

Herefordshire Council

Council Size Submission: Template

[The County of Herefordshire District Council]

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How to Make a Submission

It is recommended that submissions on future governance arrangements and council size follow the guidance provided and use the format below as a template. Submissions should be treated as an opportunity to 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 and why you have discounted them.**

The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses be 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.

'Good' submissions, i.e. those that are considered to be most robust and persuasive, combine the following *key success components* (as set out in the guidance that accompanies this template):

- Clarity on objectives
- A straightforward and evidence-led style
- An understanding of local place and communities
- An understanding of councillors' roles and responsibilities

About You

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, a resident group, or an individual.

Herefordshire Council's submission has been prepared by an officer working group with contributions offered, and included, from a member working group. The working group is made up of all the political groups and one unaligned member of the council.

The Commission informed Herefordshire Council that an electoral review is required because it has not been reviewed since 2013 and the Commission has a duty to review local authorities in England from 'time to time'. Herefordshire Council has been identified as having some degree of electoral variance since the last electoral review

The Commission view variances of this scale as creating imbalances that are unlikely to be corrected by foreseeable changes to the electorate within a reasonable period.

Table 1: Wards within Herefordshire Council showing greater than 10% variance from the average ratio for the county.

Name of ward	No. of Cllrs per ward	Electorate 2025	Variance 2025	Electorate 2031	Variance 2031
Aylestone Hill	1	2,507	-10%	2,652	-12%
Bircher	1	3,265	17%	3,473	15%
Bobblestock	1	2,490	-11%	2,676	-11%
Bromyard West	1	2,389	-14%	2,769	-8%
Castle	1	2,498	-10%	2,789	-8%
Hagley	1	3,274	17%	3,457	14%

Holmer	1	3,652	31%	4,071	35%
Ledbury North	1	2,678	-4%	3,509	16%
Ledbury South	1	3,114	12%	3,304	9%
Leominster North & Rural	1	3,102	11%	3,289	9%
Leominster West	1	2,114	-24%	2,770	-8%
Old Gore	1	2,508	-10%	2,667	-12%
Penyard	1	3,080	10%	3,369	12%
Ross East	1	3,062	10%	3,379	12%
Ross North	1	3,215	15%	3,432	14%
Tupsley	1	2,472	-11%	2,608	-14%
Widemarsh	1	2,389	-14%	2,608	-14%

The Context for your proposal

Your submission gives you the opportunity to examine how you wish to organise and run the council for the next 15 - 20 years. **The consideration of future governance arrangements and council size should be set in the wider local and national policy context.** The Commission expects you to challenge your current arrangements and determine the most appropriate arrangements going forward. In providing context for your submission below, please demonstrate that you have considered the following issues.

- When did your Council last change/reorganise its internal governance arrangements and what impact on effectiveness did that activity have?
- To what extent has transference of strategic and/or service functions impacted on the effectiveness of service delivery and the ability of the Council to focus on its remaining functions?
- Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?
- What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?
- What impact on the Council's effectiveness will your council size proposal have?

When Herefordshire Council's last considered and agreed strengthened governance arrangements in May 2022.

The main changes to the council made significant changes to its constitution was in May, 2022. The principal areas of change introduced as follows:

- a. Reorganisation of scrutiny committee functions into 5 (from 3) committees;
- b. An annual effectiveness review of committees presented to the annual council meetings;
- c. Clarity being given to the planning committee rules including redirection and a time allocation for member speaking;
- d. The Employment Panel functions relating to disciplinary and grievance meetings being more clearly set out, and
- e. Questions at meetings criteria has been changed

Several operational changes were also introduced, notably:

- f. the council's forward plan being more made transparent and accessible to councillors and members of the public,
- g. improved scrutiny pages on the council's website and
- h. key decisions compulsorily requiring political group consultations.

A key driver to introducing these changes was to increase participation of councillors in both executive and non-executive decision making. The outcome has been to increase member

participation by 17% to 71% (from 54%). It increases scrutiny meetings by approximately 6 to 8 committees per year.

At its most recent annual effectiveness review (in line with b above), Herefordshire Council reviewed its current scrutiny functions in May, 2025. The review was based on the following objectives:

- Reviewing current arrangements, against the backdrop of the priorities in the new Herefordshire Council Plan.
- Understanding current thinking on the purpose of scrutiny within the council's governance framework.
- Making recommendations on improvements to the structure of scrutiny, including training and governance processes.
- Making further recommendations on effective and proven cultural change regarding scrutiny reflecting elected members, officers and partners. And,
- Considering changes to scrutiny structures, operation and effectiveness of the scrutiny function.

The review concluded that the current five scrutiny structures should remain but with measures introduced to deliver more effective scrutiny. This includes reducing the amount of formal committee business with a move to more task and finish group-based working.

Member time commitments as evidenced from the members survey (see Appendix 5 for the full survey questions and responses)¹:

32 out of a possible 53 responses to this survey were received. In response to question 1 which asked how much time members spend on attending formal council committee meetings, per month, the following evidence was received:

- 34.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 0 to 10 hrs per month (or up to 120 hrs p/a)
- 37.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 10 to 20 hrs per month (or up to 240 hrs p/a)
- 12.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 20 to 30 hrs per month (or up to 360 hrs p/a)
- 3% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 30 to 40 hrs per month (or up to 360 hrs p/a)
- 12.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend more than 40 hrs per month.

In response to question 2 which asked how much time members spend preparing for formal council committee meetings, per month, the following evidence was received:

- 40.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 0 to 10 hrs per month (or up to 120 hrs p/a)
- 34.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 10 to 20 hrs per month (or up to 240 hrs p/a)
- 15.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 20 to 30 hrs per month (or up to 360 hrs p/a)
- 6.5% of members of Herefordshire Council spend 30 to 40 hrs per month (or up to 360 hrs p/a)
- 3% of members of Herefordshire Council spend more than 40 hrs per month.

A more detailed breakdown of member time commitments, by committee and other council related meetings, are offered below

¹ It is important to note that time commitments on formal council committee activity will vary from member to member. Some members are elected, or are put forward by their group leader's, to sit on several committees. Other members choose to engage in only essential council committee business electing instead to focus predominantly on their constituency-based working. For example, some members only attend the full council meeting during the municipal year and not any other committees.

2. What influence will local and national policy trends likely have on the Council as an institution?

Local government reorganisation - the English Devolution Framework: In line with other local authorities in England, the council is proactively working with central government and neighbouring councils to understand what devolution will mean for us. Herefordshire's position in the context of devolution is unique. Devolution presents no urgency to the council. Having become a unitary authority in 1998, we are not required to undergo a programme of local government reorganisation to unlock devolution opportunities. However, our future participation in a strategic mayoral authority (SMA) is reliant on our English Authority neighbours' ability to work through this programme of significant change.

The Council is actively engaging with central government to set out and drive our priorities for wellbeing and growth. We are seeking confirmation that we will be enabled to deliver our priorities through funding and wider government support, and we also remain engaged with our neighbouring authorities to help shape our thinking in relation to the shape and scale of an SMA that would enable us to deliver the best for Herefordshire. Whilst informal evolving local strategic arrangements are developing around the cross border partnership covering English and Welsh neighbouring councils through the [Marches Forward Partnership](#) there is no legal mechanism for a cross-border partnership with statutory powers. In this regard, Herefordshire Council is constitutionally limited to SMA arrangements as they apply to England only. Whilst we await further announcements in relation to next steps for Herefordshire, we continue to develop our options appraisal and economic case for devolution partnerships in the future.

We are a stable unitary council with a comparatively small population; however, in terms of geographic scale, we are a large county.

3. Have any governance or capacity issues been raised by any Inspectorate or similar?

i. *Final Auditor's Annual Report Year ending 31 March 2025 – published on 29 September 2025*

The audit report noted that:

- **Financial Stability:** The Council has generally sound arrangements for containing expenditure within budget. However, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit is worsening and now represents a significant threat to the Council's arrangements to ensure financial sustainability. We have updated our prior year Improvement Recommendation to a Key Recommendation.

In 2024/25 Council-wide savings were not delivered as planned. The Council has reviewed the relevant schemes and is seeking to learn lessons and strengthen arrangements. As non-delivery of planned savings schemes could lead to a significant weakness in arrangements we have raised an Improvement Recommendation.

- **Governance:** Governance arrangements are generally sound and continue to develop. In-year financial reporting provides appropriate assurance that the budget is being managed effectively. The budget setting process is robust, with appropriate review and challenge. Clear behavioural expectations are set out in codes and policies.

Decision-making is generally supported by appropriate information. However, we have identified a significant weakness in arrangements for one capital project where decision-making did not follow the Council's required processes. We have raised this in the Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness section. We were alerted to this by the Council following an internal review

- **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness:** Owing to ongoing improvements in arrangements we have been able to reduce the key recommendation in respect of Children's Services to an improvement recommendation. However, following an internal review, the

Section 151 Officer alerted us to weaknesses in the way that procedures were followed in the procurement of a capital project and we have identified this as a significant weakness in arrangements and raised a key recommendation.

Quarterly performance reports to Cabinet provide comprehensive information, including action being taken where targets are not being met. The Council has appropriate arrangements for working in partnership but could further strengthen these to align with best practice.

ii. The Recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.

As a commitment to learning and improvement at Herefordshire Council we invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to review how we operate. The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) provided an independent and objective assessment of achievements, challenges, and future plans, in terms of the Council's ongoing development.

The report from the LGA, in June 2025, recognised Herefordshire Council as a "good council that is striving hard to improve further," highlighting our strong sense of place, maturing political culture, and growing confidence in leadership. The peer team acknowledged the council's commitment to transformation, improving children's services, and increasingly playing a strategic role in regional partnerships.

Progress was noted as being made in key areas, including:

- Children's Services: Significant improvements have been recognised by Ofsted monitoring visits, reflecting the dedication of our staff and leadership.
- Financial management: A stable financial base, national recognition for excellence in governance, and a proactive approach to medium-term financial planning.
- Partnership working: Constructive engagement with strategic partners, including the voluntary sector, health bodies, and regional economic boards.
- Transformation and innovation: A clear strategy is in place, and we are working with SOCITM to strengthen our digital and data capabilities.
- Leadership and management: Visible and accessible leadership which has contributed to a positive shift in organisational culture, creating a more open, listening council, focused on delivery and collaboration.

The LGA findings report included a set of recommendations and we have produced a draft action plan as a response, we are committed to taking forward the following key actions:

1. Accelerate corporate transformation with a clear delivery plan and appropriate resourcing.
2. Strengthen data and insight capabilities to support strategic decision-making and service improvement.
3. Refresh the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and undertake robust scenario planning.
4. Build internal capacity to support transformation and improve oversight of commissioned services.
5. Deepen strategic engagement with partners, especially the voluntary sector, to co-deliver services.

Local Authority Profile

Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting, in particular the local geography, demographics and community characteristics. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description should cover all of the following:

- Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraints 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 transient populations, is there any large growth anticipated?

- Community characteristics – is there presence of “hidden” or otherwise complex deprivation?
- Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Further to providing a description, the Commission will be looking for a submission that demonstrates an understanding of place and communities by putting forth arguments on council size based upon local evidence and insight. For example, how does local geography, demographics and community characteristics impact on councillor casework, workload and community engagement?

Brief Outline of the Area:

Hereford is a medieval cathedral city surrounded by five market towns: Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster, and Ross-on-Wye. A popular tourist destination, Herefordshire exudes a strong sense of pride, community, and belonging.

Herefordshire forms one half of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System and key public services, including police, fire and mental health, are delivered on the same footprint. One acute NHS Trust and one General Practice Federation serve the whole county. Over 2,500 voluntary and community organisations support residents and there are 101 publicly funded schools.

191,000 residents (as at the ONS 2024 Mid-Year Estimate) live across 840 square miles and official population estimates put Herefordshire as one of the largest local authority areas covering a small, rural population. With 223 persons per square mile, it has the fourth lowest population density of all English upper-tier local authorities, after Westmorland and Furness, Northumberland and North Yorkshire.

Two thirds of residents clustered around the city and market towns, and a third scattered across rural areas. No other English county has a greater proportion of its population living in areas with fewer than 50 people per square kilometre (described as ‘very sparse’. We are the only County in England that meets the EU definition of ‘Rural Sparsity’).

Population growth is entirely dependent on migration, with consistently fewer births than deaths in Herefordshire each year. Births have been falling since 2018, reflecting the continued decline in fertility rates seen nationally. However, the ageing population locally means that numbers of deaths have been rising annually since 2014-15.

Currently, Herefordshire’s age structure is older than nationally, and based on trend data, the number of older people will continue to grow.

- 27% of Herefordshire's population are aged 65 and over, compared to 19% across England and Wales.
- At the same time, the number of children has fallen, with just 16% of the population aged under 16, compared with 19% in England and Wales. This is a fall of 4% since 2013, contrasting with a 4% national increase.
- 57% of the population is aged 16 to 64, compared to 63% nationally.
- While net migration has added approximately 1,000 people to this age group in the past three years, the overall working age population remains 4,000 fewer than in 2008.

Herefordshire Council operates a leader and cabinet model of governance. The Council's 53 members meet together as full Council to set the policy framework, agree the budget and spending plans, set the Council Tax, elect the Leader of the Council and make constitutional decisions. It is also a forum for debate on major issues affecting the Council and the county.

Herefordshire Council has a significant programme of business in several key areas. Substantial new infrastructure proposals (in roads, active travel and rail) and housing development in the county is being progressed. Continuing improvements being required to children’s services. There remains significant environmental concern around the health of our local rivers and water ways. Ongoing budgetary pressures which require careful management and continued oversight within a climate of ‘real terms’ government funding.

All of which are listed priorities within Council Plan 2024 to 2028 and underpin the council's a vision of 'Delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do'. While the county as whole, on the face of it, could be viewed in demographic terms as potentially lacking the economy of scale to sustain the current scrutiny committee structure; it is a county that requires a healthy and broad reaching scrutiny remit to assist with the breadth of the council's priority work areas and programmes of transformation and change. Whilst it was the subject of some debate at the recent May 2025 annual Council meeting – where the scrutiny review was considered – members voted in favour of retaining the current scrutiny structure and functions.

Council Size

The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: **Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory 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.

The county of Herefordshire is divided into 53 wards, and the council comprises 53 councillors (one member per ward) elected every four years.

The current political composition of the Council is:

- Conservatives - 20
- Liberal Democrats - 12
- The Green Party - 9
- Independents for Herefordshire - 7
- True Independents - 2
- Labour - 1
- Unaligned – 2

Members are elected every four years with Council elections due to be held in May 2027.

