

Boundary Commission Council Size Submission Survey

47
Responses

53:29
Average time to complete

Closed
Status

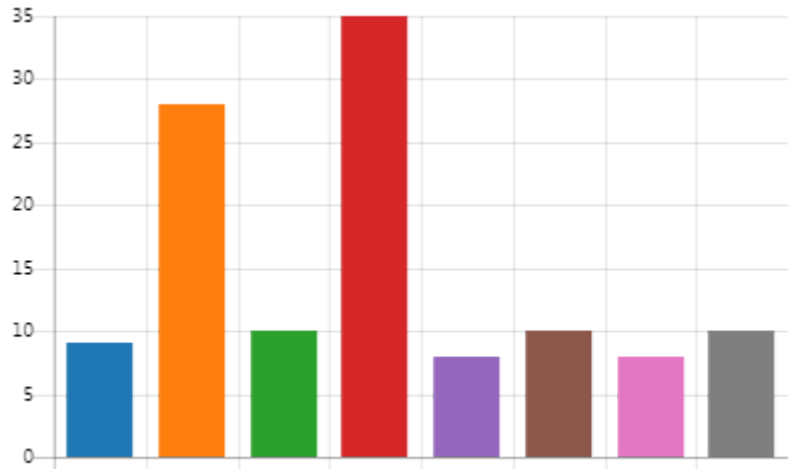
1. How long have you been a Councillor with Waverley Borough Council?

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



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

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



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

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



4. Are you a member of another council?

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



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

● Yes	20
● No	25



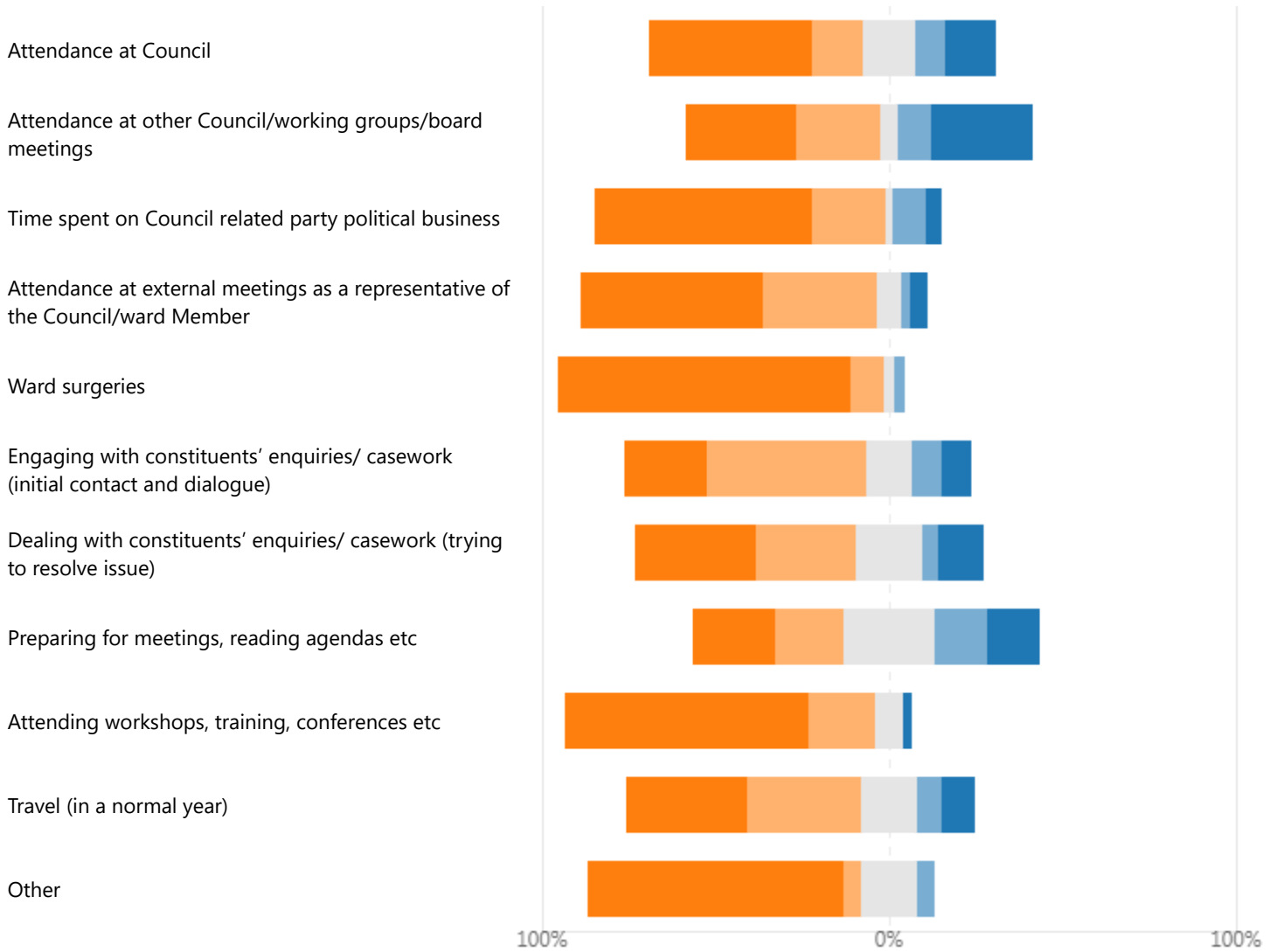
6. If yes, please list the organisation and role

