in scrutiny.</p> <p>O&S committees are chaired by a member of the Principal Opposition Group (subject to the POG comprising a minimum of 6 members, or 10% of the council). Each committee meets at least five times a year, with the ability to schedule additional meetings as required (eg to call-in an Executive decision). At the end of each committee cycle an O&S Coordinating Board also meets; this consists of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each of the four committees.</p>

	<p>All the O&S committees are able to establish Task and Finish Groups in order to carry out in-depth scrutiny of a particular topic or policy development. Task and Finish Groups typically take between three to six months and may involve between three to ten meetings.</p> <p>For the past few years there have been very few instances of call-ins.</p> <p>The Council has now voted to reduce the number of O&S Committies from 4 to 2.</p>				
<p>Statutory Function</p>	<p>This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?</p>				
<p>Planning</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="297 531 544 719"> <p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p> </td> <td data-bbox="544 531 2132 719"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="297 719 544 1417"> <p>Analysis</p> </td> <td data-bbox="544 719 2132 1417"> <p>There are currently two area-based Planning committees, each of 15 Members (plus 8 substitutes). These two area committees replaced – on a temporary basis for 2020/21 – a planning committee structure of four area committees (comprising 49 Members in total) and a borough-wide Joint Planning Committee of 23 Members. The temporary arrangement was introduced to streamline committee operations during the Covid pandemic, whilst meetings are taking place via Zoom.</p> <p>An LGA Planning Peer Review in 2018 recommended the council move to one borough-wide planning committee. This has been debated by Members but there has been no consensus on the future structure of the planning committees beyond a strong preference for an area-based approach and opposition to a single committee. Councillors who are not a Planning Committee member may still speak at a planning committee meeting in support or against a planning application, although they may not take part in the committee’s voting.</p> <p>96% of applications are delegated to officers (year ending to September 2020), with around 4% of applications being determined by planning committees, mostly due to being ‘called in’ by local Members (75% of applications going to planning committees in 2020/21 were ‘called in’).</p> <p>Planning Committees typically consider a maximum of 4 planning applications per meeting, and meetings typically last 2 -3 hours. Meetings take place in the evening.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i> 	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>There are currently two area-based Planning committees, each of 15 Members (plus 8 substitutes). These two area committees replaced – on a temporary basis for 2020/21 – a planning committee structure of four area committees (comprising 49 Members in total) and a borough-wide Joint Planning Committee of 23 Members. The temporary arrangement was introduced to streamline committee operations during the Covid pandemic, whilst meetings are taking place via Zoom.</p> <p>An LGA Planning Peer Review in 2018 recommended the council move to one borough-wide planning committee. This has been debated by Members but there has been no consensus on the future structure of the planning committees beyond a strong preference for an area-based approach and opposition to a single committee. Councillors who are not a Planning Committee member may still speak at a planning committee meeting in support or against a planning application, although they may not take part in the committee’s voting.</p> <p>96% of applications are delegated to officers (year ending to September 2020), with around 4% of applications being determined by planning committees, mostly due to being ‘called in’ by local Members (75% of applications going to planning committees in 2020/21 were ‘called in’).</p> <p>Planning Committees typically consider a maximum of 4 planning applications per meeting, and meetings typically last 2 -3 hours. Meetings take place in the evening.</p>
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		<p>Each planning committee meets at least once a month. There are also regular formal site visits for Members to attend, and many Members undertake informal site visits for sites they are not familiar with.</p> <p>Executive Members are able to sit on Planning Committees.</p> <p>The attendance levels for the Planning Committees is typically high, and substitutes are permitted if apologies are given sufficiently early to enable them to have time to prepare for the meeting.</p> <p>All Members of the Committee (plus any Councillor who will serve as a substitute on the Committee) are required to undergo planning training. This training covers the role and responsibilities of the Committee and the planning service, the legislative and policy framework, how planning decisions are taken and the Member Planning Code of Good Practice. The Head of Planning also provides briefings on national planning policy, local plan updates, design training, enforcement, review of development sites and workshops on evolving masterplans.</p> <p>The Council have subsequently voted to reduce the number of Planning Committees from 5 to 2.</p>
Licensing	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i> ➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Licensing Act 2003 requires each local authority to set up a Licensing Committee with between ten and fifteen members. It is envisaged that most member level decisions will be made by a sub-committee of three.</p> <p>Waverley's statutory licensing functions, including those functions derived from the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005, are delegated to the Licensing & Regulatory (L&R) Committee. The Committee has 12 members, giving some scope to reduce the size of the committee if the Council size was reduced. The L&R Committee typically meets four times/year and sets discretionary policies, and makes recommendations on those policies reserved to Full Council by law. The L&R Committee has a General Purpose sub-committee of 5 members, which meets on an ad hoc basis to consider matters relating to Taxi and Private Hire drivers that fall outside the agreed policies (typically 5-6 meetings/year); and three sub-committees, each of three members, which meet in rotation and as required, to make decisions on matters relating to the Licensing Act 2003 which are outside of the agreed Council policy (typically 6-8 hearings/year across the three sub-committees).</p>

		All Members of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee are required to undergo training in relation to the licensing functions of the council, which must be refreshed on a regular basis.
Other Regulatory Bodies	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What will they be, and how many members will they require?</i> ➤ <i>Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</i>
	Analysis	<p>Waverley has two further regulatory committees with responsibility for governance functions:</p> <p>An Audit Committee, comprising eight Members. Members of the Executive may not sit on the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee has the core Audit Committee responsibilities, as described by CIPFA, and has delegated responsibility from Full Council to approve the annual audited accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The Audit Committee has recently considered its terms of reference and the pros/cons of combining the roles of the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee. Due to the large volume of business falling within the remit of the Audit Committee it was agreed that it would be helpful to increase the number of meetings per year from 4 to 6, including one dedicated to consideration of the External Audit Report and approval of the annual audited accounts and Annual Governance Statement. It was felt that combining the remits of the two committees would result in either a dilution of the oversight of core Audit Committee functions, or require additional meetings such that there would be no 'efficiency' savings for members or officers overall.</p> <p>In addition to formal meetings, the Audit Committee regularly meets informally with officers and expert advisers (risk consultants, external auditor) for briefings on topical issues.</p> <p>The Audit Committee membership has significant overlap with the councillors involved in the Overview & Scrutiny function. Whilst CIPFA guidance highlights the potential risk of blurring the lines between the Audit and Scrutiny functions through shared membership, the Audit Committee has considered this and does not feel that it is an immediate priority to make the Audit Committee exclusive of both the Executive and O&S committees due to the implications this would have for the O&S committee structure, but has committed to revisit this in 12 months.</p> <p>Matters relating to the ethical conduct of Members and oversight of the Constitution fall within the remit of the Standards Committee, which has nine members. No more than one Executive member may be on the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee meets four times a year. If necessary, the Standards Committee will convene a three-member Panel to hear the case against any Member following an independent</p>