Strategic Leadership

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. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

Topic	
Governance Model	<p>Key lines of explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other? ➤ The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require? ➤ If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you propose represents the most appropriate for the authority. ➤ By what process does the council aim to formulate strategic and operational policies? How will members in executive, executive support and/or scrutiny positions be involved? What particular demands will this make of them? ➤ Whichever governance model you currently operate, a simple assertion that you want to keep the current structure does not in itself, provide an explanation of why that structure best meets the needs of the council and your communities.
	<p>Analysis</p> <p>Herefordshire Council is a unitary authority operating executive arrangement through a leader and cabinet. The council's cabinet (The Executive) makes decisions in relation to all council's areas of responsibility other than those specified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council functions, or • Scrutiny functions, or • Functions cabinet has arranged to be exercised by or with another council's cabinet <p>The Leader and Cabinet (the Executive).</p> <p>The Council has operated a leader and cabinet system of governance since the Council was established in 1998. This system of governance works well for the Council and is the preferred future model. The Executive is formed by the largest political grouping following all out local elections. To form a majority administration, the largest political group (or groups entering a coalition) need to exceed half of the overall council membership (27 members or more). A minority administration can be formed by the largest political group, but whose membership falls under 27 members.</p> <p>Under current arrangements the Conservative group, the largest of the political groups, 20 members in total, form a minority administration.</p> <p>There are 10 Cabinet members, including the Leader, and on average, the Cabinet meets formally 11 to 12 times a year, as well as additional informal meetings. The Council's executive arrangements delegate decision making to individual Cabinet members on executive functions that sit within their portfolio. The full table of cabinet member portfolios can be found at Appendix 1</p> <p>Decisions by the Executive are decisions which are to be taken by the Cabinet as a whole, or decisions which are to be taken by individual Cabinet Members, and in some very limited cases, by Council officers. Key decisions¹ are defined as:</p>

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <p>i) Any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant, or</p> <p>ii) Any other decision which in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer is likely to be significant having regard to the strategic nature of the decision and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards in Herefordshire) affected.</p> <p>iii) Any substantive decision to bring forward proposals to Council to approve or amend an item within the budget and policy framework (not being subject to call-in).</p> <p>iv) Any substantive decision made to approve or amend a policy framework where Council has granted the executive power to do so (being subject to call-in).</p> |
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Cabinet Decisions:

A cabinet meeting will be convened for decisions that are key and relate to more than one cabinet portfolio, or of sufficient public interest that a decision at a public meeting is required, or reserved to cabinet by virtue of the financial procedure rules and associated guidance

Formulating Strategic Plans:

Cabinet has the responsibility to propose the strategies and policies of the council – these fall into a category of Budget and Policy Framework items. Examples of this include the Council Plan 2024 to 2028, the Budget Council Tax, the Local Plan, the Local Transport Plan. These are proposed by Cabinet to full Council (all 53 ward members) – Council has the responsibility to agree, amend or reject, those plans by a majority vote. Once Council has agreed budget and/or policy framework items, those policies and strategies move into implementation.

To provide an example of this. Cabinet (the Executive) propose a capital investment programme to Council each year (which will need to be in accordance with the agreed Council Plan); Council is responsible has to agree that programme(a non-executive decision). Once it has done so implementation of spend can begin. Cabinet develops annual delivery plans which set out the priority projects and annual spend, all of which must be in accordance with the agreed Council Plan (2024 to 2028).

Demands placed upon the Leader and Cabinet members (also known as executive functions) which are taken either collectively or by an individual Cabinet member (as noted above). Some of these decisions can create bespoke delegations to officers (see iv – below).

- Approx 11 public meetings p/a at approximately 3 hrs per meeting involving 10 cabinet members + 4 to 6 other members (Group Leaders and optional attendance from scrutiny chairpersons) = 528 hrs p/a.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx 46 cabinet briefings p/a at approximately 3 hrs per meeting involving all 10 cabinet members² = 1,380 hrs – • Approx 46 cabinet briefings p/a at approximately 3 hrs per meeting involving 10 cabinet members³ = 1,380 hrs <p>TOTAL COMMITTEE/NON-PUBLIC MEETING HOURS = 3,288 hrs p/a This equates to – 329 hrs p/a per cabinet member</p>
Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<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>Once elected, the Leader of the Council appoints and chairs the Cabinet (the executive). Each Cabinet member has a specific area of portfolio responsibility. The Cabinet currently comprises of 10 members (which includes the Leader). The leader of the council determines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the size of the cabinet • the appointment of a deputy • the appointment of cabinet members • the appointment of cabinet support members • the appointment of champions • the allocation of portfolios and responsibility to cabinet members • the cabinet functions that can be carried out by cabinet members individually the cabinet functions that can be carried out by the chief executive <p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holders) Decisions: The leader has decided to delegate to individual cabinet members key decisions that relate to their portfolio. Where cabinet member portfolios cut across the various functions of the council and in cases of uncertainty as to which cabinet member is responsible for any function, the leader shall decide which cabinet member(s) will deal with it. All Cabinet member Portfolios are set out and listed in Table 1 below.</p> <p>Cabinet member's roles are: To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies; • To identify priorities and recommend them to Council; • To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;

² These meetings are broken into two categories – Cabinet Feeder and Cabinet Briefings attended by all cabinet members and the corporate leadership team. Cabinet feeder briefings allow for preparation ahead of a forthcoming public Cabinet Committee, Cabinet briefings allow for review of forthcoming Cabinet and/or Cabinet member decisions.

³ These Cabinet briefings are planning and preparation meetings attended by cabinet only

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give guidance in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day-to-day implementation issues; To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives; To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews. <p>The Leader of the Council and Cabinet members are actively involved with the functioning of the Council, and they commit significant time to their roles. The position of Leader is equivalent to a full-time post. On average Cabinet members report an average weekly commitment of 30 to 40 hours on Council business. The Leader working the equivalent of full time.</p> <p>Leader - Cabinet (also known as executive functions) which are taken either collectively or by an individual Cabinet member (as noted above). Some of these decisions can create bespoke delegations to officers (see iv – below).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx 11 public meetings p/a at approximately 3 hrs per meeting involving 10 cabinet members + 4 to 6 other members (Group Leaders and optional attendance from scrutiny chairpersons) = 528 hrs p/a. Approx 46 cabinet briefings p/a at approximately 3 hrs per meeting involving 10 cabinet members = 1,380 hrs Approx 46 private cabinet briefings p/a at approximately 3 hrs per meeting involving 10 cabinet members = 1,380 hrs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TOTAL COMMITTEE/NON PUBLIC MEETING HOURS = 3,288 hrs p/a This equates to – 329 hrs p/a per cabinet member
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>The intention of the Council is that decision taking should be delegated in the interests of speed where that is consistent with the democratic process in terms of accountability and openness. A purpose of this Constitution is to encourage delegation of decision making to individual officers. This constitution delegates decisions to the chief executive. Where such decisions have been delegated it remains open to the officer making the delegation to call back for their own decision, issues of significance or sensitivity and for the decision maker to refer matters upwards for determination.</p> <p>The various levels of decision making are:</p>

1. **Full Council** is responsible for agreeing the council's budget and policy framework items – these are the major strategic budget and policy – decisions which the council has responsibility for. All 53 members are eligible to vote on all matters that require a council decision.
 - The council meets approximately 5 times per year for 3 hrs per meeting with all 53 members present
 - **TOTAL COMMITTEEHOURS = 795 hrs p/a**
 - **This equates to – 15 hrs p/a per member**
2. **Non-executive functions/decisions.** Full Council will appoint committees with power to carry out its non-executive and other functions. Non-executive functions are those which the cabinet does not have the power to carry out⁴.
 - **TOTAL COMMITTEE HOURS = 294 hrs p/a**
 - **This equates to an average of = 58.8 hrs p/a**

Table 1: Herefordshire Council's Non-Executive Committees.

Committee	Function
Employment panel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Member committee • Approx 5 to 7 meetings per year • An approximate duration of 2 hrs per meeting. Total time commitment of committee = 84 hrs p/a Total time commitment per member = 14 member hrs p/a	<i>The employment panel has been established and will fulfil the following functions:</i> <p>(a) <i>Be the appropriate body to fulfil the employment functions in relation to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the head of paid service (to include returning officer and electoral registration officer functions),</i> • <i>corporate director community wellbeing,</i> • <i>corporate director children and young people,</i> • <i>corporate director economy and environment, director of public health, monitoring officer and s151 officer.</i> <p>(b) <i>Review the annual pay policy statement and make recommendations to Council</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Be a consultee on all terms and conditions including policies for all staff, and</i></p> <p>(d) <i>Approve the performance and development framework for annual assessment of the chief executive</i></p>
Audit and Governance . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 member committee 	<i>The Committee remit is to:</i> <p>(a) <i>Review and examine, and where required in depth examine, matters relating to internal audit, external audit, risk management, governance, assurance statement, anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements as well as any other function to meet the Council's Audit Committee requirements</i></p>

⁴ To note, this does not include the Planning and regulatory Committee, or the Licensing Sub-committee (these are dealt with below in the planning and Licensing sections).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx 5 to 7 meetings per year • At an approximate duration of 3 hrs per meeting. <p>Total time commitment of committee = 147 hrs p/a</p> <p>Total time commitment per member = 21 member hrs p/a</p>	<p>(b) <i>Enhance and promote the profile, status and authority of the internal audit function and to demonstrate its independence</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Contribute towards making the authority, its committees and departments more responsive to the audit function</i></p> <p>(d) <i>Review compliance with the relevant standards, code of conduct, codes of practice and corporate governance policies, and</i></p> <p>(e) <i>Act within the Council's Constitution.</i></p>
		<p>Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 councillors attend this committee • Approx 4 to 5 meetings per year • At an approximate duration of 3 hrs per meeting. <p>Total time commitment of committee = 45 hrs p/a</p> <p>Total time commitment per member – 15 member hrs p/a</p>	<p><i>Herefordshire Council has established a health and wellbeing board in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The functions of the board are:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>To encourage those who arrange the provision of any health or social care services in Herefordshire to work in an integrated manner for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of the people of Herefordshire.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>To provide such advice, assistance or other support as it thinks appropriate, for the purpose of encouraging the making of prescribed arrangements under S 75 National Health Service Act 2006.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>To encourage those who arrange for the provision of any health related services in Herefordshire to work closely with the health and wellbeing board.</i></p> <p>(d) <i>To encourage the close working of those providing health or social care services with those who arrange for the provision of health related services in Herefordshire.</i></p> <p>(e) <i>To prepare a health and social care joint strategic needs assessment (Understanding Herefordshire) for the county</i></p> <p>(f) <i>To prepare a health & wellbeing strategy to meet those needs</i></p> <p>(g) <i>Reviewing whether the commissioning plans and arrangements for the NHS, public health and social care (including Better Care Fund submissions) are in line with and have given due regard to the health and wellbeing strategy</i></p> <p>(h) <i>To prepare and publish a local Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment under S206 of the 2012 Act, and</i></p> <p>(i) <i>To give its opinion, as appropriate, to Herefordshire Council, the Clinical Commissioning group or NHS commissioning Board, as to whether they are discharging their duty to have regard to any assessment of relevant needs</i></p>

			<i>prepared by the Council, the Integrated Care Board or NHS commission Board in the exercise of their functions.</i>
		Standards Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 councillors attend this committee • Approx 2 meetings per year • At an approximate duration of 3 hrs per meeting. 	<i>The standards panel's remit is to consider and determine code of conduct complaints that cannot be resolved by the monitoring officer. The members of the panel receive copies of all decisions made by the monitoring officer under the code of conduct complaint process and may directly provide feedback of their views on the decision or meet informally with the monitoring officer. Where requested by the Chairperson of the panel, the monitoring officer will convene a meeting to discuss a specific decision.</i>
		Total time commitment of committee = 18 hrs p/a	<i>The standards panel consists of an independent person, the chair and two other members of audit and governance committee and a parish councillor nominated by Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.</i>
		Total time commitment per member = 6 member hrs p/a	<i>The committee may also appoint up to two further substitute members who should only substitute if any of the three standing members are unavailable.</i>
		Total MEMBER HOURS = 294 hrs p/a	
		<p>3. Officer decisions: The chief executive, and through delegations to other officers, has the ability to take six types of decisions.</p> <p>a): Operational decisions - decision that involve the day to day management of the council. They are usually incidental to a function being exercised by the council. Such decisions are taken by the chief executive, in accordance with the scheme of delegation and any financial or contracting requirements specified in the finance or contracts procedure rules and will be classed as operational.</p> <p>b): Executive decisions - The cabinet has delegated non key decisions to the chief executive. These will be decisions concerning a function being exercised by the council which is below the key decision threshold. As these are executive functions the requirements to publish the decision, reports and call in provisions apply.</p> <p>c): Council decisions - The council has decided that some of its decisions can be taken by the chief executive. Where the effect of the decision is to grant a permission or licence; changes the legal rights of an individual; or awards a contract (above £50k) or incurs expenditure (£50k) which in either case materially affects the council's financial position there is a requirement to publish the decision.</p> <p>d): Local choice decisions - The council has delegated certain further functions to the chief executive. As a result these become executive or council decisions and will follow the procedures for those types of decisions.</p>	

		<p>e): All necessary decisions in cases of emergency. For the purposes of this scheme, ‘emergency’ shall mean any situation in which the chief executive believes that there is a risk of damage to property, a threat to the health or wellbeing of an individual, or that the interests of the council may be compromised. ‘All necessary decisions’ includes decisions to take such action as is necessary within the law to protect life, health, safety, the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the county, its communities and individuals living, working or visiting, and to preserve property belonging to the council or others.</p> <p>f): Implementing decisions - There is implied authority for the chief executive to take all necessary actions to implement Council, Committee and Cabinet decisions that commit resources, within agreed budgets in the case of financial resources, as necessary. There will also be express authority within certain decisions, delegating further decisions to a named officer, usually a Director, to take certain actions within the parameters of the recommendation from Council, Committee or Cabinet decisions.</p> <p>All of these six types of decisions can be taken by the chief executive without consultation with elected members, however where executive decisions are being taken by officers cabinet members are normally briefed by a director before taking the decision as the cabinet member can decide to take the decision themselves.</p>
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Accountability

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. **Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

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>Herefordshire Council's Constitution Scrutiny committees have the power:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to review, influence policy or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive, (b) to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive, (c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,

- (d) to make reports or recommendations to council with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area
- (f) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the council with respect to the discharge of those functions. In this regard crime and disorder functions means:
 - (i) a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment);
 - (ii) a strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
 - (iii) a strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area
- (g) to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to a responsible person on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised or to be consulted by a relevant NHS body or health service provider in accordance with the Regulations (2013/218) as amended. In this regard health service includes services designed to secure improvement —
 - (i) in the physical and mental health of the people of England;
 - (ii) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental illness
 - (iii) in services provided in pursuance of arrangements under section
- (h) to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions or coastal erosion risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area
- (i) to track actions and undertake an annual effectiveness review.

Herefordshire Council's scrutiny function is currently divided into five main committees, each focused on specific areas of council and partner organisation operations. Committees tend to meet formally four times a year. The five committees are:

- Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee = 7 member committee
- Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee = 7 member committee
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee = 7 member committee
- Health, Care, and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee = 7 member committee
- Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) = 12 member committee

There were originally 3 scrutiny committees, prior to May 2022, this increased to five on the basis that e current arrangements.

This was in response to a formal constitutional review conducted by a member led working group – the working group recommending a new committee setup. This change was based on an agreement to form five committees to improve the council's governance, provide accountability, and enable councillors to contribute to policy and service improvement. In summary – to:

- **Respond to a review:** The increase was a direct result of a council decision to adopt a new scrutiny structure based on a review that recommended expanding the number of committees to five.
- **Improve governance:** The aim was to strengthen the council's governance by providing more opportunities for elected councillors (who are not on the Cabinet) to review services, question decisions, and make recommendations.
- **Enhance accountability:** A larger number of committees was intended to help drive improvement to local services and ensure greater accountability across the council's various functions.
- **Support for policy development:** A key goal of the scrutiny process is to provide a platform for councillors to contribute to policy development and review.

A total of 40 scrutiny councillors attend approximately 20 meetings per year (4 meeting meetings per committee at an approximate duration of 3 hrs per meeting).

- TOTAL COMMITTEE HOURS = 480 hrs p/a
- This equates to approximately – 12 hrs p/a per member

There are several T+F groups currently underway at any one period of time (there are currently 4 underway) – these generate approximately 20 mtgs per year at 2 hrs per meeting which will have 2 members per meeting.

- TOTAL T+F HOURS = 80 hrs p/a (spread across 5 committees)
- This equates to approximately – 8 hrs p/a per member

Committee meetings are underpinned by:

- A topic planning session for each major agenda item. This brings together the chair and
- vice-chair with the officers who are leading on the item, to agree a more detailed scope
- and objectives for each topic, and to plan the information to be shared with the committee
- in advance. These typically happen around two months before the committee meeting.
- A lines of enquiry meeting of the committee, to plan questioning on the topics to be
- scrutinised. These typically take place a week or two before the committee meeting.
- A member briefing or training session. These do not happen as a matter of course, but
- they are becoming increasingly common. Although these are primarily intended to support
- a particular topic at a scrutiny committee meeting, recordings are often shared with all
- elected members when they are of wider interest

A total of 40 councillors attend approximately 20 meetings per year at an approximate duration of 4 hrs per meeting – these include key lines of enquiry meetings and pre-committee meetings.

