

Councillor Survey Responses

40 of 63 members responded to the survey (62%). Most responses were named, four were anonymous.

Key themes emerging include:

- **Involvement, information and communication:** a perception across the political spectrum that there could be a greater connection between **Cabinet** and the rest of the Council. The *aspiration*, frequently expressed, was for more involvement, information about, and communication from, Cabinet. For some, this is about *prior involvement* of wider range of members *before* decisions are taken. For others it is about *hearing more* about the work of Cabinet.
- **Cabinet:** as above, there are views that Cabinet could engage more fully with the backbench perspective.
- **Scrutiny:** while the perspective and focus of Performance Scrutiny Committee is well respected, there is dissatisfaction with the present scrutiny arrangements. For some, there is the sense that scrutiny members are not making the most of their roles and that the scrutiny function is not engaging as creatively and actively as it might. For others, there is a need for a greater range of scrutiny committees, possibly chaired by members not from the Conservative –Independent Alliance Group.
- **Committees:** a number of members have overtly expressed a wish to adopt a committee system as being a more inclusive form of governance. Others fear that a committee model does not provide sufficient accountability and speed, which some regard as a benefit of the Cabinet model.

The first of these themes appears to be the most cross-cutting, irrespective of which form of governance the Council may operate.

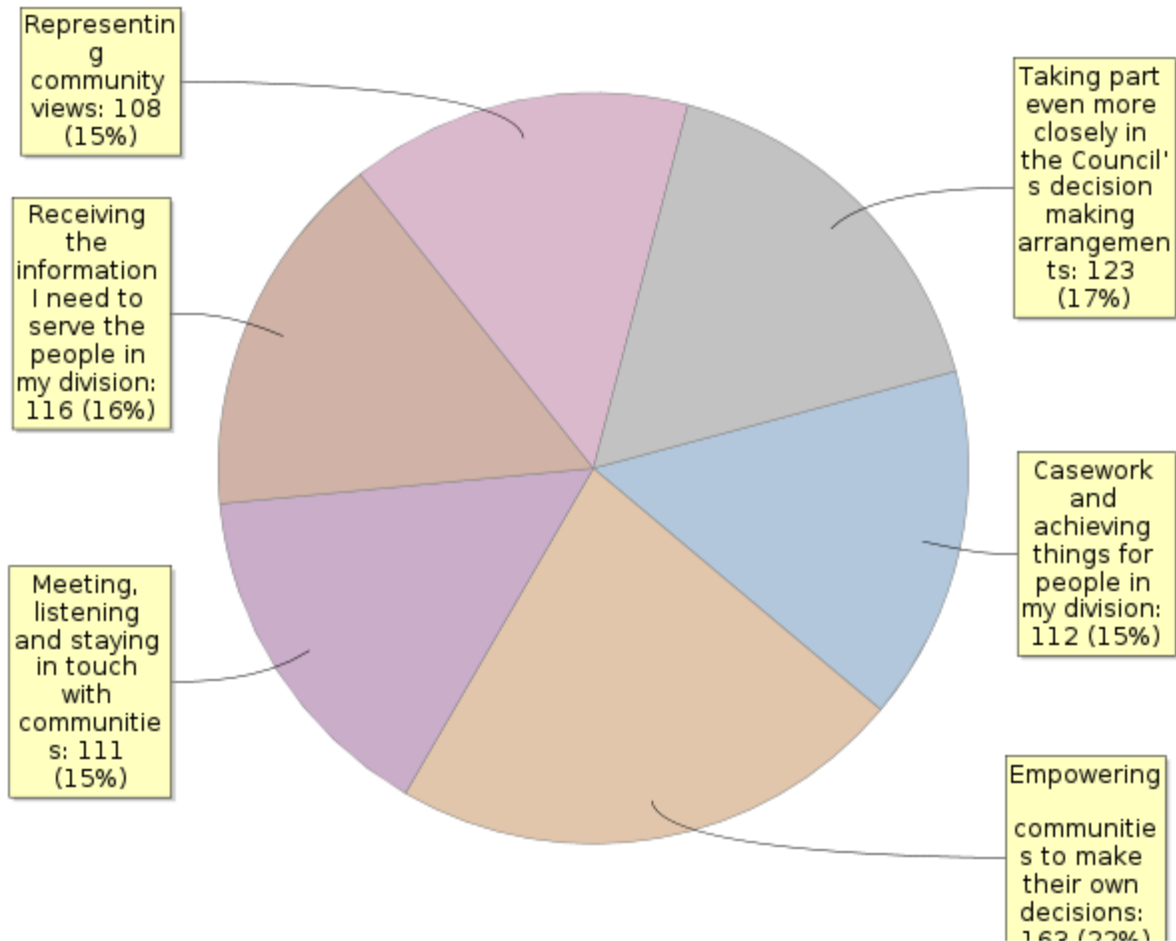
The following charts express the range of views as regards:

- ***What aspects of being a county councillor are most important to you?***
And...
- ***What principles should underpin any form of governance?***

In each case, members ranked the options (hence the numeric value).

A. Most important to you....

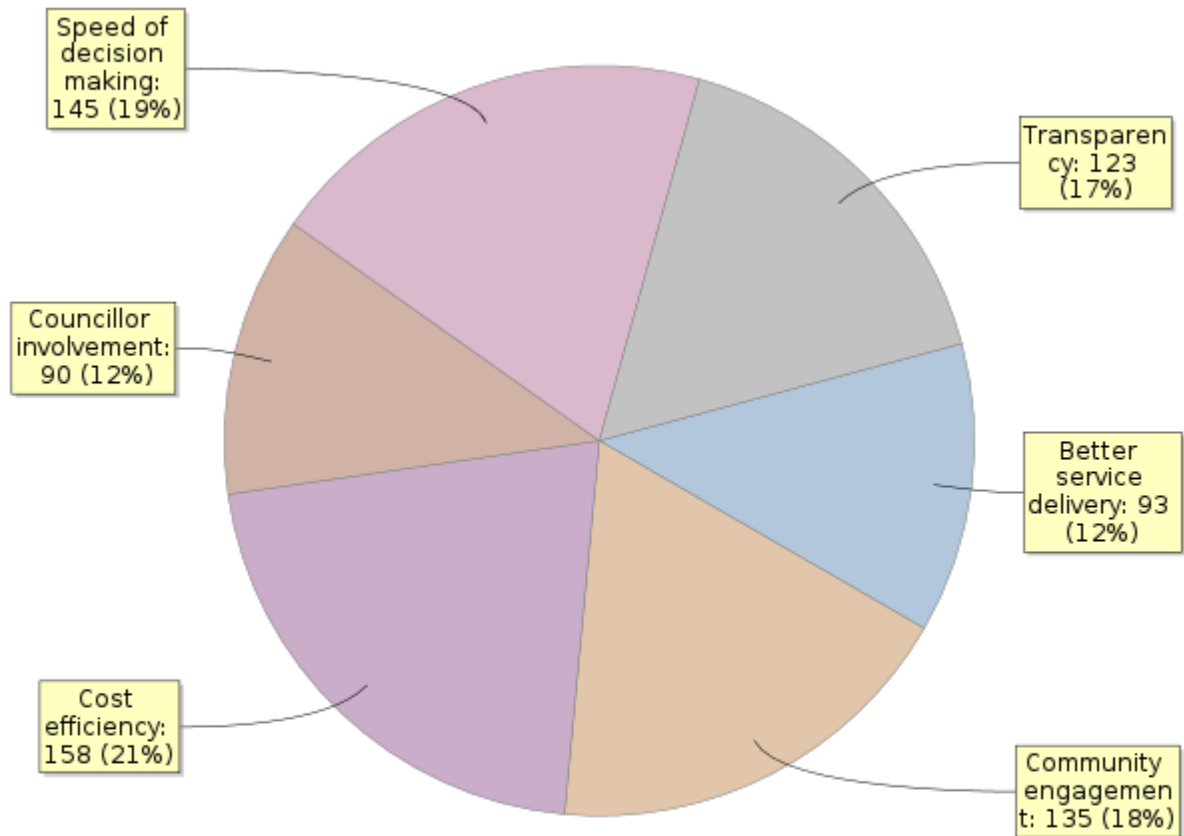
The most highly rated response was: *empowering communities to make their own decisions*