		investigation into an alleged breach of the Member Code of Conduct. Only one such Panel has been convened since the Standards regime was changed in 2012, following the Localism Act.
External Partnerships		Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i>
Analysis		<p>The Council has no formal decision-making partnerships or joint working arrangements.</p> <p>The Council appoints representatives to a number of Outside Bodies. These have been categorised as being of organisations of regional strategic significance (17), organisations that receive financial support from the council (11), and organisations that have relevance to Waverley’s strategic plans (11). Thirteen of these positions are held by members of the Executive in an <i>ex officio</i> capacity.</p> <p>Representatives are appointed in advisory or observer capacity, and have no authority to commit the council to any action or policy approach without reference back to the Executive or Full Council.</p>

Community Involvement

9. The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties?

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i> ➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i> ➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i>
	Analysis	<p>This analysis is based on a survey conducted with Councillors during the period 12-19 January 2021. The survey and responses are attached at Annexe 1.</p> <p>As a fully parished Borough, it is significant that half of councillors are also parish or town councillors and three councillors are also triple hatted being County Councillors as well. This compares with 39% of councillors nationally (LGA Census of Local Authority Councillors 2013) Those councillors not on town or parish councils comment that they do attend the meetings on a regular basis both to represent the Borough council and to keep in touch with local issues. Over one third of councillors represent the council on outside bodies. These include day centre and local transport boards, museums and hospital trusts, cycle forums, the LEP etc. Nine councillors are also members of the Surrey County Council Local Committee, discussing issues such as education, social care, young people, highways and transport.</p> <p>From the survey results the largest amount of time is spent equally on attending council and other related meetings and preparing for these meetings and dealing with, and engaging with, constituent's enquiries and casework. Half the councillors responding to the survey spend more time on council business than they expected to before they were elected and two thirds of those who have been on the council for more than one term feel that time spent on council business has increased. Reasons for increased time spent on council business are: greater expectations and need from the public, greater complexity of issues, especially planning</p>

		<p>and finance issues, meetings taking longer, social media, emails making everyone more available, more responsibilities with roles on Executive and taking on chair's roles and more active and aware residents. Councillors were asked what aspect of their duties had increased the most and the majority of responses cited casework and queries from the public followed by attendance and preparation for meetings. Planning issues were the next most common reason.</p>
<p>Casework</p>	<p>Key lines of explanation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i> ➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i> ➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i>
	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>From the survey results the majority of councillors (66%) deal with up to 10 cases or enquiries a month whilst nine councillors do between 16 and over 30 cases a month. The majority of their casework concerns planning, housing and environmental services issues such as street cleaning and refuse collection. Planning issues in particular take up a lot of time. The method of dealing with queries will depend on experience and knowledge, but the majority of queries will be dealt with without recourse to officers. Members receive good support from officers and the process for handling resident's complaints is effective. Other than administrative support for the Leader and Deputy Leader there is no other dedicated support for councillors, nor political advisors. There is one officer dedicated to supporting the four Overview and Scrutiny committees.</p> <p>Councillors use a variety of methods for communications, email and telephone being by far the highest (20%) followed by face to face and meetings (16%). Social media and texting also feature relatively highly (11% and 8%). The most preferred method is email followed by letters, face to face and then newsletters. Councillors were asked if they had noticed any significant change in the amount of time spent on communicating via different methods. The most significant increase was email followed by social media and telephone. Given the survey was conducted after almost a year of the pandemic this aspect needs to be taken into consideration, however, it can be generally accepted that the amount of email traffic has increased enormously over the last few years. Councillors have become more accessible and have had to meet the challenges of social media with the immediacy of response that this often requires. A typical response in the survey was <i>"Social Media, Telephone and Email are instant and people want answers quickly."</i> The public in Waverley are well informed, articulate and small interest groups can create a large impact and workload.</p> <p>Almost half of those responding (48%) felt that new technology had made their roles easier with 17% feeling it made it harder. During the last year councillors have adopted new ways of working and have successfully adopted virtual meeting arrangements. However, many have mentioned the difficulty of dealing with cases and</p>

		<p>engaging with constituents without face to face contact. <i>“Covid19 has forced me to communicate in different ways which are far less effective than face to face contact.....Face to face meetings are an extremely important part of the work as a ward councillor.”</i></p>
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Other Issues

10. Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

In addition to the committees detailed above there are other advisory and governance groups that are established to inform the decision making process. These are: the Property Investment Advisory Board, Housing Delivery Board, CIL Advisory Board, Air Quality Steering Group, Dunsfold Park Garden Village Advisory Group, the Dunsfold Park Garden Village Governance Board and the Climate Emergency Board.

Summary

11. In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

Waverley Borough is often cited as one of the best places to live in the country with beautiful countryside and a good balance of towns and villages. We have a particularly well-informed and engaged population who demand high standards of public service. The survey of our Members has shown a remarkable level of commitment and time spent on serving constituents and engaging in council business for the benefit of the wider community. The Council has considered the question of its future size carefully and appreciates that the current size of the council is at odds with other councils who have a similar area and mix of rural and urban settlements. Whilst considering the appropriate size for the council there was also consideration of the type of representative equality that exists in Waverley. Residents are currently represented by one, two or three councillors dependent on where they live. The council would also like to put forward a strong preference for two member wards as it is felt that they would be highly beneficial for electors in terms of choice, availability to the electorate and resilience in case vacancies arise. The council would certainly not wish for any wards to have only one councillor.