- TOTAL PRE-COMMITTEE HOURS = 640 hrs p/a
- This equates to approximately – 16 hrs p/a per member
- **OVERALL TOTAL SCRUTINY TIME COMMITMENT = 1,200 hrs p/a**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This equating to 36 hrs per member p/a 	
Statutory Function	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?	
Planning	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members? ➤ Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated? ➤ Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee? ➤ Will executive members serve on the planning committees? ➤ What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?
	Analysis	<p>From April 2023 to September 2025, there was a total of 3050 planning applications⁵ determined by the council. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76 were determined by the 15 members planning committee (2.5% of all planning applications) over 23 meetings – each meeting taking approximately 3 hrs • Ahead of each of the 23 planning committees are planning site visits which take approximately 4 hrs • 2974 were determined through delegated decision (97.5%) – which on average will require approximately 1 hr of a ward members time to review/consider (there are 53 ward members). <p>From this it is possible to provide a ‘reasonable’ estimate of member time, from April 2023 to year to date (September 2025) or 23 months - as follows:</p> <p>Planning committees – 23 (mtgs) X’s 3 hrs X’s 15 members = 1,035 hrs (from Apr 2023 to Sept 2025).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This equates to approximately 36 committee member hrs p/a <p>Planning site visits – 23 (visits) X’s 4 hrs X’s 15 members = 1,380 hrs (from Apr 2023 to Sept 2025).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This equates to approximately 48 committee member hrs p/a <p>Delegated decisions – 2974 (delegated decisions) ÷ 53 ward members X’s 1 hr = 2,974</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This equates to approximately 4.9 member hrs p/a <p>TOTAL COMMITTEE MEMBER TIME DURING TIME PERIOD = 1,035 hrs TOTAL PLANNING SITE VISIT TIME DURING TIME PERIOD = 1,380 hrs TOTAL TIME COMMITTEMENT PER COMMITTEE MEMBER (Committee + site visit) = 84 hrs p/a⁶</p>

⁵ This aggregates determination of major and non-major applications. It does not include prior approvals or listed buildings consents.

⁶ This figure relies on the assumption that there is one planning committee meeting per month. Where planning committees may have been cancelled the assumption has been made that committee business would be picked up by a committee the following month. In this regard, while some committees with heavier business may take longer than three hours. A reliable estimate, taking into account cancellations and carry over of committee business, over the course of municipal year is three hours. Similar assumptions have been made for planning site visits.

TOTAL TIME COMMITMENT PER WARD MEMBER⁷ (*Determination of delegated decisions*) = 4.67 p/a hrs⁸

The planning and regulatory committee is a single council wide committee which came into existence in 2018. There are no members of the executive who sit on this committee. However, they may attend in their capacity as a ward member if or when planning applications in their wards are being considered by the committee

Herefordshire Council changed its planning code primarily because of a significant, mandatory increase in its housing targets from the government. The new plan-making system introduced by the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#):

- **Increased housing targets:** In December 2024, the government updated the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#), requiring Herefordshire to accommodate a far greater number of new homes than previously planned. The new target is significantly higher than what the council could previously evidence, which means a new spatial strategy is needed.
- **Existing Local Plan requires updating:** The previously developed draft Local Plan was based on lower housing targets and the supporting evidence for this plan is no longer valid for the new, much larger housing requirements.
- **Adopting new legislation:** The council decided to pause the old plan and start the new one using the new plan-making system from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which is better suited for the new, higher growth targets.
- **Need for a new strategy:** The council needs to create a new spatial strategy to guide the significantly increased growth, which requires additional evidence gathering and detailed site assessments to ensure infrastructure can keep up.

The Planning and Regulatory Committee consists of 15 Councillors. The membership reflects the balance of political groups on the council. The Committee determines applications for planning permission and listed building consent in those cases where:

- (a) the application has been called in for committee determination by the relevant ward member in accordance with the redirection procedure
- (b) the application is submitted by the council, by others on council land or by or on behalf of an organisation or other partnership of which the council is a member or has a material interest, and

⁷ This analysis is based upon an even distribution, across the county, of delegated decisions. There is weakness with this calculation, insofar as, it does not consider the relative complexity of some delegated decisions or the uneven distribution of decisions across the county (some ward members/areas will have more decisions than others). It can only – therefore – be relied upon as a 'reasonable' average figure. A breakdown can be provided of number of decisions per ward member should the Commission wish for this to be undertaken.

⁸ This figure was obtained as follows: 2974 decisions ÷ 12months ÷ 53 members

		<p>where objections on material planning considerations have been received, or where the proposal is contrary to adopted planning policy</p> <p>(c) the application is submitted by a council member or a close family member such that a council member has a material interest in the application</p> <p>(d) the application is submitted by a council officer who is employed in the planning service or works closely with it, or is a senior manager as defined in the council's pay policy statement, or by a close family member such that the council officer has a material interest in the application</p> <p>(e) the application, in the view of the service director, regulatory, raises issues around the consistency of the proposal, if approved, with the adopted development plan</p> <p>(f) the application, in the reasonable opinion of the service director, regulatory, raises issues of a significant and/or strategic nature that a planning committee determination of the matter would represent the most appropriate course of action, or,</p> <p>(g) in any other circumstances where the service director, regulatory, believes the application is such that it requires a decision by the planning and regulatory committee.</p> <p>The following attend the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee, include the chairperson and vice chairperson. • Officers of the council – to present reports and give technical advice to the committee • Ward members – who have the right to start and close the member debate on an application. • Other councillors - may attend as observers but are only entitled to speak at the discretion of the chairman. <p>The Council's Constitution provides that the public will be permitted to speak at meetings of the Committee when the following criteria are met:</p> <p>a) the application on which they wish to speak is for decision at the planning and regulatory committee</p> <p>b) the person wishing to speak has already submitted written representations within the time allowed for comment</p> <p>c) once an item is on an agenda for planning and regulatory committee all those who have submitted representations will be notified and any person wishing to speak must then register that intention with the monitoring officer at least 48 hours before the meeting of the planning and regulatory committee</p> <p>d) if consideration of the application is deferred at the meeting, only those who registered to speak at the meeting will be permitted to do so when the deferred item is considered at a subsequent or later meeting</p>
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		<p>e) at the meeting a maximum of three minutes (at the chairperson's discretion) will be allocated to each speaker from a parish council, objectors and supporters and only nine minutes will be allowed for public speaking</p> <p>f) speakers may not distribute any written or other material of any kind at the meeting</p> <p>g) speakers' comments must be restricted to the application under consideration and must relate to planning issues</p> <p>h) on completion of public speaking, councillors will proceed to determine the application</p> <p>i) the chairperson will in exceptional circumstances allow additional speakers and/or time for public speaking for major applications and may hold special meetings at local venues if appropriate.</p> <p>The role of the local ward member: The ward member will have an automatic right to start and close the member debate on the application concerned, subject to the provisions on the declaration of interests as reflected in the Planning Code of Conduct in the Council's Constitution (Part 5 section 6). In the case of the ward member being a member of the Committee they will be invited to address the Committee for that item and act as the ward member as set out above. They will not have a vote on that item. To this extent all members have the opportunity of expressing their own views, and those of their constituents as they see fit, outside the regulatory controls of the Committee concerned.</p>
Licensing	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>➤ <i>How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>And what will be the time commitment for members?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</i></p>
	Analysis	<p>The Council has delegated its licensing functions to the Planning and Regulatory committee. The committee shall have responsibility (including policy and strategy) for all licensing matters (including as licensing committee under the Licensing Act 2003) other than for functions which have been reserved to Council or delegated to an officer.</p> <p>From April 2024 to March 2025, there was a total of 931 licensing matters determined by the council. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 were determined by the a 3 member licensing sub-committee (2.15% of all licenses matters) over 8 meetings – each meeting taking approximately 3 hrs • 911 were determined through delegated officer decision (97.85%) – which require no members time to review. <p>From this it is possible to provide a 'reasonable' estimate of member time, from April 2024 to March 2025 - as follows:</p>

		<p>Licensing committees – 8 (mtgs) X's 3 hrs X's 3 members = 72 hrs p/a.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This equates to approximately 24 committee member hrs p/a <p>The licensing sub-committee is a single council wide committee which came into existence in 2018. There are no plans to make any changes to this committee. There are no members of the executive who sit on this committee.</p> <p>The licensing sub-committee determines the following;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Applications for personal licences (if police objection); Applications for personal licences with unspent convictions; Applications for premises licences/club premises certificates (if relevant representation are made as specified in the Licensing Act 2003); Applications for provisional statements (if relevant representation are made as specified in the Licensing Act 2003); Applications to vary premises licences/club premises certificates (if relevant representation are made as specified in the Licensing Act 2003); Applications to vary designated premises supervisor (if police objection); Requests to be removed as a designated premises supervisor Applications for transfer of premises licence (if police objection); Applications for interim authorities (if police objection); Applications to review premises licences/club premises certificate; Deciding whether to object when the authority is a consultee and not the relevant authority considering an application; Determination of objections to temporary event notices; Determination of application to vary premises licence at community premises to include alternative licence condition (if police objection) Revocations of licences where convictions come to light Appeals in relation to refusals (full or part) for a pavement licence under Business and Planning Act 2020, and Applications for licensing Sex Establishments under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
Other Regulatory Bodies	Key lines of explanation	<p>➤ What will they be, and how many members will they require?</p> <p>➤ Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</p>
	Analysis	

		N/A. However, there is some discussion as to whether the Council should introduce a new Taxi Licensing committee. There are no timeframes associated with this and no firm commitment given that this will come in to force.
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>	<p>➤ <i>Will council members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies? In doing so, are they able to take decisions/make commitments on behalf of the council?</i></p> <p>➤ <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></p> <p>➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i></p>	
Analysis	<p>The full list of outside bodies and partnership arrangements are found at Appendix 3 and 4. They are too numerous in number to go in to full details in this section of the report. However, some background on, and benchmarking/indicative time commitments demanded of some of our more prominent outside bodies is set out below. We have triangulated these known time commitments, from the list below, with the indicative time demands members have stated they give to their respective appointments to outside bodies from the members survey (the full survey and results can be found in Appendix 5)</p> <p>Outside Body:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Police and Crime Panel: The West Mercia Police and Crime Panel is part of the governance arrangements for policing in the West Mercia area (which covers the geographical areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire). Its role is to maintain a regular check and balance on the performance of the directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner. Herefordshire Council has two attending members. There are 5 meetings per year at a duration of 3 hours per meeting. These meetings are out of county and require a minimum of 1 hr travel time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCP committees – 5 (mtgs) X's 4 hrs (3hrs + 1hr travel) X's 2 members = 40 hrs p/a This equates to approximately 20 hrs p/a per member Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire Authority: The Fire Authority comprises 6 Councillors appointed by Herefordshire Council and 19 appointed by Worcestershire County Council. As Members of the Fire Authority, Councillors do not represent the individual wards/divisions for which they were elected or even the constituent authorities by whom they were appointed. Instead they have a duty to represent the interests of the community across the two counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire as a whole. There are six Herefordshire councillors appointed to this authority 	

- HWFA hold approx. 3 mtgs X's 3hrs X's 6 members = 54 council member hrs p/a
- This equates to approximately 9 hrs p/a per member

3. English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) is a committee established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that brings together members appointed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and independent members with relevant experience for 3 purposes:

- to ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines
- to encourage efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that represents value for money and benefits local communities
- to provide a link between the Environment Agency, LLFAs, other risk management authorities, and other relevant bodies to build understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area

Herefordshire Council has one attending member. There are 3 meetings per year at a duration of 3 hours per meeting. These meetings are out of county and require a minimum of 1 hr travel time.

- **RFCC** meetings - equates to approximately 12 committee member hrs p/a

4. River Lugg Internal Drainage Board: The River Lugg Internal Drainage Board is responsible for water level management and watercourse maintenance in a defined geographical area which encompasses low-lying land within the catchments of the Rivers Lugg, Arrow, Frome, Monnow and Worm Brook. This area of rich agricultural land is dependent upon well-maintained drainage systems. The River Lugg Internal Drainage Board's rateable area comprises 11,171 ha. with 219 km. of scheduled watercourses, which are generally arterial watercourses with more than one riparian owner. Most of these watercourses are subject to regular maintenance with the others receiving attention on a less regular basis, as required. 9 Herefordshire council members sit on this board.

- **LSIDB Meetings** - approx. 3 mtgs X's 3hrs X's 9 members = 81 committee member hrs p/a
- This equates to approximately 9 hrs p/a per member

5. The Wye Valley Joint Advisory Committee: The Wye Valley National Landscape is one of 46 National Landscapes across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are nationally designated and protected landscapes cared for by locally accountable partnerships that promote and support effective long term management to keep the area special. The Wye Valley National Landscape is the only designated landscape to straddle the border between England and Wales. There are 4 Herefordshire council members who sit on the WVJAC meeting approximately 4 times per year with a meeting duration of approximately 3 hrs.

- **The WVJAC Meetings** – 4 mtgs X's 3hrs X's 4 members = 48 council member hours
- This equates to approximately 12 hrs p/a per member

6. Malvern Hills Joint Advisory Committee AONB: The Malvern Hills National Landscape Joint Advisory Committee oversees the work of the Malvern Hills National Landscape. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) were renamed in November 2023, as National Landscapes to place them alongside their larger and more well-known counterparts, National Parks. Herefordshire Council has two attending members. There are 3 meetings per year at a duration of 2 hours per meeting. These meetings are out of county and require a minimum of 1hr travel time.

- **MHJAC- AONB Meetings** - 3 mtgs X's 2hrs X's 2 members = 18 council member hrs p/a
- This equates to approximately 9 hrs p/a per member

Triangulating with evidence presented from the members survey:

As noted above, this benchmarking information has been triangulated with the responses to the member survey. 32 out of a possible 53 responses to this survey were received.

In response to the question that asked how much time do members spend on outside bodies work, per month, the following evidence was received:

- 69% of members of Herefordshire Council who sit on outside bodies spend 0 to 10 hrs per month (or up to 120 hrs p/a) on outside body duties
- 19% of members of Herefordshire Council who sit on outside bodies spend 10 to 20 hrs per month (or up to 240 hrs p/a) on outside body duties, and
- 3% of members of Herefordshire Council who sit on outside bodies spend 20 to 30 hrs per month (or up to 360 hrs p/a) on outside body duties
- 9% of responders did not answer this question.