- Casework and achieving things for people in my division
- Empowering communities to make their own decisions
- Meeting, listening and staying in touch with communities
- Receiving the information I need to serve the people in my division
- Representing community views
- Taking part even more closely in the Council's decision making arrangements

B. Key principles

The most highly rated response was: *cost efficiency*



- Better service delivery
- Community engagement
- Cost efficiency
- Councillor involvement
- Speed of decision making
- Transparency

Terms of Reference: Governance Review Task Group**Purpose**

As a cross-party Task and Finish Group, to provide worked-up recommendations to Political Group Leaders, and to Cabinet, on potential changes to the Council's decision making arrangements.

The review should consider the Council's current and other available models of governance with a view to recommending arrangements that are *transparent, inclusive and reflect the political dynamics* of the Council

The review should consider such evidence as the Group believes relevant, including:

- the views of current County Councillors e.g. as expressed in the Councillor Survey
- the views of senior officers on the impact on their services.
- the strengths and weaknesses of the various options
- benchmarked information e.g. from other authorities which may already operate any aspects of the model, for instance through visits and/or other methods
- the costs associated with each option

Membership and voting

Membership will be seven members of the Council appointed by Group Leaders on the basis of political proportionality:

- 4 Conservative-Independent Alliance members
- 2 Labour members
- 1 Lib Dem member

It is expected that the Task Group will reach its recommendations through consensus. However, if a vote is needed on the final recommendations to present to Political Group Leaders and to Cabinet, then each member of the Group (present and voting) shall have a vote each. The Chairman will have a second or casting vote.

If the appointed members from each Political Group cannot be in attendance, each Group Leader will be able to appoint a substitute. However, the nature of the Task Group's work would benefit from a consistency of membership.

Quorum

The quorum of each meeting shall be 3 members.

Chairmanship

The Task Group shall appoint a chairman and a deputy chairman at its first meeting, from among its membership, whose terms shall last for the duration of the review. The Chairman will chair the subsequent meetings; if absent, the Deputy Chairman will chair the meeting. If both are absent, then (if quorate) the meeting will appoint a chairman from those present for the duration of that meeting.

Frequency of meetings

It is expected that Task Group will need to meet several times during October and November. Political Group leaders should be mindful of this when seeking members to serve on the Task Group.

It will be for the Group to determine the length of each meeting – it is expected that these will be between 90 minutes and 2 hours.

Visits to other authorities

In addition to meetings of the Group, it is also expected that the Task Group may wish to undertake visits to other authorities, or to conduct conversations with members and officers of other councils.

It is envisaged that the Group may wish to allocate visits between its members, to maximise coverage. It is suggested that a visit should comprise at least two members of the Task Group.

Publicity

The Task Group will necessarily be exploring options, including potentially radical options. As such, and to allow the Task Group the greatest possible freedom, in the public interest, the meetings of the Group will take place in private session. The final recommendations will of course be made public at Cabinet in any case.

Support

The Task Group will be supported by officers from Law and Governance; and the Council's Policy team as appropriate.

Nick Graham
Director of Law and Governance.

Timeframe

Month	Meeting
Oct 17th <i>Throughout</i>	Cabinet Task Group
November <i>Throughout</i>	Task Group
December 19th	Cabinet – to receive recommendations
January 4th 10th	Performance Scrutiny Audit & Governance Committee

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Month	Meeting
TBC	Full Council – to make final decision
February	None
March 7th 27th	Performance Scrutiny Committee – Detailed constitutional changes Audit & Governance Committee - Detailed constitutional changes
April	None
May 15th	Annual Council Meeting