We have looked at the present arrangements for strategic leadership and wish to continue with 8-10 councillors serving on the Executive. The roles of the Portfolio Holders have been framed to ensure they reflect the priorities of our residents and the successful operation of the Council. We are aware that, as well as having a higher proportion of councillors to electors than most councils, Waverley has more Planning and Overview & Scrutiny committees than other district councils of a similar size. Due to Covid, our four area planning committees have been temporarily reduced in the last year to two committees. Many councillors believe that this arrangement has worked well and that this structure should continue in some form. In addition, the number of Overview & Scrutiny Committees (four) is also under review and it would seem appropriate therefore that a smaller number of committees should result in a smaller council overall. If it were in line with the average, Waverley would have around 44 councillors. However, the role of the councillor has been particularly affected in recent years by both new ways of working,

in terms of technological advances, and the increase in social media; this will not diminish or go away. Looking forward to the next fifteen years the council will find smarter ways of working, with a smaller cost base and the electors will still expect a high level of engagement and response to their issues. The Council has concluded that it can continue to deliver good public service to residents with a smaller sized council and for that reason a number of 50 is considered appropriate which will bring the Council closer to, but still a little higher than, its rural parished neighbours without affecting its ability to function efficiently.

Boundary Commission Council Size Submission Survey

47
Responses

53:29
Average time to complete

Closed
Status

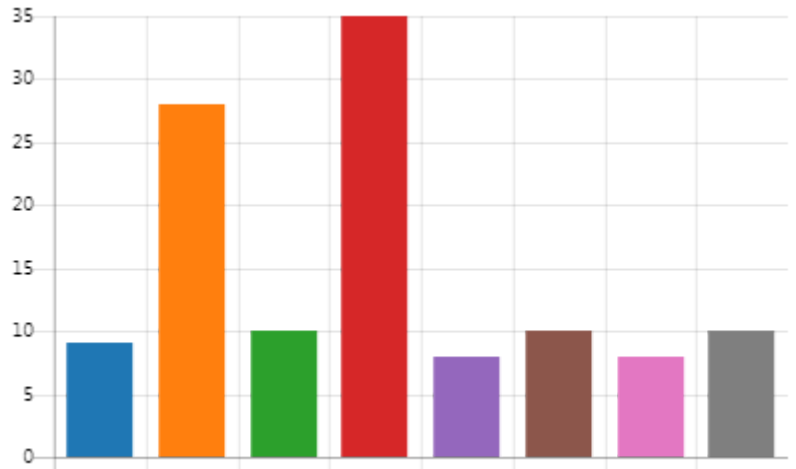
1. How long have you been a Councillor with Waverley Borough Council?

1-4 years	25
5-8 years	9
9-12 years	5
13-16 years	3
over 16 years	5



2. What Waverley Committees/working groups/boards etc do you belong to?

Executive	9
O&S Committee	28
Licensing and Regulatory Com...	10
Planning Committee	35
Audit	8
Standards	10
Local Committee	8
Other	10



3. In addition to your role as a councillor, what other special responsibilities do you undertake within the Council?

● Executive Member	9
● Committee Chairman (includin...	9
● Committee Vice-Chairman	7
● None	15
● Other	8



4. Are you a member of another council?

● Parish Council	28
● Surrey County Council	2
● None	19



5. Have you been appointed to represent the Council on any outside bodies?

● Yes	20
● No	25



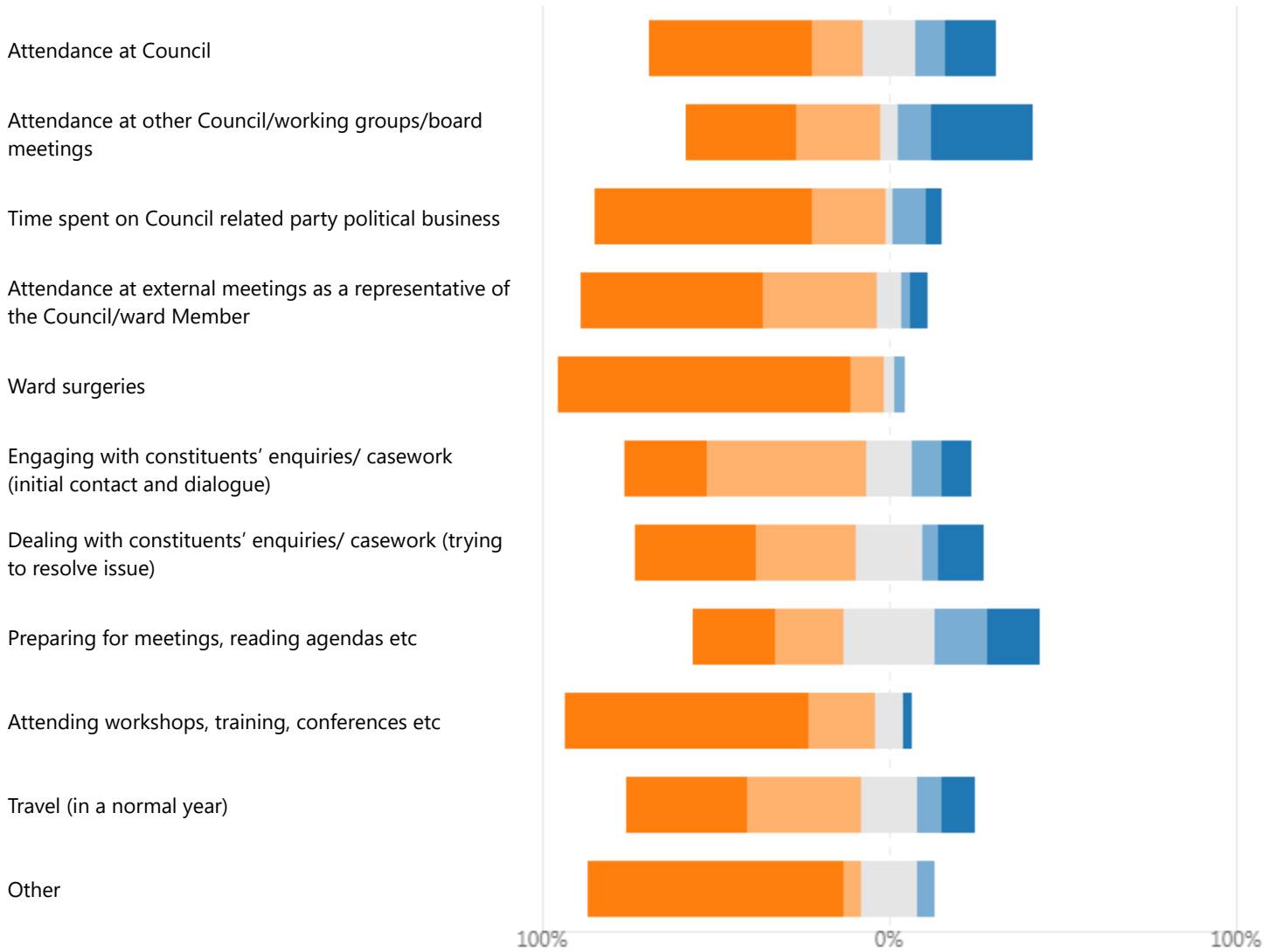
6. If yes, please list the organisation and role