In response to the question that asked how many outside bodies do you sit on, the following evidence was received:

- 56% of members noted that they sit on 0 to 2 outside bodies
- 25% of members noted that they sit on 2 to 4 outside bodies
- 9% of members noted that they sit on more than 5 outside bodies
- 10% of members did not answer this question

Community Leadership

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? The Commission also wants to see a consideration of **how the use of technology and social media by the council as a whole, and by councillors individually, will affect casework, community engagement and local democratic representation. Responses should demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been explored.**

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>Councillors are expected to work with partners and other organisations with which the council is actively involved. Councillors can be appointed by the council as the representative on outside bodies. They will have a responsibility to explain the council's policies and position where appropriate and to listen to the views of others and report back to the council.</p> <p>Councillors play a leading role in explaining to others outside the council how the decision-making process operates and the respective roles of members and officers have. Appendix 3 outlines the current appointments, made by the Chief Executive, of councillors to outside bodies with whom the Council has formal working relationships with appendix 4 outlining the appointments made by the Leader of the council.</p> <p>The council does not have any area committees.</p> <p>Triangulating with evidence presented from the members survey:</p> <p>Engagement topics and communication methods:</p> <p>32 out of a possible 53 responses to this survey were received.</p>

		<p>In response to the question that asked how much time do members spend interacting with their residents by email, surgeries and meetings per month, the following evidence was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% of members of Herefordshire Council said 0 to 10 hours (or up to 120 hrs p/a) on outside body duties • 50% of members of Herefordshire Council said 10 to 20 hrs per month (or up to 240 hrs p/a) on outside body duties, and • 25% of members of Herefordshire Council said 20 to 30 hrs per month (or up to 360 hrs p/a) • 6% of members of Herefordshire Council said 30 to 40 hrs per month (or up to 480 hrs p/a) • 6% of members of Herefordshire Council said more than 40 hrs per month. • 10% of responders did not answer this question. <p>Membership of, frequency of attendance at Parish Council Meetings.</p> <p>In response to question 11 about how many parish council do ward members sit on, the following evidence was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6% said they were not a member of any parish council. • 34% said they were a member of 3 to 4 parish councils • 9% said they were a member of 1 to 2 parish councils • 40% said they were a member of 5 or more parish council • 11% of responders did not answer this question. <p>In response to question 12⁹ about how often you attend parish council meetings, the following evidence was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.5% % said they attend parish council meetings on a weekly basis. • 62.5% % said they attend parish council meetings on a monthly basis. • 19% said they attend parish council meetings every other month • 3% said they attend parish council meetings yearly • 6% said they never attend a parish meeting
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>➤ <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></p> <p>➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>In what ways does the council promote service users' engagement/dispute resolution with service providers and managers rather than through councillors?</i></p>

⁹ To note – this question was answered by 34 responders which would indicate at least two members provide more than one answer

		<p>Triangulating with evidence presented from the members survey:</p> <p>32 out of a possible 53 responses to this survey were received.</p> <p>Case work:</p> <p>In response to question 8 about the main types of council activity their ward work relates to the following evidence was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Highways was the most common element of ward level engagement activity – with 29 members listing this • Street cleaning was the second most common element of ward level engagement activity – with 24 members listing this • Housing was the third most common element of ward level engagement activity – with 18 members listing this • Waste services (13 members) and customer services (16 members) were the fourth and fifth most common elements of ward level engagement <p>In response to question 9 about the main ways in which members engage with their ward members, the following evidence was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletters and leaflets were listed as the most common way of ward level engagement activity – with 23 members listing this • Community/public meetings were listed as the second most common way of ward level engagement activity – with 22 members listing this • Surgeries (14 members) and Social Media (14 members) were listed – equally - as the third most common way of ward level engagement activity <p>In response to question 10 about the main ways in which residents contact their ward members, the following evidence was received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email was listed as the most common way in which members were contacted by their constituents – with 29 members listing this as their response • Phone was listed as the second most common way in which members were contacted by their constituents – with 28 members listing this as their response • Direct contact was listed as the third most common way in which members were contacted by their constituents – with 23 members listing this as their response • Surgeries (13 members) and Social Media (13 members) were listed – equally - as the fourth most common way members were contacted by their constituents
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Summary

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 governance arrangements and number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future.

Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate 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.

Council Size – proposed recommendations.

Herefordshire Council has been mindful of the overall appropriateness of the proposed council size in terms of this electoral review. Specifically looking to set out our current arrangements regarding the discharge of our statutory functions; the current councillor numbers to deliver those functions, and future-proofing the deliverability of those functions to 2031.

Recommendations – Council size.

Recommendation 1: *Herefordshire Council retain the current council size of 53 members, requesting that the Commission focus on making boundary adjustments to ensure electoral fairness is maintained in areas showing an electoral imbalance of more than 10% from the average ratio for that authority.*

The preferred option.

Explanatory note:

Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulatory and Partnerships): Members considered and agreed new governance arrangements in May 2022. Two additional scrutiny committees were introduced, raising the number of scrutiny committees from three to five. The regulatory and partnership arrangements, as set out in the councils earlier draft submission, are also guided by periodical annual reviews of effectiveness of the council's constitution. The most recent review, May 2025, recommending no structural changes to current arrangements, but moving to different ways of working to maintain and strengthen current scrutiny arrangements. Please see: [Annual review of effectiveness – Scrutiny review](#)

Strategic Leadership: The Council has operated a leader and cabinet system of governance since the Council was established in 1998. This is unlikely to change given the recent government position in regard to abolishing the committee system of local authority governance. Council has agreed its four-year Council Plan (2024 to 2028) which is in turn supported by executive delivery arrangements through annual delivery plans.

Executive arrangements are kept under review: The Cabinet currently comprises of 10 members (which includes the Leader). The cabinet has constitutional scope and authority given to it to update and modify its strategic leadership around existing and new priorities. The numbers of, and portfolio arrangements, are kept under review. Most recently, in May 2025, the Leader increased the number of cabinet portfolios from 9 to 10. The new portfolio created reflects emerging priorities within the council's 2025 to 2026 delivery plan

Non-executive arrangements are kept under review: through annual effectiveness reviews of committees presented to the annual council meetings. The most recent review, was October 2024, recommending no structural changes to current arrangements, but moving to different ways of working to

maintain and bring the constitution up to date and amend the Planning and Regulatory; Audit and Governance; Budget and Policy Framework items; Employment Rules; Fostering Panel and criteria for call-in of executive decisions. Please see: [\(Public Pack\)Supplement: Constitution Updates Agenda Supplement for Council, 11/10/2024 10:00;](#)

Future changes: The council is mindful of the limitations we have as a council to looking ahead to future drivers of change, notably around the government's devolution framework. The council is currently assessing what 'devolution' may mean for Herefordshire and no decisions have yet been made. We expect further updates from government in due course, we will then, as a council, set out what options are considered right for the county.

This recommendation is based on the council's relatively stable position as an established unitary authority. It is also based on the council's most recent review of our constitutional provisions and annual reviews of the effectiveness of the council in terms of performing its key functions. The council – for the foreseeable future (the next two-to-three-year window) – is unlikely to see any significant differences to, or variations in, current council business and workloads.

The working group members have some initial ideas about how boundary changes can reintroduce 'electoral fairness' where the forecasted variance is likely to exceed 10% variance, without any intervention. We invite the Electoral Review team to explore these ideas as a proactive underpinning/contribution to the 'evidence led' considerations as they conduct the review.

Recommendation 2: *That wherever it is possible to do so, the LGBCE retain a one-member ward electoral arrangement. The preferred option.*

Explanatory Note: On 10 October, Herefordshire Council agreed, unanimously (with just one abstention) to retain its current electoral arrangements of one member per ward. The council decision can be viewed here: [Electoral Review: Proposing the number of members per ward](#)

In taking this decision, members of the council were advised that although the council has resolved and recommended one member per ward arrangements, this does not guarantee that those arrangements will continue. The Commission has noted that *'it will endeavour to construct a uniform pattern of wholly single member wards/divisions except where that would not be the best balance of our statutory criteria of electoral equality, community identities and interests and effective and convenient local government'*.

Recommendation 3 – Increase the council size to address electoral imbalances in electoral arrangement by 2031 by no more than 2 to 3 new wards/council members. A less preferred option.

Explanatory Note:

Herefordshire is showing 17, out of the 53 council wards (in 2025 and/or forecasted in 2031) as having a variance of greater than 10% from the forecasted average for the county by 2031. This represents just over 32% of wards in the county. The forecasted growth in the electorate by 2031 is just over 7.5% (from 147,917 to 160,056 locally eligible electors). There are 12 wards that are showing a greater variance of 10% - the Commission's preferred measure, as follows: 3 wards with an electorate more than 15% above the average by 2031 – Bircher, Holmer & Ledbury North; 4 wards with an electorate between 10-15% above the average by 2031 – Hagley, Penyard & Ross East & North, and 5 wards with an electorate between 10 -15% below the average by 2031 – Aylestone, Bobblestock, Old Gore, Tupsley & Widemarsh

The council is not seeking to influence the Commission, in terms of recommending any new wards/council seats at this stage. It is however, recommending that boundary changes wherever possible, to achieve electoral fairness, should be the priority of the LGBCE's electoral review team. Focus on creating new wards and new council seats should only be recommended where boundary adjustments cannot deliver the desired electoral fairness outcome sought by the commission. The Council recognises that boundary adjustments alone, may not achieve this outcome.

Not being recommended: Reduce the number of Councillors

The option of reducing the number of councillors has been considered. Based on the 2031 forecasted figures and the above explanatory note set out in recommendation 1 above, there is no compelling evidence to support this option.

Appendix 1: Table 1: Cabinet Member Portfolios (as amended in May 2025)

Leader (corporate strategy and budget): Councillor Jonathan Lester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate policy and strategy • Corporate budget • Represent the Council on various business and economy organisations including the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, Herefordshire Business Board and the Enterprise Zone Board. Working with the Portfolio holder for the Economy. • Governance of external arrangements with companies, outside bodies and partnerships • Member of the Council's Shareholder Committee • External liaison and relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local Government Association (LGA)/County Councils' Network (CCN) ○ European and national matters ○ Regional matters ○ Marches Local Enterprise Partnership • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council • Any initiative not specifically allocated to any other portfolio
Environment (Deputy Leader): Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputise for the Leader in their absence. • Waste Management Strategy • Waste collection and disposal • Cabinet Commission on Phosphates • Planning services, land use strategies including Core Strategy • Environmental and conservation promotion, protection and sustainability including response to climate emergency. • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader
Community Services and Assets: Councillor Harry Bramer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council asset, investment property strategies and property strategies • Council property services including facilities management

- Major Contracts
- Commissioning and procurement strategy and policy
- Community services:
 - Parks and countryside
 - Leisure Services
 - Cultural services
 - Libraries
 - Heritage Services
 - Archives
 - Public conveniences
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Children and Young People: Councillor Ivan Powell

- To provide leadership and ensure coordination across the range of council children's services, and through engagement with partners, with a particular focus on children and young people's health & wellbeing and safeguarding
- Services for vulnerable young people/children/families
- Lead member for children's services in accordance with the Children's Act 2004
- Corporate parenting
- Children and young people's education and attainment
- Post 16 education, training and skills development, including NMiTE
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Finance and Corporate Services: Councillor Pete Stoddart

- Agreeing and leading the process for developing revenue and capital budgets, medium term financial strategy, council tax and NNDR
- Financial policy, fees and charging policy, financial control and reporting
- Council tax benefits
- Council ICT services and digital strategy
- Human Resources
- Health and safety
- Performance, improvement, risk management, research and intelligence

- Services under Governance and Legal Services
- Registrars and Coroner Services
- Communications, and social media including website
- Digital Connectivity
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Adults, Health and Wellbeing: Councillor Carole Gandy

- Provide leadership and ensure coordination across the range of council adult social care services, and through engagement with partners
- Services for vulnerable adults
- Adult safeguarding
- Homelessness, housing allocation and condition
- Leadership of Health and Wellbeing Board and partnership working with health
- Co-chair of the Integrated Care Partnership Assembly
- Member of the Council's Shareholder Committee for Hoople
- Public Health Strategy
- Emergency planning and business continuity
- Community engagement and development, encompassing Talk Community, Talk Parish Summits and Parish Shared Services
- Customer services
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Community Safety including the Community Safety Partnership
- Bereavement services
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Economy and Growth: Councillor Graham Biggs

- Economic development and regeneration
- Strategic Housing
- Tourism strategy
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader.

Local Engagement & Community Resilience: Councillor Dan Hurcomb

- Future Public Realm Contract.
- Land Drainage, flood alleviation.
- Public Rights of Way.
- Highways Act Enforcement.
- Parish Council Grant Schemes.
- Communications and Social Media.
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader.

Roads and Regulatory Services: Cllr Barry Durkin

- Animal health and welfare
- Environmental health and trading standards
- Markets and fairs
- Licensing
- Car parking policy and services
- Public realm contract management
- Gypsy and traveller services
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Transport and Infrastructure: Councillor Philip Price

- Transport and highways policy and strategy
- Public Transport and active travel measures
- Rivers and waterways
- Street scene design, policy and delivery
- Traffic Management
- Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio at all times having regard to the cross-cutting priorities of the council
- Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the leader

Appendix 2: The five scrutiny committee remits (as amended in May 2022)

The table below sets out the list of each of the five committee remits. This is not an exhaustive list and where a scrutiny item falls outside of the remit of the committee, or it is unclear as to which scrutiny committee should take the lead, SMB has the responsibility for deciding which committee should scrutinise a matter.

Committee	Scrutiny of:
Health Care and Wellbeing scrutiny committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult social care (including adult safeguarding) • Health and wellbeing board • Housing • Adults mental and physical health & wellbeing • Safe Herefordshire campaign • Outbreak control plan • New models of care accommodation • Talk Communities • Homelessness • All ages whole system commissioning strategy • Independent living services and Assistive technology plan • Adults and Communities budget and policy framework • Statutory health scrutiny powers including the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning provision and operation of health services affecting the area and to make reports and recommendations on these matters
Children and Young People scrutiny committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's social care including safeguarding • Online teaching & home learning • Signs of Safety • Children and families policy framework items • Statutory education scrutiny powers • Children's mental and physical health & wellbeing • Schools investment programme • Children's Improvement Board and the oversight of the required improvement journey.
Connected Communities scrutiny committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk Business programme, advice and support • Development Investment plans – town, market town, rural, Hereford City • Hereford Enterprise Zone • Higher education development • Adult and community learning programme • Apprenticeships • Fastershire programme • Digital connectivity • Heritage, culture & tourism • Social Value procurement policy • Planning • Licensing • Regulatory • Capital highway maintenance, Asset management & infrastructure repair • Council housing • Statutory community safety and policing scrutiny powers
Environment and Sustainability scrutiny committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core strategy • Waste & recycling • Transport incl. active travel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate & ecological emergency • Climate and nature impact assessment on infrastructure proposals • Environmental and energy efficiency standards • Nature strategy - Stewardship of natural resources & green spaces • Integrated wetlands & water quality • Statutory flood risk management scrutiny powers
Scrutiny Management Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake the scrutiny role in relation to areas which are cross cutting nature e.g. Corporate Strategy and Finance (Budget), People and Performance and Corporate Support. • Where a matter falls within the remit of one or more Scrutiny Committees, decide which Committee will consider it and whether a spotlight, task and finish or standing panel review is appropriate • Budget • Treasury Management • Approve an annual work programme for itself and the other scrutiny committees • Oversee communications to members and public in relation to scrutiny matters • The coordination of an annual effectiveness review • Oversight of performance of Council's companies, e.g. Hoople

Appendix 3: Outside Bodies: Appointments by Chief Executive following consultation with Group Leaders.