20
Responses

Latest Responses

7. On average how many hours per month do you spend on Waverley Council (and council related political) business?

1-5 hours 6-10 hours 11-15 hours 16-20 hours Over 20 hours



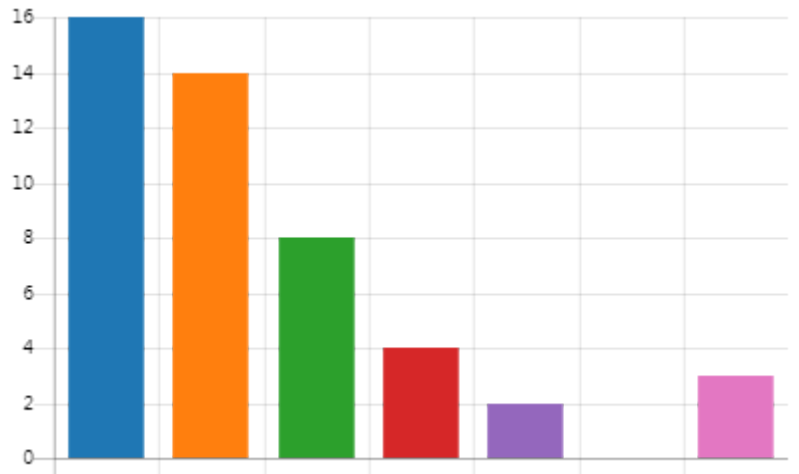
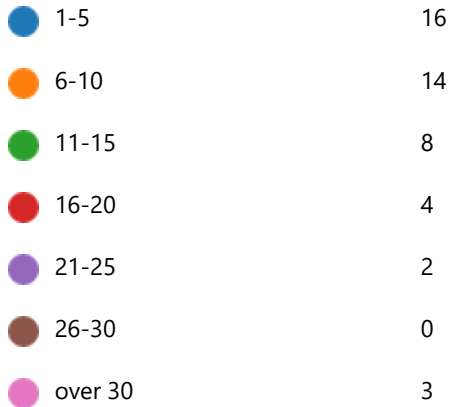
8. If you selected 'Other', please state the type of Council/political business below.

16
Responses

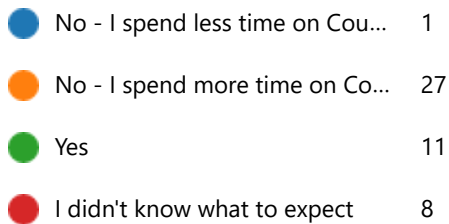
Latest Responses
"Writing papers and reports."

9. How many constituents' enquiries/cases do you deal with, on average, per month?

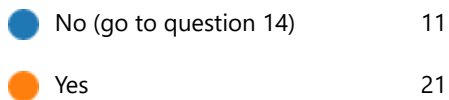
💡 Insights



10. Is the time you spend on council business what you expected when you became a councillor?



11. For those members who stood between 2015- 2019 or earlier, has the time you now spend on Council business increased?



12. What do you think is the reason for this?

21
Responses

Latest Responses
"more need"

13. What aspects of your duties have increased the most?

20

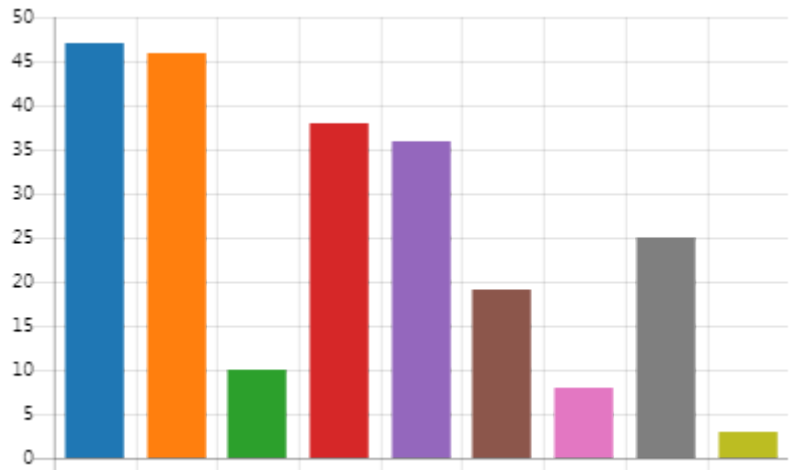
Responses

Latest Responses

"more case work"