Body	Appointee
Bringsty Common Manorial Court (W)	Cllr P Stoddart
Bromyard Downs Commons Association (W)	Cllr P Stoddart
County Councils Network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Hitchiner 2. Cllr James 3. Cllr Toynbee 4. Cllr Lester
English Severn & Wye Regional Flood & Coastal Committee	1. Cllr Price
Hereford BID Board*	1. Cllr Biggs (cabinet member)
Hereford Business Board	Leader – Cllr Lester
Hereford Centre for Cyber Security Joint Venture	Ross Cook Rachael Hart
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Joint Members Waste Resource Management Forum	1. Cllr Swinglehurst
Herefordshire Local Access Forum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Peberdy 2. Cllr Highfield
Hereford Towns Funding Board	1. Cllr Biggs (cabinet member) + Leader to observe
Hoople (officer appointments_	Tracey Sampson Hilary Hall
Local Government Association	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Phillips 2. Cllr James 3. Cllr Harvey 4. Cllr Chowns
*The next meeting of LGA General Assembly will be held on Tuesday 4 July at 11.45am in Bournemouth.	
Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board	1. Cllr Harvey
Malvern Hills Trust (Does not have to be a Councillor)	1. No current HC Councillors appointed
Malvern Hills Joint Advisory Committee AONB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Harvey 2. Cllr Heathfield
Nutrient Management Board	1. Cllr Swinglehurst
Patrol Joint Committee (Organised by Civil Car Parking)	1. Cllr Durkin
River Lugg Internal Drainage Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Swinglehurst 2. Cllr Phillips 3. Cllr Stone 4. Cllr Biggs 5. Cllr Hurcomb 6. Cllr Hamblin 7. Cllr Highfield 8. Cllr Tulley 9. Cllr Jamie Audsley from the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

	10. Cllr Woodall 11. Jon Fry Wye Usk
Rural Services Network (SPARSE)	1. Cllr Phillips 2. Cllr Hitchiner (
South West Audit Partnership – Members Group	1. Cllr Hitchiner
West Midlands Employers	2. Leader
West Mercia Police & Crime Panel 1 Conservative (substantive) and 1 ‘Other’ (co-opted)	1. Cllr Durkin (V.Chair) 2. Cllr Harvey
West Midlands Rail Ltd 1 Conservative (substantive) and 1 ‘Other’ (co-opted)	1. Leader 2. Deputy –Cllr Price.
Worcestershire Local Pension Board	1. Cllr Phillips
Worcestershire Pensions Committee	1. Cllr Stoddart
Worcestershire Pensions Investment Sub-Committee	1. Cllr Stoddart
Wye Navigation Advisory Committee	1. Cllr Swinglehurst 2. (Vacant)
Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee (W) Backbury Kerne Bridge Old Gore Ross East	1. Cllr Durkin 2. Cllr Biggs 3. Cllr Simeon Cole 4. Cllr Ed O’Driscoll

Appendix 4: Appointments to Outside Bodies made by the Leader of the Council.

Body	Group	Councillor
Fire Authority (6)	Conservative	1. Cllr D Davies 2. Cllr Phillips
	Green	3. Cllr Toynbee
	Independents for Herefordshire	4. Cllr Boulter
	Liberal Democrats	5. Cllr Carwardine
	Unaligned member	6. Cllr Kenyon
SACRE (3 seats)	Conservative	1. Cllr John Stone
	Liberal Democrats	2. Cllr Rob Owens
	Green	7. Cllr Peberdy

Adult Safeguarding Board (L)*	Cllr Carole Gandy
Children's Safeguarding Quality and Effectiveness Group (L)*	Cllr Powell
Community Safety Partnership (L)*	Cllr Carole Gandy
Health and Wellbeing Board (L)*	Cllr Gandy (Chair) Cllr Lester (Leader) Cllr Powell
Herefordshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership (L)	Cllr Durkin
Midlands Connects Partnership Advisory Board (L)* (This will be the current Leader of the Council)	Cllr Lester
Herefordshire Enterprise Zone Executive Board (L)*	Leader Cllr Lester Paul Walker - Chief Executive
Herefordshire Local Climate Nature Board (L)*	Cllr Swinglehurst
Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership (L)*	Cllr Swinglehurst
Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd (L)*	Leader Cllr Lester Deputy Cllr Biggs
Midlands Connects Partnership Advisory Board (L)*	Leader Cllr Lester
West Mercia Energy Joint Committee (L)*	1. Cllr Stoddart 2. Cllr Biggs

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (the Commission) Electoral Review of Herefordshire Council.

2025 Councillor Questionnaire

In May, the Commission indicated its intention to conduct an Electoral Review in Herefordshire. Electoral reviews look at whether the boundaries of wards within a local authority need to be altered. An electoral review is an examination of a council's electoral arrangements. Within scope of an electoral review is consideration of:

1. the total number of members to be elected to the council;
2. the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards) for the purposes of the election of councillors;
3. the number of councillors for any electoral area of a local authority; and
4. the name of any electoral area.

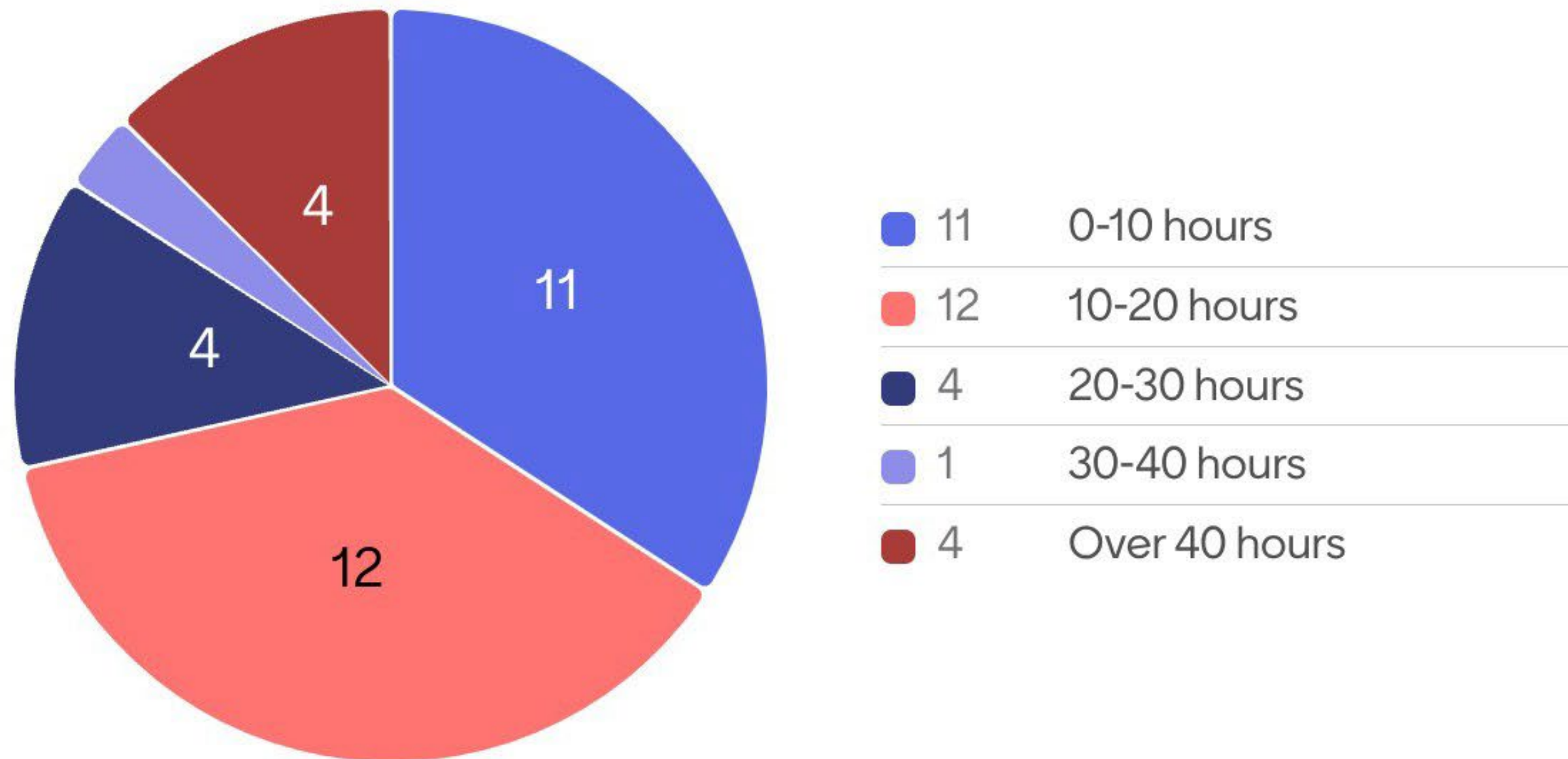
The following short questionnaire will enable you to tell us about your workloads as a councillor and invites you to consider whether there are any changes to your local ward boundaries.

For example, are there parts of your ward where the community share a close identity with a neighbouring ward? Are there natural geographical boundaries, such as roads or rivers, that might more naturally be aligned to an adjacent ward.

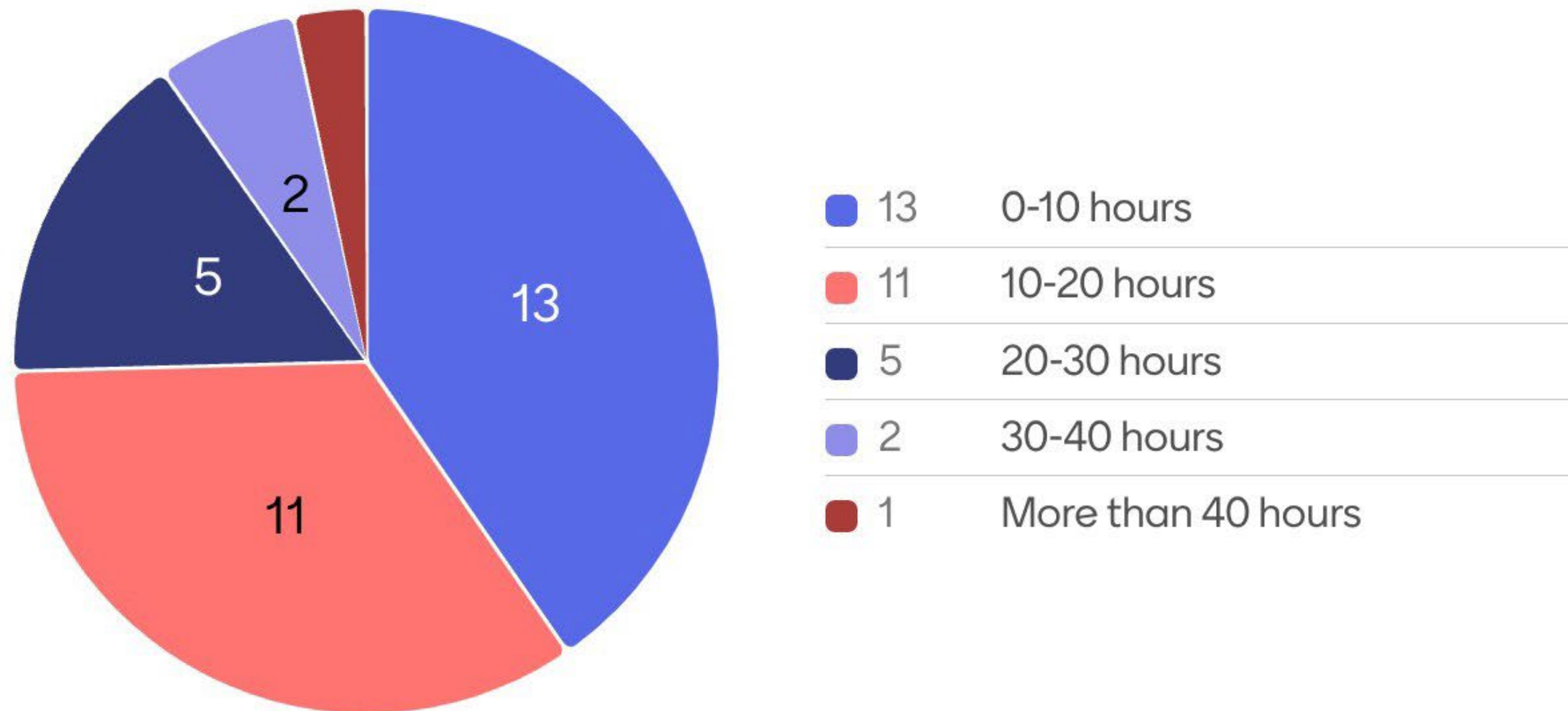
This is your chance to highlight your views and share these with the Local Government Boundary Commissions electoral review team. Your feedback will be taken into account as part of their consultation and review of our current electoral arrangements.



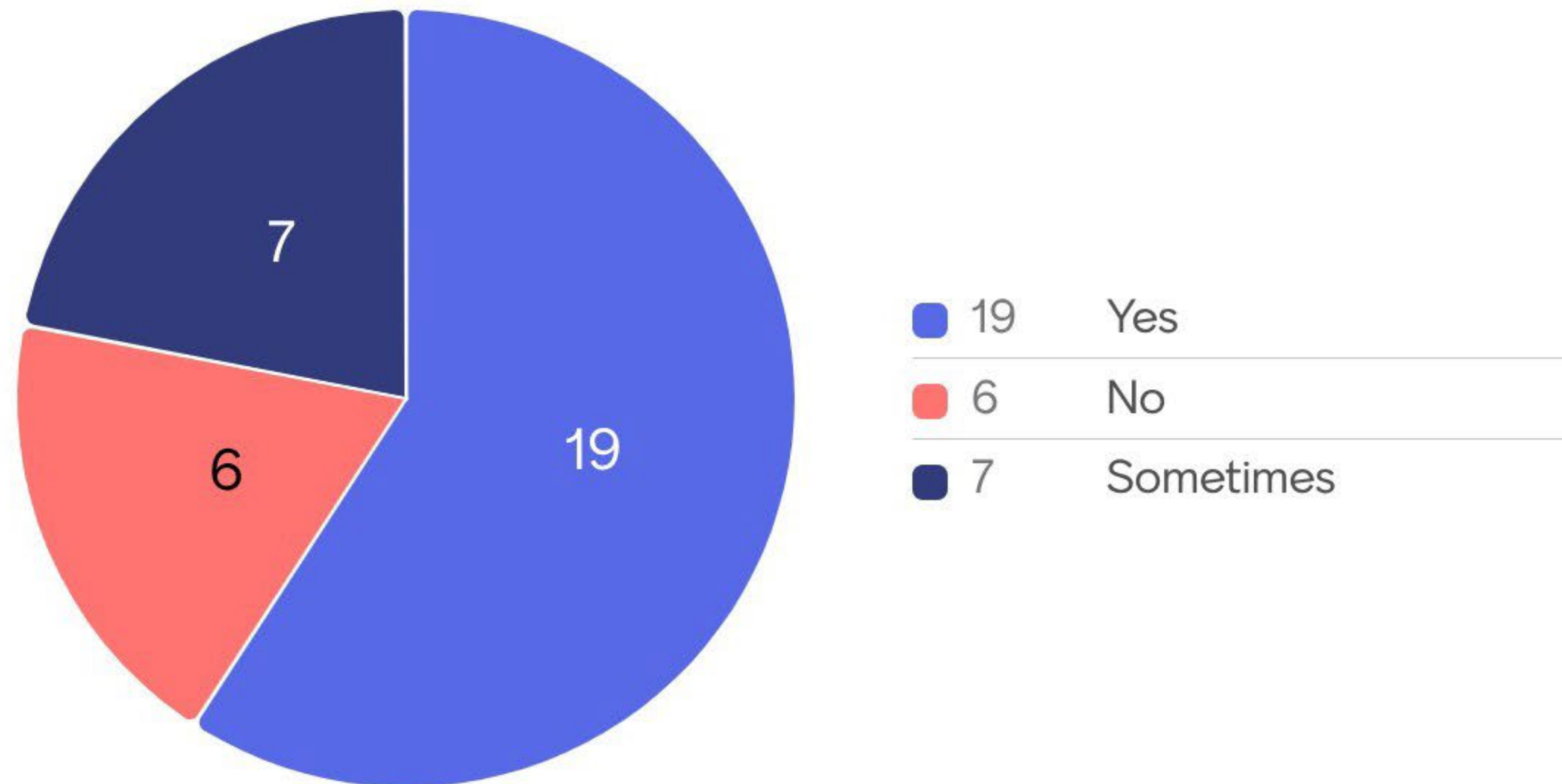
1. How much time do you spend attending Herefordshire Council formal committee meetings in an average month?



2. How much time do you spend preparing for Herefordshire Council committee meetings on average every month?



3. Do you feel that you have enough time to prepare for meetings to your satisfaction?



4. If you answered no to question 3, what are the challenges you face in preparing for meetings?

Work and family commitments. Papers published with less than a week before meetings

Usually sufficient time if reports are available in time to read.

Not applicable

other responsibilities
Late arrival of information

nsibilities Other responsibilities Late arrival of information. Slow response to questions

Papers not being ready to give sufficient time to read them thoroughly.

Not enough time to read through the papers because they are not ready in time

N/A

4. If you answered no to question 3, what are the challenges you face in preparing for meetings?

N/A

For Planning Committee meetings there are often many hundreds of pages of technical reports to read in one week.

Ensuring that I have enough time to read through all technical reports.

Sometimes papers arrive late or not at all - for PGCs etc.

Poor councillor attendance at preparatory meetings for scrutiny sessions reduces the effectiveness of the meeting and wastes the time of members and officers who want to take a whole committee approach

Depends on the timing of meetings with Ross Town Council Cttes. Vice-Chair of three of them

Documents are too long. Meetings are like proverbial buses - sometimes they all come together at the same time.

Papers sent out with only a day or less to go to the meeting

4. If you answered no to question 3, what are the challenges you face in preparing for meetings?

Lack of forward time to prepeare

Getting agendas on time.

Getting agendas and information on time.

None

Being a cabinet member there are multi papers to comprehend and comment upon. at regular and many meetings. In addition to my ward work and my cabinet portfolio role.

NA

Some times the amount of information that is to be read is significant taking up a lot of time. Such as some scrutiny committee reports and planning.

Some reports are very long and there have been occasions where there have been multiple reports taking a long time to read and understand.

4. If you answered no to question 3, what are the challenges you face in preparing for meetings?

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insufficient time between receipt of committee documentation and meetings /site visits & committee meeting. Wednesday is a popular PC meeting evening same a Planning meetings.

Time. A lot of documentation and little time to prepare and digest, plus you have a lot of other council work within your ward

Time, need more time to digest documentation

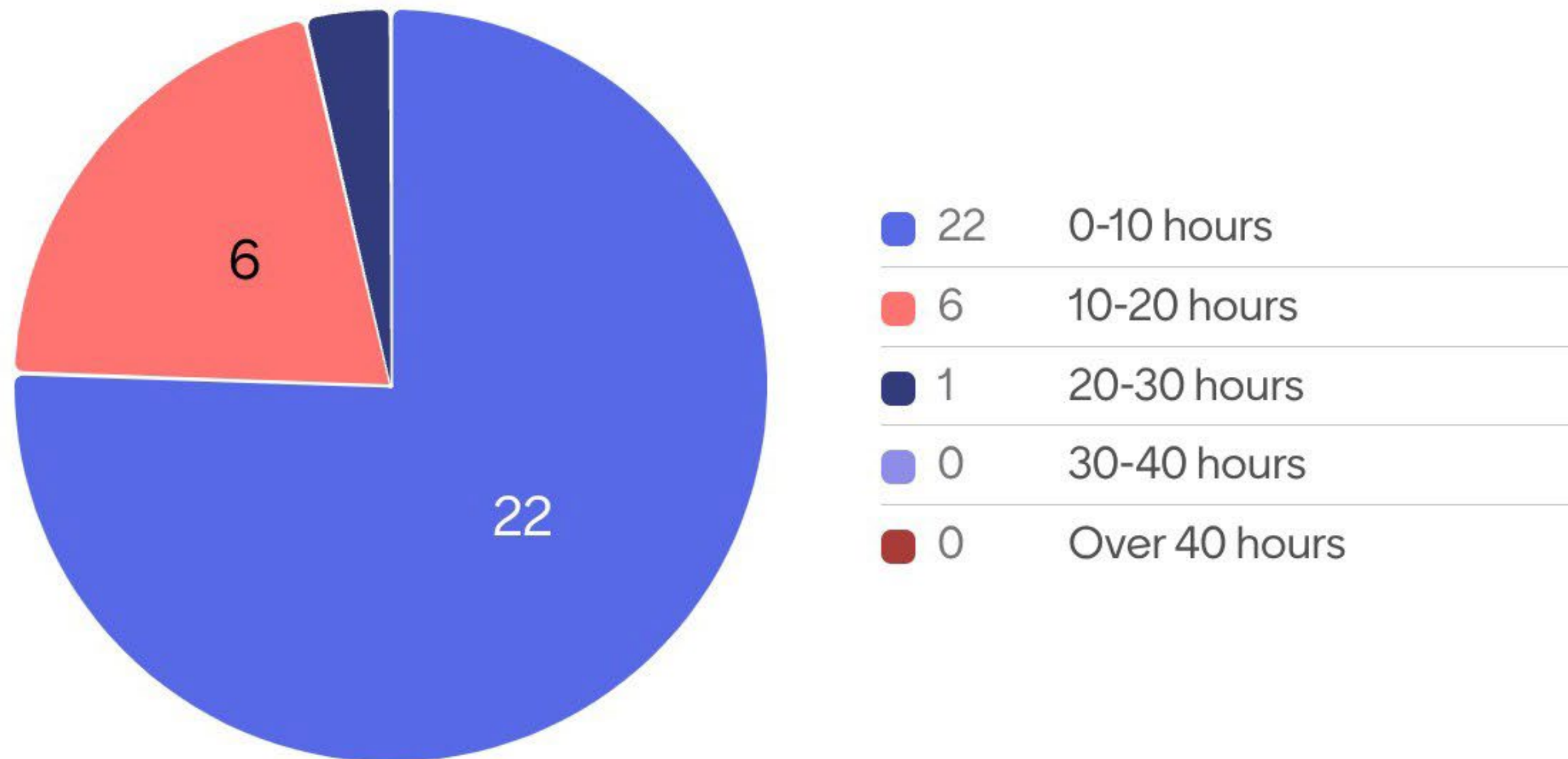
Time and information

I read papers as early as possible in order to have time to consider the implications.

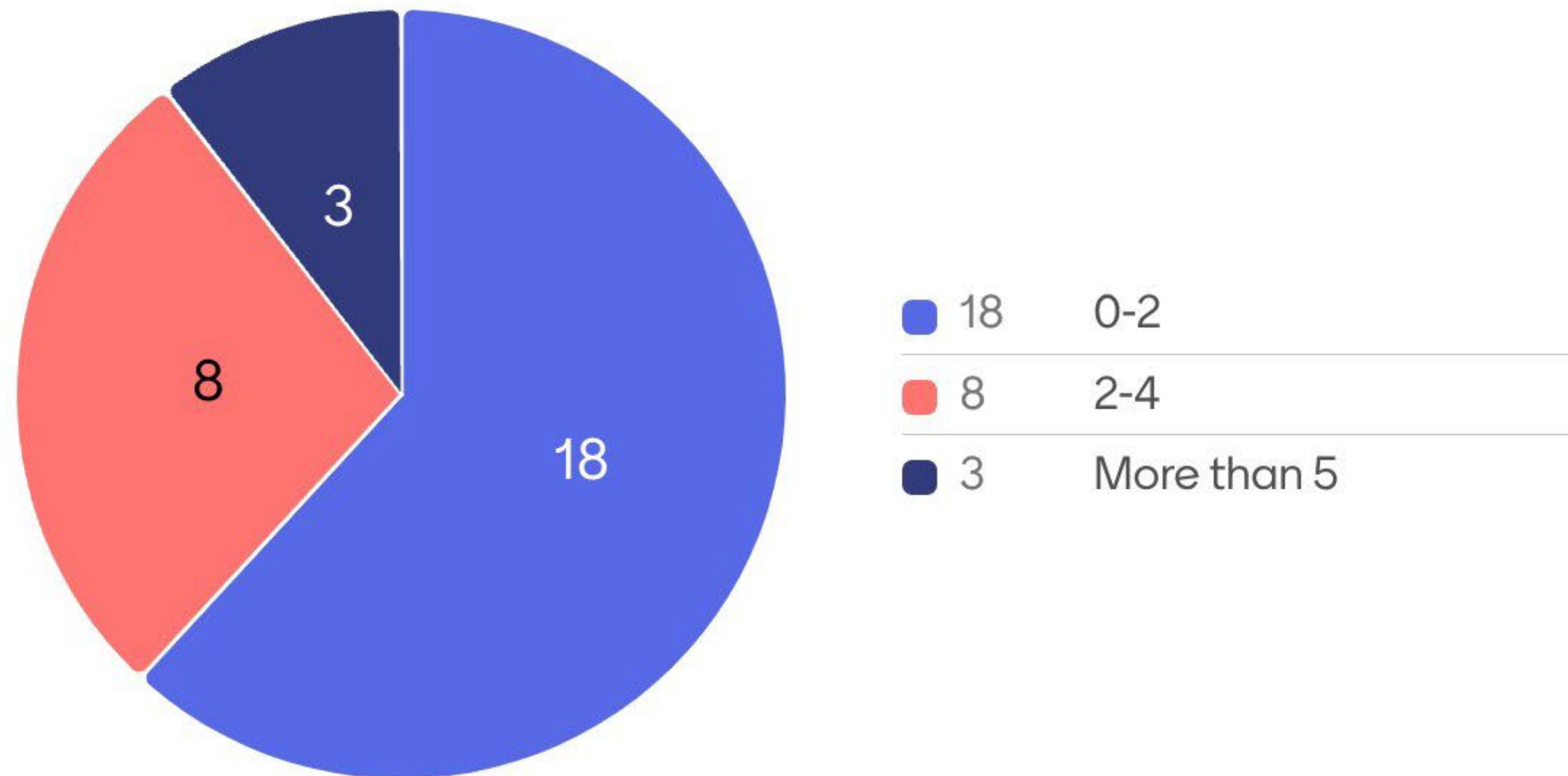
Work life balance. I have a full time job and family commitments. We are required to be experts across a vast field of subjects and there is never enough time to prepare properly.

Work/life balance. I have a full time job and family commitments. Cllrs are expected to grasp extremely complex and difficult issues and make informed decisions ... there can never be enough time.

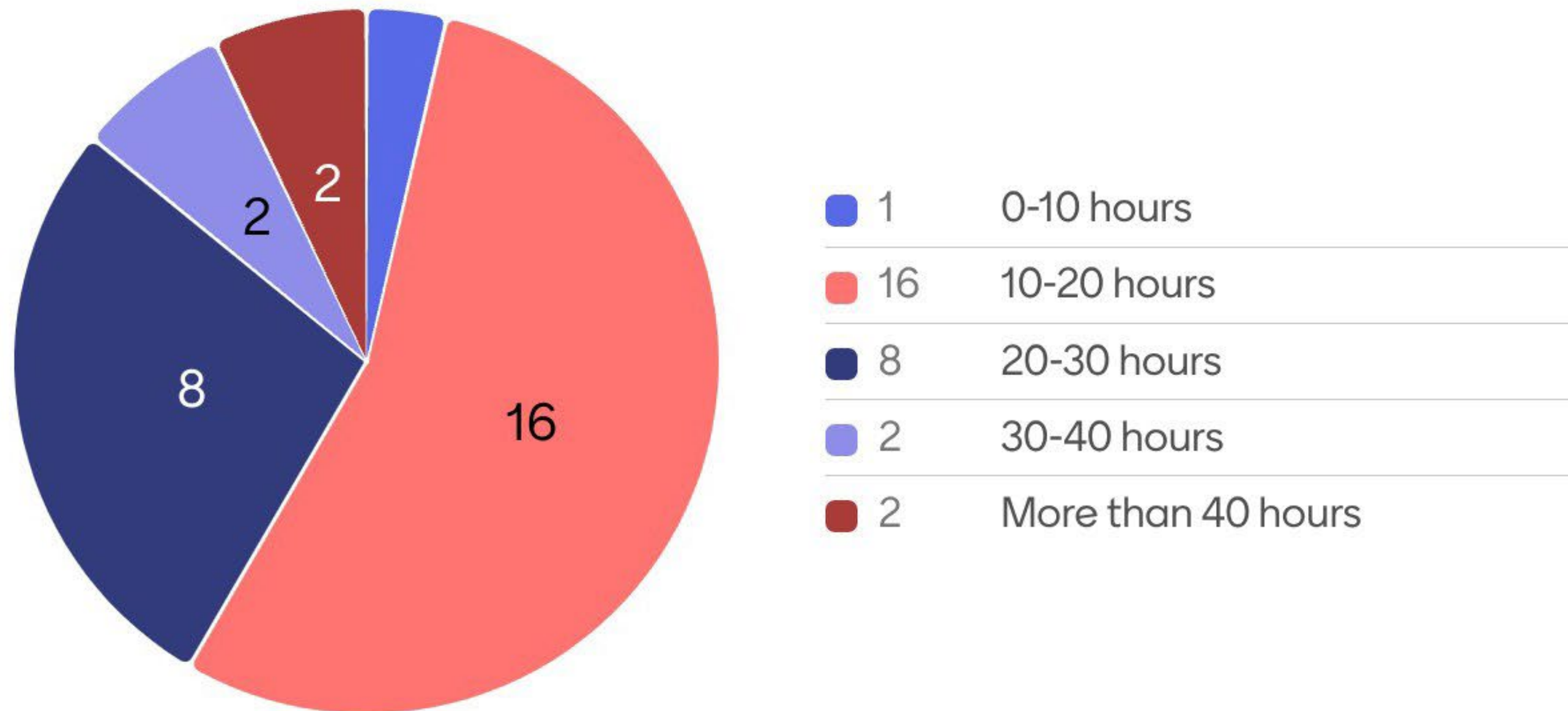
5. In a month how many hours do you spend in meetings of formally recognised outside bodies you have been appointed to by Herefordshire Council?



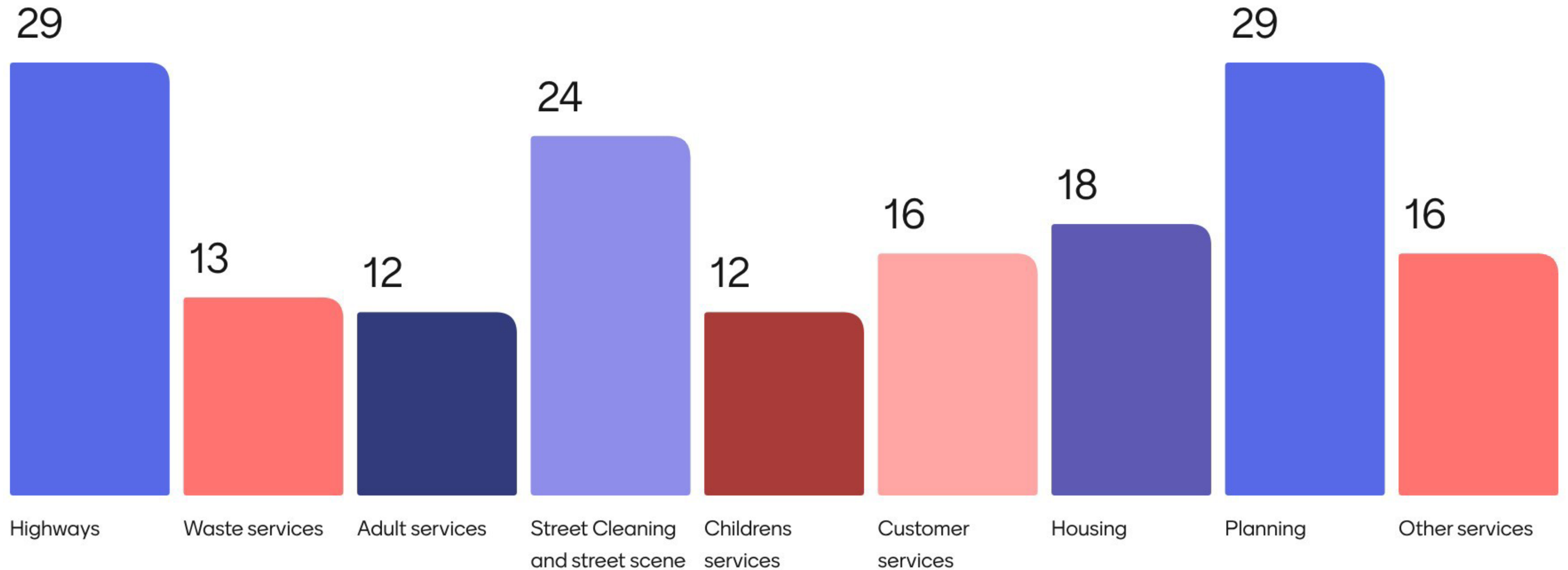
6. How many formally recognised outside bodies are you appointed to?