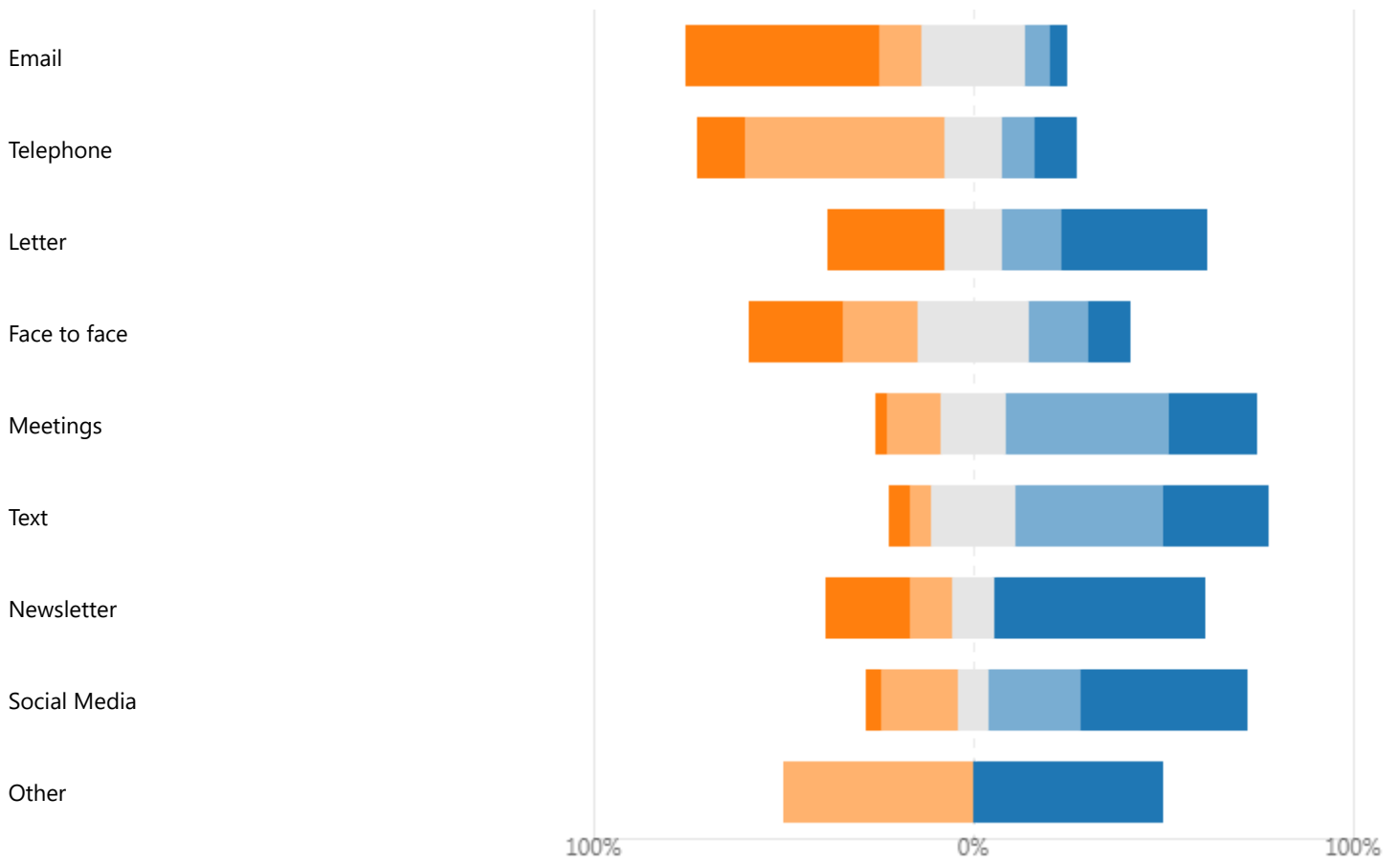
14. What methods of communication do you use when engaging with your constituents? (Please select any that apply.)

Email	47
Telephone	46
Letter	10
Face to face	38
Meetings, including Zoom an...	36
Text	19
Newsletter	8
Social media	25
Other	3

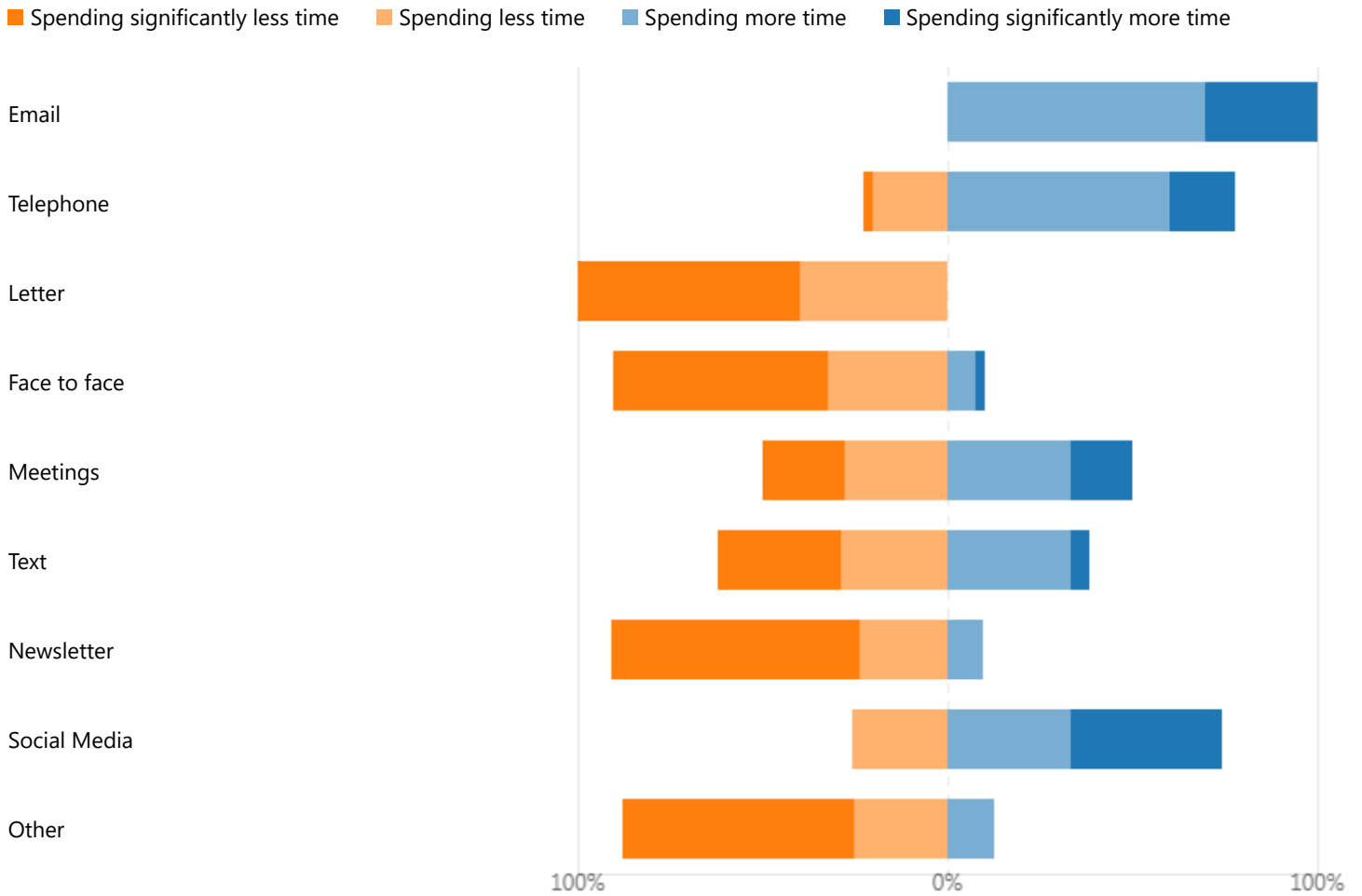


15. What is your preferred method of communication? Please select your top 5 only and rank them in order with 1 being the most preferred.