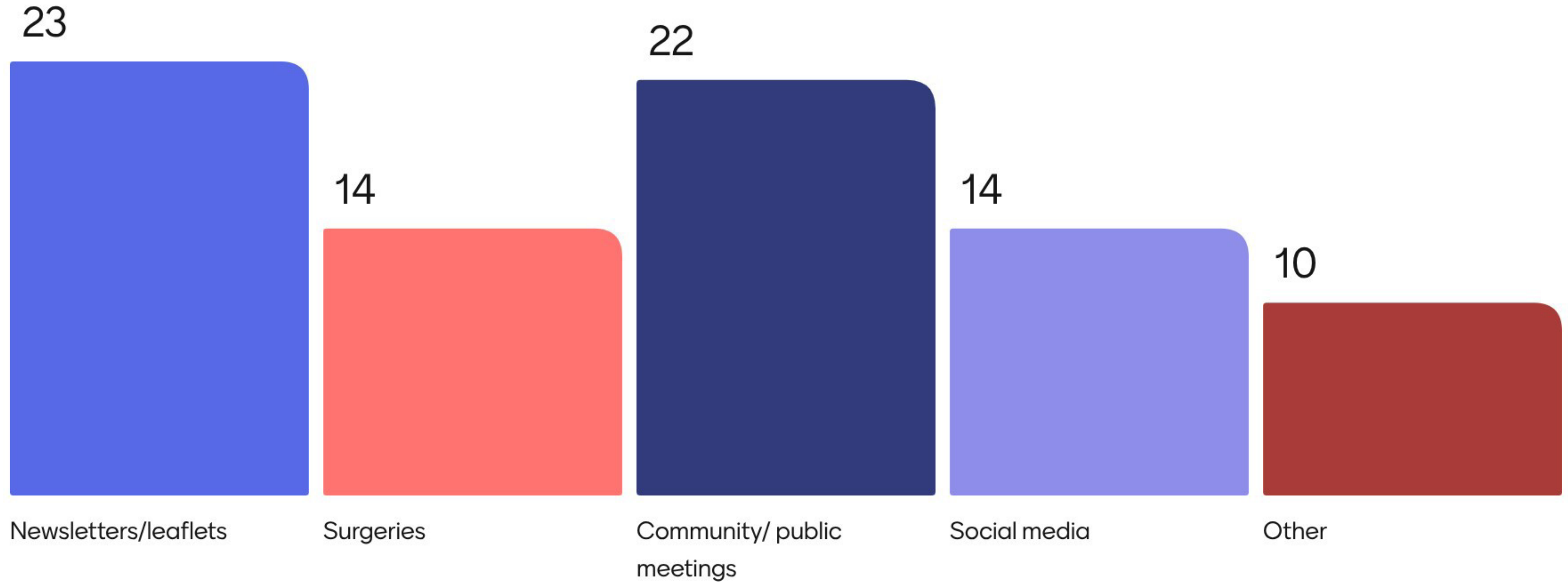
7. How much time in an average month do you spend interacting with residents i.e. by telephone, email, meetings, surgeries?



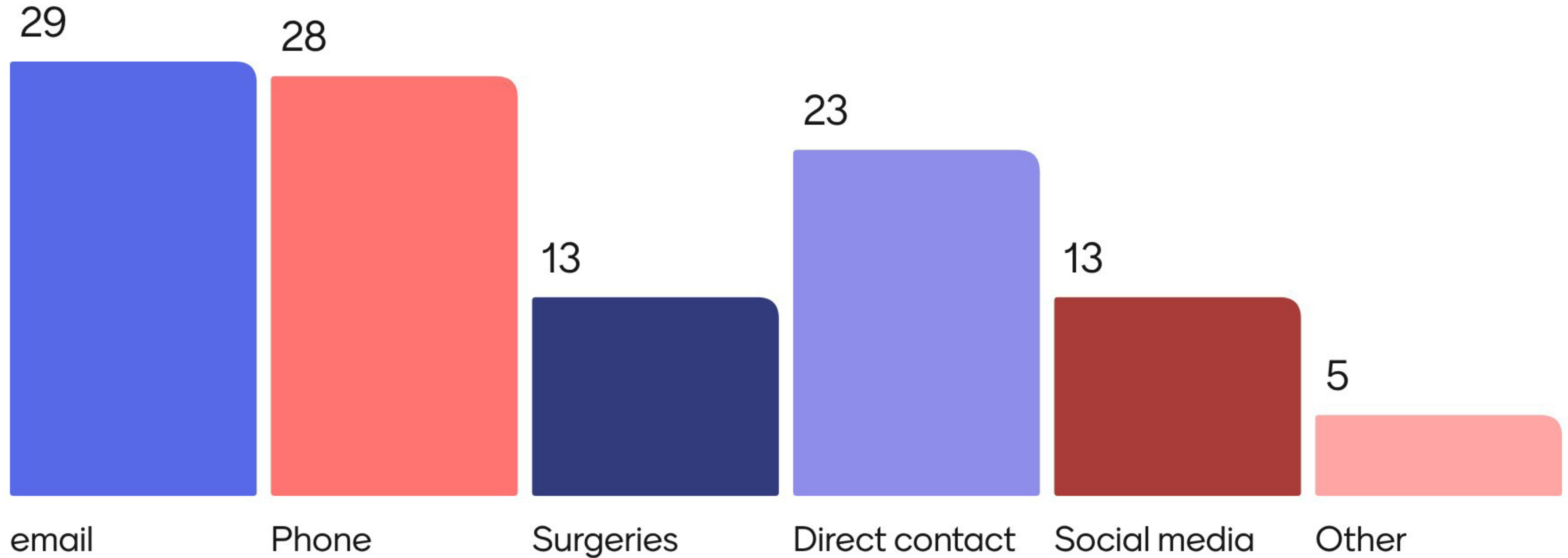
8. What type of council activity does your ward work relate to?



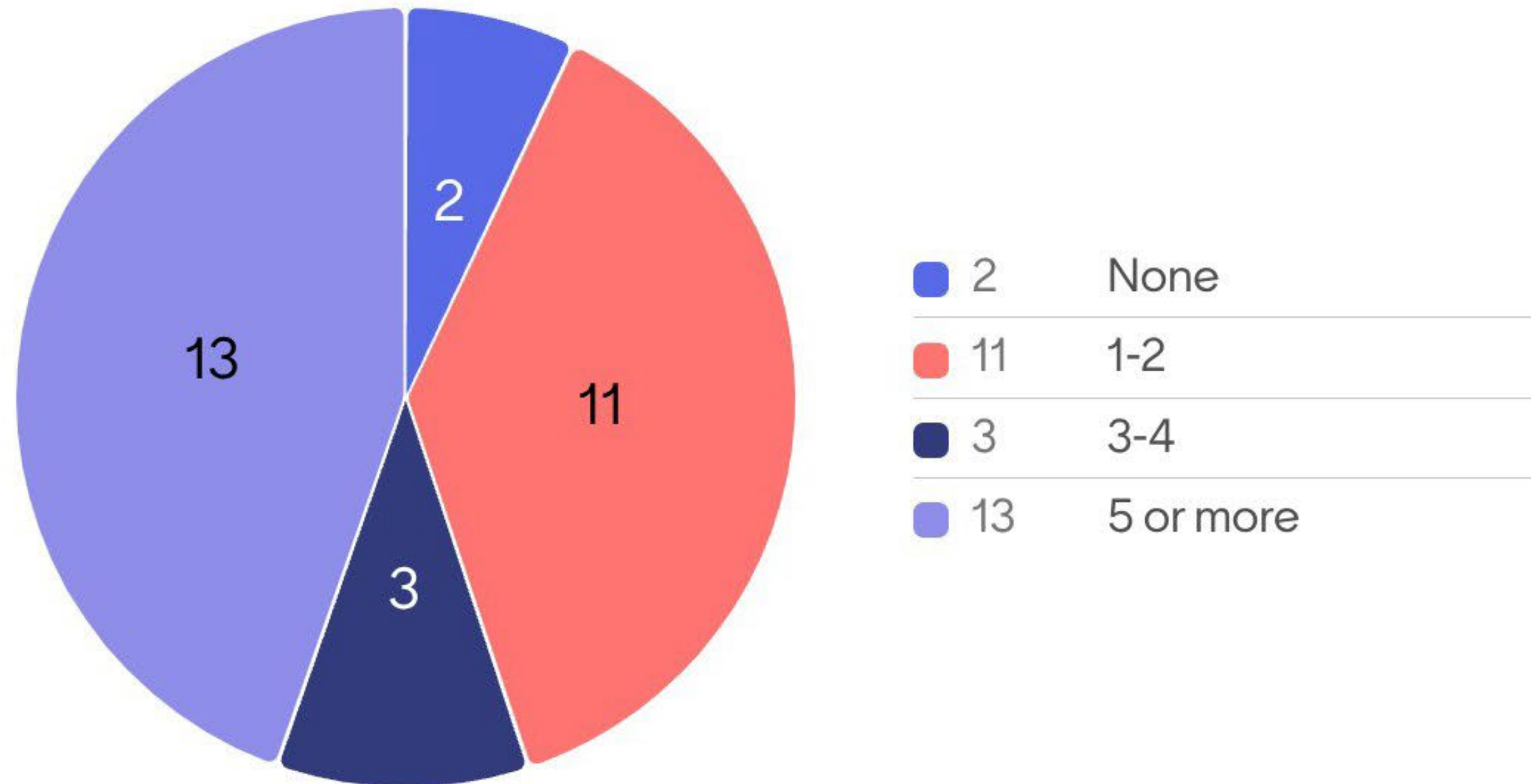
9. In undertaking your role as a councillor what kind of activities do you undertake to engage with residents and obtain feedback?



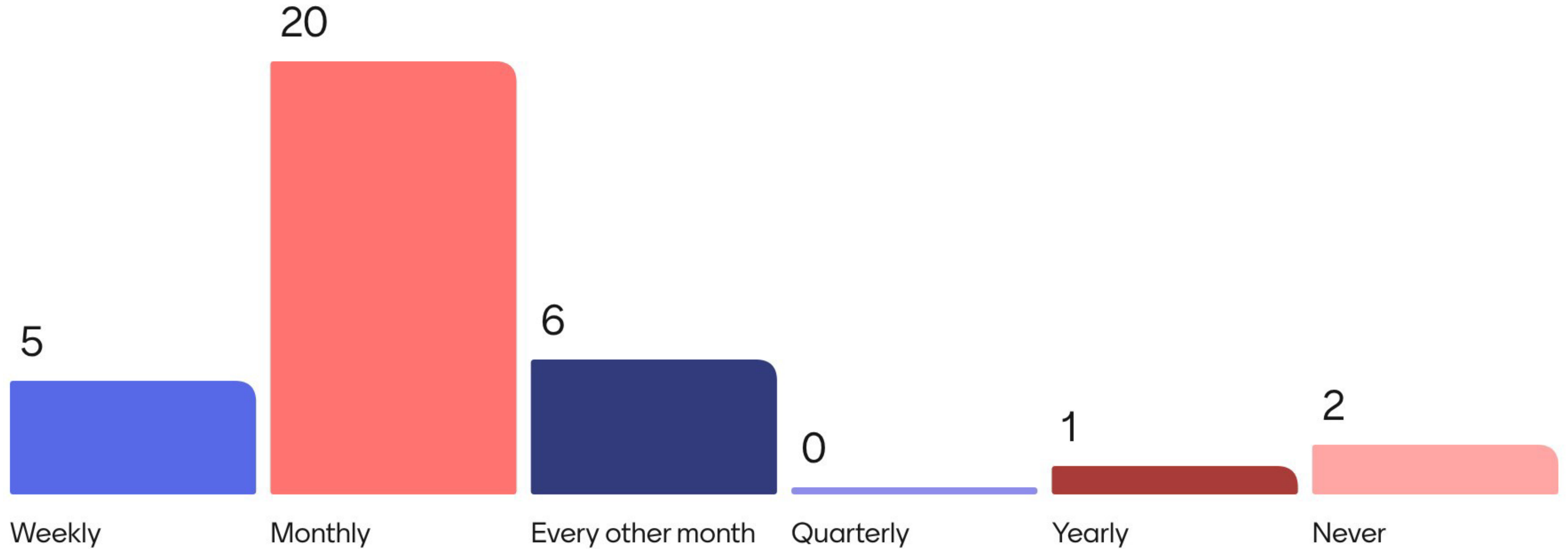
10. How do residents contact you with their issues?



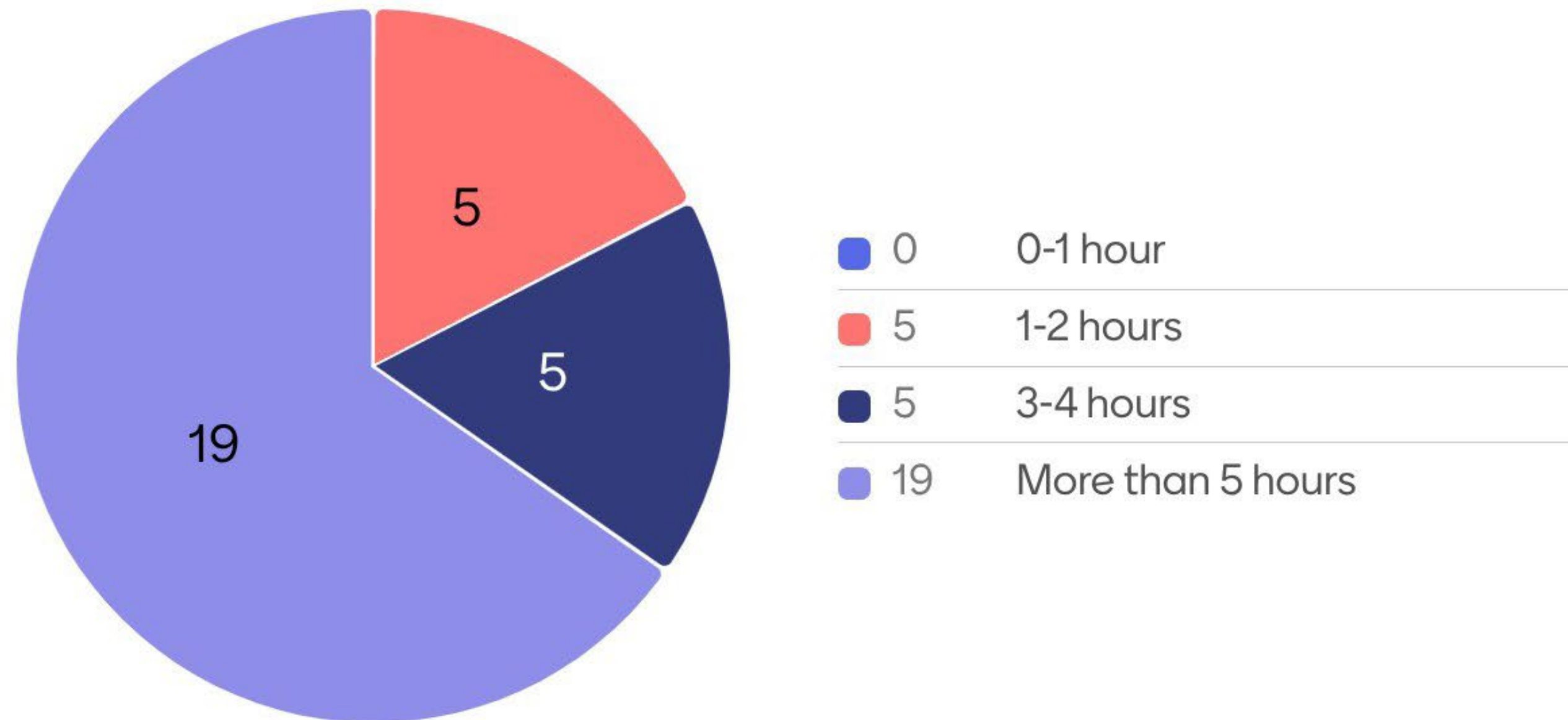
11. How many Parish Councils do you sit on?



12. How often do you attend parish council meetings in your role as a Herefordshire Councillor



13. How much time do you spend travelling on council business in an average month? This can include formal meetings and ward related activity.



14. How many miles do you travel each month on council business? What are your main methods of travel?

Motorbike 200 miles per month

motorbike 200 miles

motorbike 200 miles

Bicycle and walking 30 miles

Bicycle and walking 30 miles

Own car 80 miles

80 miles per month in own car

Car, 26 miles round trip to council offices from home Train on occasion, 25min round trip from Leominster to Hereford station. Walking to local Town Council office for town council meetings

14. How many miles do you travel each month on council business? What are your main methods of travel?

100 miles by car

100 miles. Car

100 miles mostly by private car.

150 and by car

150 miles and by car

My main method of transport is car. I travel approximately 200 miles per month to Council and outside body meetings. 50 miles per month parish council meetings, community events and resident issues

About 200 miles on Council business and outside bodies and 50 miles visiting residents and attending parish council meetings

car

14. How many miles do you travel each month on council business? What are your main methods of travel?

Variable

Car, up to 40 miles

Always by car. Average
120 miles per month

Always by car. Varies
enormously, between 50
and 100 miles per month.
Can be more if Planning Site
Visits are required.

500 miles by car

500 miles via car

Variable miles due to
different planning
committee site visits. Main
method of travel is by car.

200 miles by car

14. How many miles do you travel each month on council business? What are your main methods of travel?

Not sure

10-20 miles, could be more if meeting is not Ross or Hereford

All car. About 500 miles. (Majority of which is non claimable)

By Car about 1000 miles a month

500 miles on average

500

Car Difficult to say because I do planning site visits every month as well as other meetings at Plough Lane or other places

Car or train

14. How many miles do you travel each month on council business? What are your main methods of travel?

100 - 200 miles a month.
Fire authority is a 100
mile round trip.

100-200 miles. Car

Not sure don't keep a proper
log but as an estimate. If going
to Hereford for meetings
30miles (once a week) and
around 15 miles of local travel
per week. Always car. No public
transport.

depends - on average I'd
say between 50 to 100.
vehicle usually my truck due
to the state of my road and
in the winter, flooding.

About 3 to 400, all by
car.

350miles car

Travel by car - rural ward
- 150 -200 miles

Up to 200 miles by car

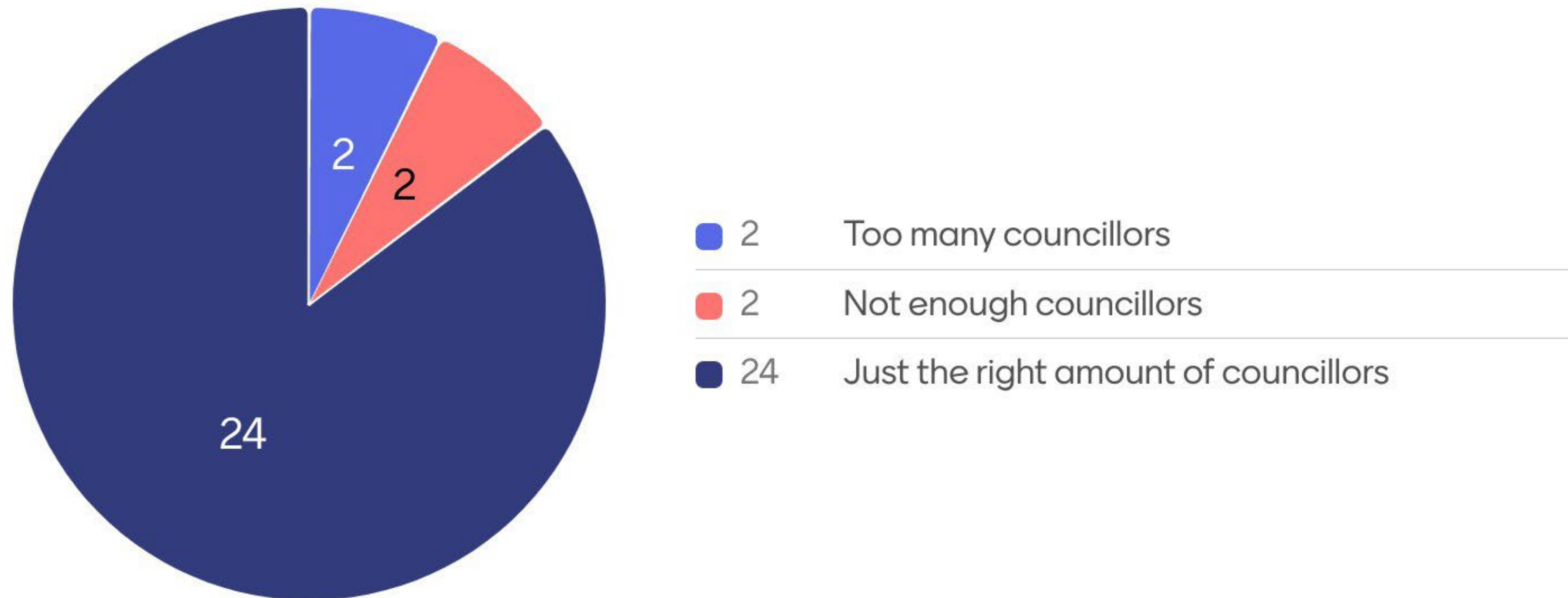
14. How many miles do you travel each month on council business? What are your main methods of travel?

20 miles Car and walking

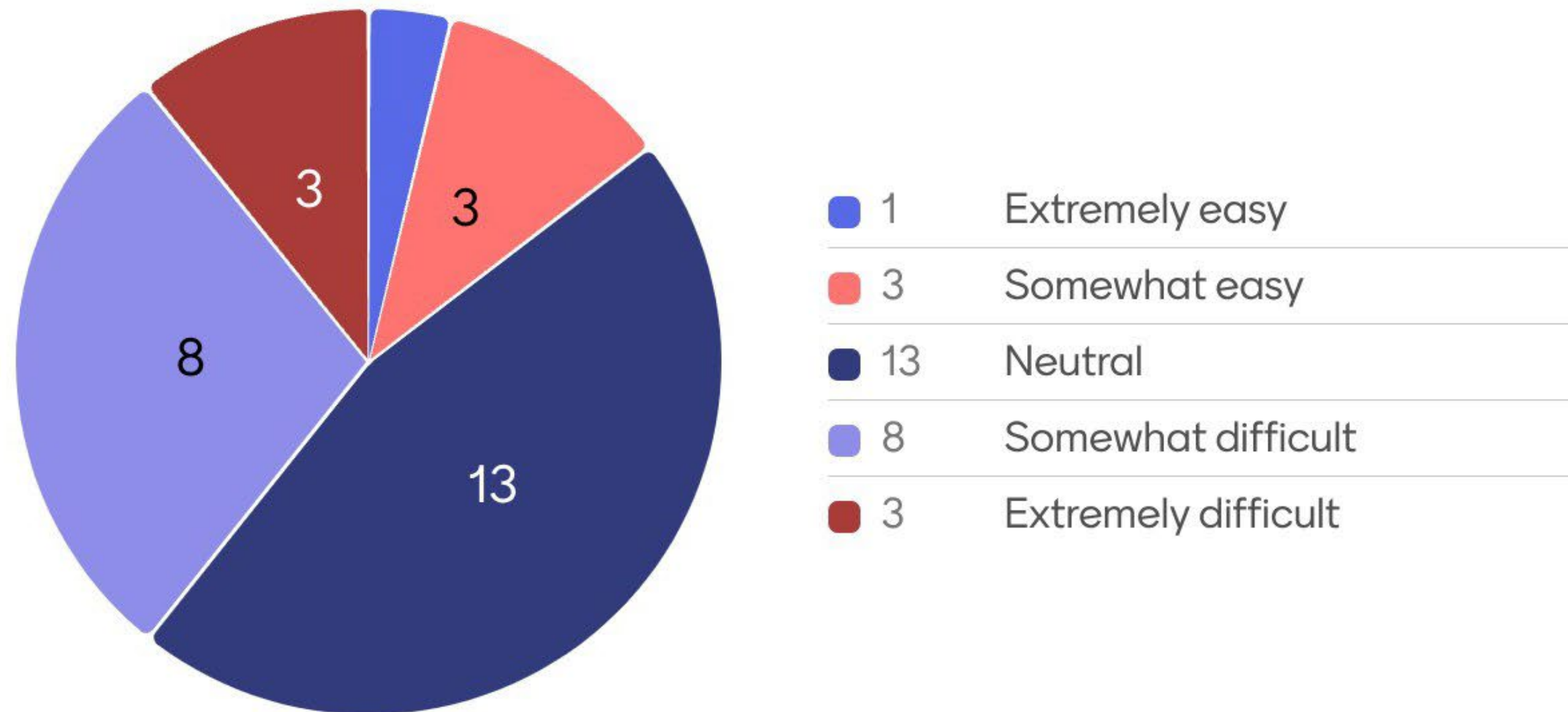
250 - car

Rural area so travel by
car over 300 miles per
month

15. In terms of the number of councillors on the council's committees, do you think there are:



16. How easy or difficult do you find it to manage your other commitments, such as employment or caring responsibilities, with being a councillor?



17. What do you think is your biggest challenge as a councillor?

Finding time for unexpected meetings or issues

Allocating the time necessary to do a good job while needing to earn sufficient money to live

Requests and expectations from residents that cannot be met, either at all, or in a time frame that they find acceptable. Insufficient social housing.

Processing large 200-300 page report before meetings. Getting timely responses on constituent issues Understanding how all the different teams & job titles relate to specific council activities.

Being asked continuously to get pot holes and drains fixed when in reality this is an impossible task because of the lack of funding. Residents and Parish Councils have nobody better to complain to

Constituents sometimes have a raised view of what problems a councillor can solve

Living in such a rural County. My ward is 60 sq miles with only 2500 residents.

Getting responses to problems Residents not understanding the limitations of both council and councillors powers Residents expecting their problems to be sorted overnight!

17. What do you think is your biggest challenge as a councillor?

Getting what the residents think is a simple problem sorted in a reasonable time.

Delay in getting things done by officers concerned

Maintaining enthusiasm with challenging or difficult subjects

Balancing time with other commitments

Many different challenges: being a mum, being self employed, being neurodivergent.

Staying current on all the issues

getting the right information to enable good scrutiny

getting adequate engagement from other councillors on committee issues

17. What do you think is your biggest challenge as a councillor?

getting timely responses to information and action requests from officers

staying healthy mentally

maintaining a healthy work life balance

Residents expectations and lack of government funding

The increasing negative nature of politics and never being recognised for what you may have achieved, Also, the challenges from a national perspective are having an impact on local funding.

Satisfying residents - also it is a seven day a week job.

Officer response times

Understanding the complexity of some cases

17. What do you think is your biggest challenge as a councillor?

The ring-fenced nature of systems (phones/ computers, etc) makes it really difficult to deploy the sort of management/productivity tools I would normally use.

If I want to go back to work - I have no idea how I would juggle the role (done properly!) and a job, even part time.

Finding Time

The allowance is too low.

Paperwork, meetings and answering queries from parish councils

Trying to maximise Council time without impacting work and home life in that priority order

Finding the right POC for any issue that comes up!

Time and pay. Allowance isn't high enough to decrease normal employment so I juggle both.

17. What do you think is your biggest challenge as a councillor?

Knowing who to contact regarding some issues. Expectation with regards to how long issues can take to be resolved. Sometimes lack of responses to email in a timely fashion. Knowing processes

The frustration of getting things done because of the lack of resources and staff and the ludicrous requirements of central government (no matter who is in power)

Keeping calm when fellow members drone on and on.

Funding (lack of), the time it takes to get anything done, process constraining progress. Getting anyone in Westminster to respect local government.

Meeting resident's expectations

Supporting vexatious residents.

Managing residents expectations for a level of service that current budgets simply cannot achieve.

maintaining communications with residents

18. Are there any changes you would recommend to your own ward boundaries? (Please state the name of the ward)

None

College Ward. I would recommend including Old School Lane Public Open Space in College Ward as it is mostly used by College Ward members.

No. Single member wards of equal numbers of residents is working well here.

For Leominster South Ward: Change to northern boundary to follow the A44 to B4457 then south to Stretford junction with A4110. Keep Monkland & Stretford in ward by looping round Old Road and Common

Stoney St. Include in my Ward the side of Poplar Road Clehonger which is in Allensmore/Wormside. Remove Bishopstone Parish as it is North of the River - the rest is South. Include all of Stoney St

I enjoy representing Bishopstone so to lose them would be a disappointment to me.

Rural boundaries need updating and should follow roads not old parish boundaries that may go across a fields or streams sometimes splitting villagers in half

Yes, Wormside

18. Are there any changes you would recommend to your own ward boundaries? (Please state the name of the ward)

No

Widemarsh ward - which is entirely a construct of a previous boundary review, divided by a main traffic artery and with different areas with no relation to each other and lacking a single community

Holmer Ward, it is the biggest ward in the County, but i am not sure where i would put the dividing line. One thought would be to put the 'South' of the ward into the adjacent city wards

Widemarsh suggestt any changes are made with consultation with other north city wards

No. Boundaries are suitable for the layout of my ward.
Hampton Ward

No, Bromyard Bringsty

Hereford Central Ward - the boundaries are pretty fixed as they are made up of the river and city wall. I wouldn't change the boundaries.

Given the significant level of unplanned development that has taken place in Ledbury since 2015, it may be necessary to look at the ward boundaries for all 3 Ledbury wards

18. Are there any changes you would recommend to your own ward boundaries? (Please state the name of the ward)

It may even be necessary to consider whether a 4th ward for Ledbury is needed.

No

The river Wye is a natural boundary to my ward, but the hamlet of Wilton is cut off from the rest of Llangaron ward by the A40. I suspect residents there look to Ross as their natural political home.

None, although (WEOBLEY) the area north of Bishopstone, south of Mansel Lacy is a bit odd.

None

No

Old Gore. Was considered to be changed in 2012 but the rethought to no name change. No change required.

Better defined either larger or smaller due to to numbers and natural features. Example - Haugh Wood Woolhope side (100 yard) falls within Backbury Ward, the woods would provide a natural boundary

18. Are there any changes you would recommend to your own ward boundaries? (Please state the name of the ward)

No - Dinedor Hill Ward

No. The Ward is manageable at the size it is. If a reduction was favoured then Richard's Castle may be better served in Mortimer Ward.

no

No. Golden Valley South is a large but sparsely populated area but I see no problem in that. I do see a problem in that there is no provision for mileage within the ward even though car journeys are..

...essential which could be a hardship to people without separate incomes.

Not especially.

None

Boundary between Much Dewchurch and Much Birch is ill defined

18. Are there any changes you would recommend to your own ward boundaries? (Please state the name of the ward)

Eign Hill Ward No changes to the ward boundary.

No - happy with current ward boundaries

Arrow ward no changes - the demographics and profiles are similar with the river arrow flowing through four of the five parishes

19. In addition to being a councillor, do you also have other paid employment?