1 2 3 4 5



16. Have you noticed any significant change in the amount of time you spend communicating via each of these methods in the last 12 months?



17. Do you feel the balance above is right for you to communicate effectively with your constituents?

● Yes 32
● No 14



18. Why do you think this is?

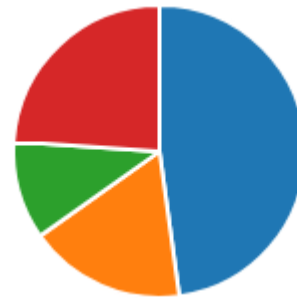
45
Responses

Latest Responses

"Constituents need to choose the method of communication which the..."
"residents contact me easily"
"it's what I do"

19. What do you feel the impact of new technology has had on your role as a Councillor? (By new technology include everything from emails, social media to virtual meetings.)

● It's made it easier	22
● It's made it harder	8
● It hasn't made a difference at all	5
● Other	11



20. If you answered 'other' please comment.

12
Responses

Latest Responses

21. What do you feel about the current size of the Council?

● It is about right	29
● It is too large	14
● It is too small	2



22. Looking forward to the next 15 years, what would you consider to be the right number of Councillors?

45
Responses

Latest Responses

"51"

"as now, 2 per ward"

"2 per ward works well"

23. Is there anything else about your experience as a Waverley Borough Councillor that might be relevant to the Council's submission on Council size?

36
Responses

Latest Responses

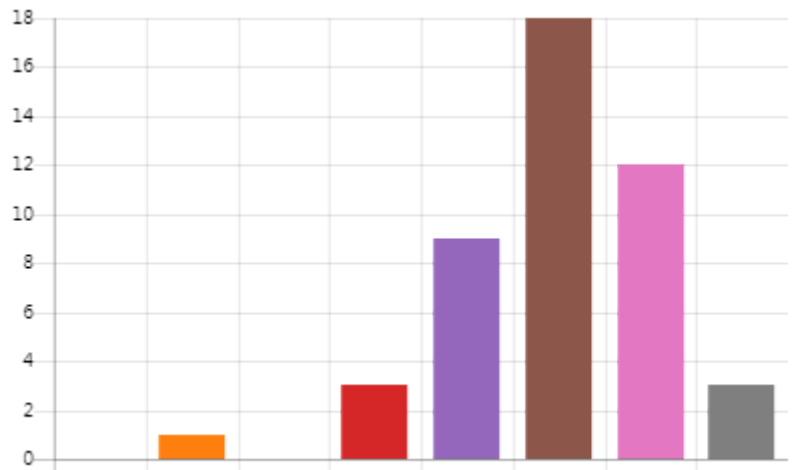
"All (or almost all) wards should be a similar size and should be multi-..."

"no"

"no"

24. Equality Monitoring Questions Whilst the following questions are entirely discretionary they are helpful to be able to contextualise the responses in relation to the following protected characteristic groups.

● 18-24	0
● 25-34	1
● 35-44	0
● 45-54	3
● 55-64	9
● 65-74	18
● 75+	12
● Prefer not to say	3



25. Gender

💡 Insights

Female	16
Male	25
Prefer not to say	5



26. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term condition?

No	36
Yes	8
Prefer not to say	2



**Q11. For those members who stood between 2015- 2019 or earlier, has the time you now spend on Council business increased?
Q12 If yes, what do you think is the reason for this?**

As an O&S Chair I have to attend pre-meetings and two associated boards.

Others not willing to do the work

Getting to know the role better - plus too long meetings with a lot of waffling, but few decisions

Social media, increasing planning pressures, greater expectations of public, less respect for people in public office

Joined the Executive; became Group Leader

Greater regulation and planning complexity requiring greater preparation time for meetings and in dealing with some constituent's queries (especially planning).

Covid

Greater expectation by residents, more complex cases within communities, and the complexity of finances in the current climate. Also Dunsfold Park is a huge burden on ones time

Better known locally. The role is definitely more demanding and residents expectations are greater but the situation at the moment is very different to what had become the norm and it is difficult to know how it will evolve as we return to some sort of normality.

Easier access, better means of communication, raised awareness of local issues

Committee meetings Longer, Council longer, New regime running Council more active residents

COVID. And the need to be engaged more fully with my work

Now on the Executive

People are more aware and require help and advice

Yes, role changed from backbencher and sole member of my party to exec member with a 15 member group.

Taking on more responsibilities, increase of social media activity making me more accessible to residents, generally the amount of work the council is undertaking.

More, longer meetings

Emails have made us all more accessible to each other, councillors, constituents & officers. Texts to lesser extent.

More issues need attention

more need

Q13. What aspects of your duties have increased the most?

Additional meetings

Meetings and research/preparation

Prep for meetings, online and resident contact

Case work and being more accessible via social media. Use of email, rather than all decision being taken at Committee meetings

meetings internal and external and leading the Council

Residents enquires

Dunsfold park and planning in general. More applications, with greater impact on the countryside. These need more research etc

Listening to residents and sometimes signposting but regularly trying to find answers relating to County Council issues.

Dealing with the public on a daily basis. Email traffic
preparing for meetings, planning resident issues / enquiries referral from MP
Contact with officers
Working with Officers
Planning and Unsocial behaviour
All - as the leadership role has a higher profile, all forms of engagement have also increased.
Meetings and casework, as well as background reading
Attending more meetings for a longer time.
Casework and briefings/training.
Looking at consultations eg LLF part of Farnham Infrastructure Programme
more case work

Q18. Why do you think this is? (What aspects of your duties have increased the most?)

Because I am prepared to work hard to assist my residents to get a fair treatment if they have a complaint by listening to them and acting as their ambassador I am to find answers for them when things are not clear in the confusing world that is Local Authority
I don't think the above questions are well formulated. The right balance depends on the prevailing issues and problems. And lockdowns have completely distorted how things are done over the past 10 months.
Lack of time
No complaints!
I use the same type of communication used by my constituents
I think personal response is important
Can't see people face to face and zoom meetings are not as effective
COVID-19 has changed the game.
relatively small change from previous year - above mix works well
Too many different channels of communication. Emails and social media create more emails and social media...and misinformation. At meetings misinformation is corrected immediately.
It seems to work - constituents happy and Council working well
Concerns over the Pandemic Virus and for Constituents therefore not being able to meet their Councillor in person.
Social Media, Telephone and Email are instant and people want answers quickly
It corresponds to what most of my constituents prefer.
Replying to enquires straight away
We need to engage local residents on the doorstep - difficult to do this year
Question 17- I suggest that it is not appropriate for me to judge this
Responsibilities are shared with co Ward Councillor, using our different skill sets
Generally good feedback from residents
Residents contact when they need to
I feel that there is less positive contact with residents. During the current crisis the type of enquiry from residents has changed and is more likely to be a complaint. People are generally tired and dispirited and less inclined to think about the operation of the Borough Council. I am not a supporter of social media and if I do

engage in a matter of factual info such as burst water mains etc I would not identify myself as a local councillor. In discussion I do not normally say that I am a local councillor do rather than

I much prefer to visit a constituent who has a problem so I can see the issue for myself in context rather than cover it on zoom or selected photos.

Matters get resolved

Contact details readily available - assorted methods, depending on residents' needs

Covid means face-to-face is not really possible. Virtual meetings are potentially easier and quicker than real ones but depend on access to technology.

Most resident issues are individual and it reflects what they want - moving away from zoom will increase time spent

Face to face group meetings not possible,

There is nothing to compete with face to face communication. Zoom doesn't do it for me

Seems to work

Useful to have written record of matters raised

Still accessible

Less time travelling, more readily available

Covid

Although this year skews meetings in person to nearly zero, I have long tried to be active on other media and this has not really changed much (other than volume)

More people are using mobile devices to contact Cllrs and response timescales are much quicker, good for catching issues before they become a bigger problem.

Time pressures

Absolutely not. Covid19 has forced me to communicate in different ways which are far less effective than face to face contact, i.e face to face and site meetings and not always desirable. Face to face meetings are an extremely important part of the work as a ward councillor. There is far more to be understood when communicating with people from personal contact.

I am able to communicate at a suitable time to me.

Covid has stopped us meeting our constituents face to face.

Council doesn't actively engage with the community

Remote meeting via Zoom have increased

it's what I do

residents contact me easily

Constituents need to choose the method of communication which they prefer - and councillors should respond to that.

Q20. If you answered 'other' please comment.

It has made communication easier but responding effectively is more demanding.

Nothing to compare it with

Email has made it much easier and I am more used to virtual meetings. Having been 'trolled' on a social media site and more directly as a result I do not wish to engage on social media but recognise that this is not beneficial to my role as a councillor or helpful to my residents.

Each new tech adds to the possibilities, but also to the complexity, and can divide people into groups according to access, age, preference, capability. It means managing communication is more complex and requires more skills.

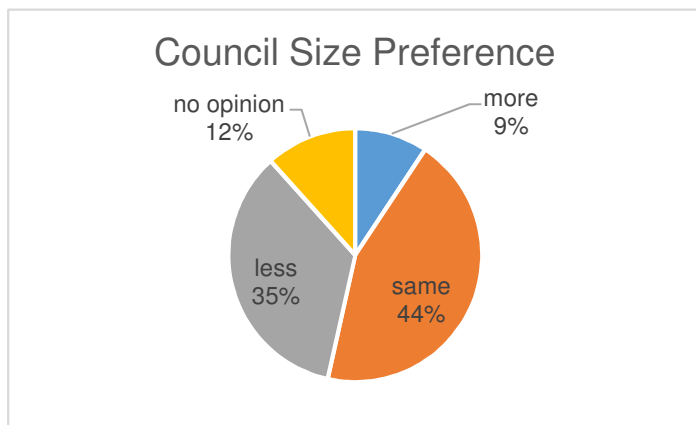
Facebook and emails have increased the communication with residents - still require visits to see problems and dealing with older residents
Made things easier sometimes, but not all residents are familiar with the technology
Being easier to contact is better for residents / engagement but that does tend to contribute to a feeling of always being 'on'
It's different, the role has changed, it's far more public and it's much easier to keep in touch with residents. My casework has definitely increased but equally I can quickly deal with queries and help more people through social media. Through being more accessible you naturally get more queries.
My view is this is mixed. In many ways people now expect a rapid response and are more demanding. They want immediate answers to everything. As a result it can at times become overbearing. People find it acceptable to be abusive and unpleasant via e-mail and social media whereas in face to face situations they would not behave in this manner. In my view this is very counter productive.
Less personal.

Q22. Looking forward to the next 15 years, what would you consider to be the right number of Councillors?

Same as now
The current number is broadly right though building in Cranleigh, Dunsfold Park and Farnham will need some adjustments to be made. The issue in some places has more to do with the calibre and commitment of members than how many there are.
57
50 Difficult to find good
Between 38 and 45
58
45-50
Fewer
48
Hard to predict but we know we have granted planning permission for a lot more housing including the development of a new town at Dunsfold.
44
56
45 - 50
The same to preserve adequate community representation in the villages and other areas outside the four main settlements.
57
From my limited experience, existing numbers seems to give a sensible balance- although the Villages appear to be somewhat neglected at times.
possibly more due to increased number of residents due to housing policy
the same, as large developments are built out ie Dunsfold Park, Milford Golf Course will require an increase in certain areas
As now
62
Waverley is a very diverse Council, with 3 towns, 1 large village and 12 or more villages, the later mostly in the green belt and ANOB. The issues and agendas

important to the different areas are significant so many decisions have to be compromises but its very important that there are balanced voices representing the different interests and neither the towns nor the villages are are able to supress the interests of the other.
About the same in view of the number of villages
It will depend on any change to responsibility after any future re-organisation
45 - 60
40-50
The same especially in the rural areas like mine with two Parishes and area covered - population increasing by 10%
about 57 as now,
Status quo. If it ain't broke don't fix it.
50
57
48
57
We need more effective Councillors. If that means fewer ineffective Councillors then so be it, but we don't need fewer ineffective Councillors per se.
48
44-48
45-48
Current numbers are about right to provide the correct coverage for committees and ward work.It is crucial that the needs and issues within the villages are represented and can be managed effectively.
48
57 for next 10 years but needs to be reviewed in relation to new housing if our quota is delivered!
No should be larger with the proposed planning of large housing developments all over the Borough.
57
Same as now
2 per ward works well
as now, 2 per ward
51

Table of responses to 'Looking forward to the next 15 years, what would you consider to be the right number of Councillors?'



Option	Number of responses
58 or more	4
57	19
56	1
51	1
48	4
44-48	1
40-50	1
45-50	2
45-48	1
45-60	1
38-45	1
44	1
less than 57	1
No opinion	5
Total responses	43

Consolidated options	Number of responses
58 or more	4
57 – same	19
56	1
51	1
40-50	10
38-45	1
45-60	1
Less than 57	1
No opinion	5
Total responses	43

Q23. Is there anything else about your experience as a Waverley Borough Councillor that might be relevant to the Council's submission on Council size?

Of course the amount of development we will see will mean a lot more residents Rural and urban (large village in my case) wards bring different challenges. So not all wards are equal. I would suggest that a predominantly urban ward should contain more residents per councillor than a rural ward.

Difficult to find enough good hard-working cllrs to share the workload

Depends on possible local government reorganisation in Surrey with creation with one or more unitary authorities

Full Council is very unwieldy in size and a number of councillors are therefore unable to contribute to debate.

I have seen committee sizes increase from previous councils by about 20per cent for no obvious reason

Waverley Borough is still a very rural borough and village communities are very parochial and like their Councillors to be living in their area. I am also a parish councillor and our area covers three villages...even here we have to operate on a village by village basis as people wont volunteer or engage above village level. If a councillor had a wider area to cover they would struggle to get the engagement with their residents.

In my experience generally WBC works very well with its current number of Councillors.

Planning issues seem to matter highly to Waverley residents who contain a significant number of highly able, articulate and wealthy people who are willing to

campaign for their views to be heard and acted upon. In recent years, WBC has been involved in several judicial review proceedings.

The current COVID pandemic makes it impossible for me to answer this- we are not in normal times.

A requirement to future proof the establishment. I could go from a single member ward, to a single member ward with the largest number of houses and residents.

Rural make up is import to note this is not a metropolitan area

Waverley is geographically a large rural area with 4 main centres and very different communities. With the huge increase in housing requirements some wards, including my own, would benefit from an increase in the number of councillors.

For 4 years I was planning portfolio holder developing the local plan and coordinating with some neighbourhood plans, this was effectively a full time job. Having another Councillor to help with the ward business was essential.

The quality and motivation of borough councillors are both more important than the quantity. The executive system can be wasteful of the talent on the back benches.

The council is not as representative as it could be. The age profile does not reflect that of the Borough, nor does the socio-economic grouping. A larger number of Councillors might allow for shared workloads so that those in fulltime employment can become Members. We should also consider setting up a Youth Council (if it doesn't already exist) to allow those in full time education to have a say on issues and ensure their voice is heard. The capability, commitment and interest of Members varies widely. The existing skillsets and experience of Councillors is not necessarily used to the best advantage. There are no qualifications, assessments or performance measures, no mentoring and little individual guidance for new Councillors to try to ensure that they can contribute most effectively. Consequently, the number also needs to allow for this variation in ability and inefficiency in selection. Finally, the intrusion of party politics into the Council seems largely detrimental and unhelpful, and may impede (or excuse) individuals from thinking for themselves.

Committee size

Brexit, Local Plan, NP and Covid have greatly mobilised residents who are more demanding and active and will remain so - more older people are using emails and younger people are taking a local interest especially green issues

Impact of Redmond report may affect number of Councillors if Audit committee cannot have O&S members

Being a councillor is not it is not a numbers game it's about the quality and integrity of the councillor - being there to truly represent one's territory

Residents need access to enough cllrs who have time/resources to handle their enquiries

In a large urban area a single Councillor would be unable to carry out their duties effectively. I spend approximately 30-35 hours a week on Council work, as I am retired this is a workload that is acceptable in a two Councillor ward. Sadly younger people of working age are unable to give the amount of time to adequately cover the work

Size is not the issue. The Council needs to be effective and efficient. To be so it needs to be resourced appropriately: democratically and otherwise.

its a difficult balance because the rural / large / dispersed geography of the borough tends to need more councillors to adequate serve residents (and adding

to that, the more urban areas are going in population). - but it then leads to essentially 'finding work' for councillors with a preponderance for more committees (and quality suffering from that too). I think it needs to be a little smaller but also a rebalance a little toward the urban areas.

This is not about the number of Cllrs but about the amount of time they are able or willing to invest in the role. With technology the role has definitely changed and the numbers of Cllrs needed should reflect this. Think it would be reasonable to review 3 member wards as well as representation in rural areas.

Wards that have more than one member!! As a single ward member it's clear what's going on, hard work but not diluted with political preference. I would also like to say that my submission if requested a year ago would not be the same as it is now. A year ago I easily spent 30 to 40 hours a week on council related business, the new political climate, poor management appointing member/I to committee and Covid has all impacted. What was once a demanding, time consuming role is no longer, that's not due to less work, it's due to the political status of the council and lack of fairness and a new political culture that puts experience to one side in exchange for an unhealthy insatiable appetite for control.

I have moved from a Town ward to a village ward and it is only now as a representative of 4 villages that I have fully understood the level of work expected by the parish councils who work extremely proactively and quite rightly have high expectations of their Waverley ward councillor representatives.

Geography of Waverley is key factor in appropriate number of councillors. See separate sheet attached.

I think that this is not the right time to be discussing this during these difficult times. As we can't see our constituents and be as pro active due to the lockdown.

The overloaded planning system that is designed to fail.

All (or almost all) wards should be a similar size and should be multi-member wards, as this enables younger councillors who work full time to be supported by councillors who have more time on their hands.

Agenda Item 9.4. Local Boundary Commission Electoral Review 2020/22

<u>Waverley and adjacent boroughs comparison</u>					
Authority Name	Electors	Council Size	Electors per Councillor	Sq miles	Parishes
Chichester	91,835	36	2,551	304	67
East Hampshire	93,417	43	2,172	199	40
Guildford	101,811	48	2,121	105	24
Hart	74,783	33	2,266	83	21
Horsham	112,024	48	2,334	205	32
Mid Sussex	114,159	54	2,114	129	24
Mole Valley	69,198	41	1,688	100	13
Test Valley	98,538	43	2,292	242	59
Winchester	90,243	45	2,005	255	48
Waverley Now	93,951	57	1,648	133	21
Waverley Equivalent	93,951	44	2,135	133	21
Waverley Proposed	93,951	50	1,879	133	21