20
Responses

Latest Responses

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

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



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

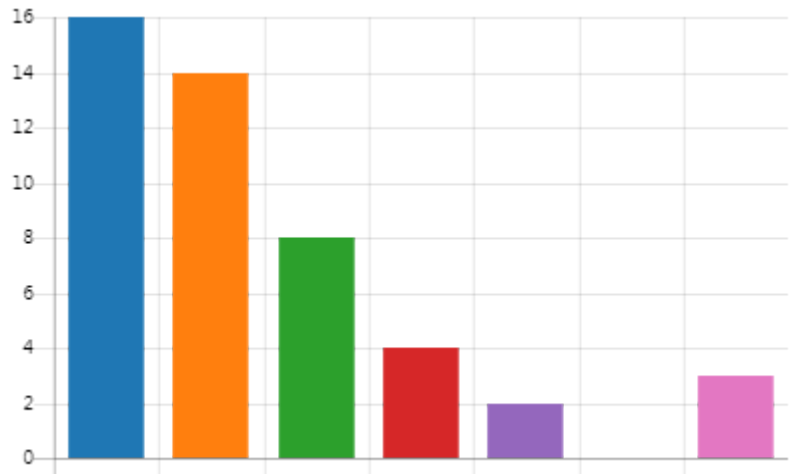
16
Responses

Latest Responses
"Writing papers and reports."

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

💡 Insights

1-5	16
6-10	14
11-15	8
16-20	4
21-25	2
26-30	0
over 30	3



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

No - I spend less time on Cou...	1
No - I spend more time on Co...	27
Yes	11
I didn't know what to expect	8



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

No (go to question 14)	11
Yes	21



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

21
Responses

Latest Responses
"more need"

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

20

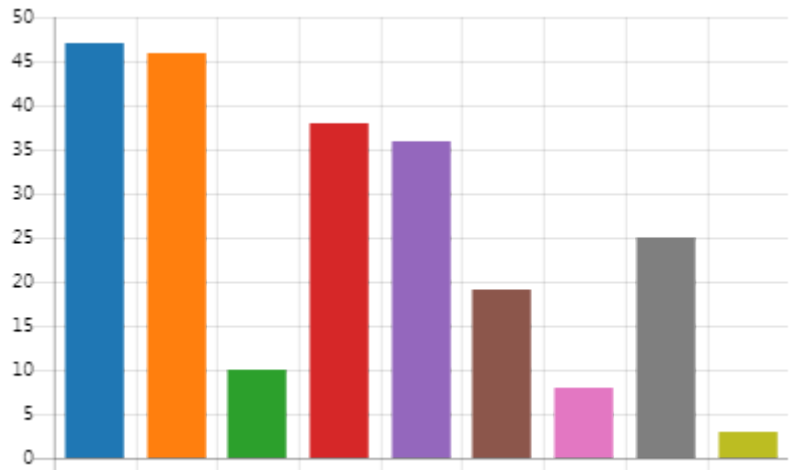
Responses

Latest Responses

"more case work"

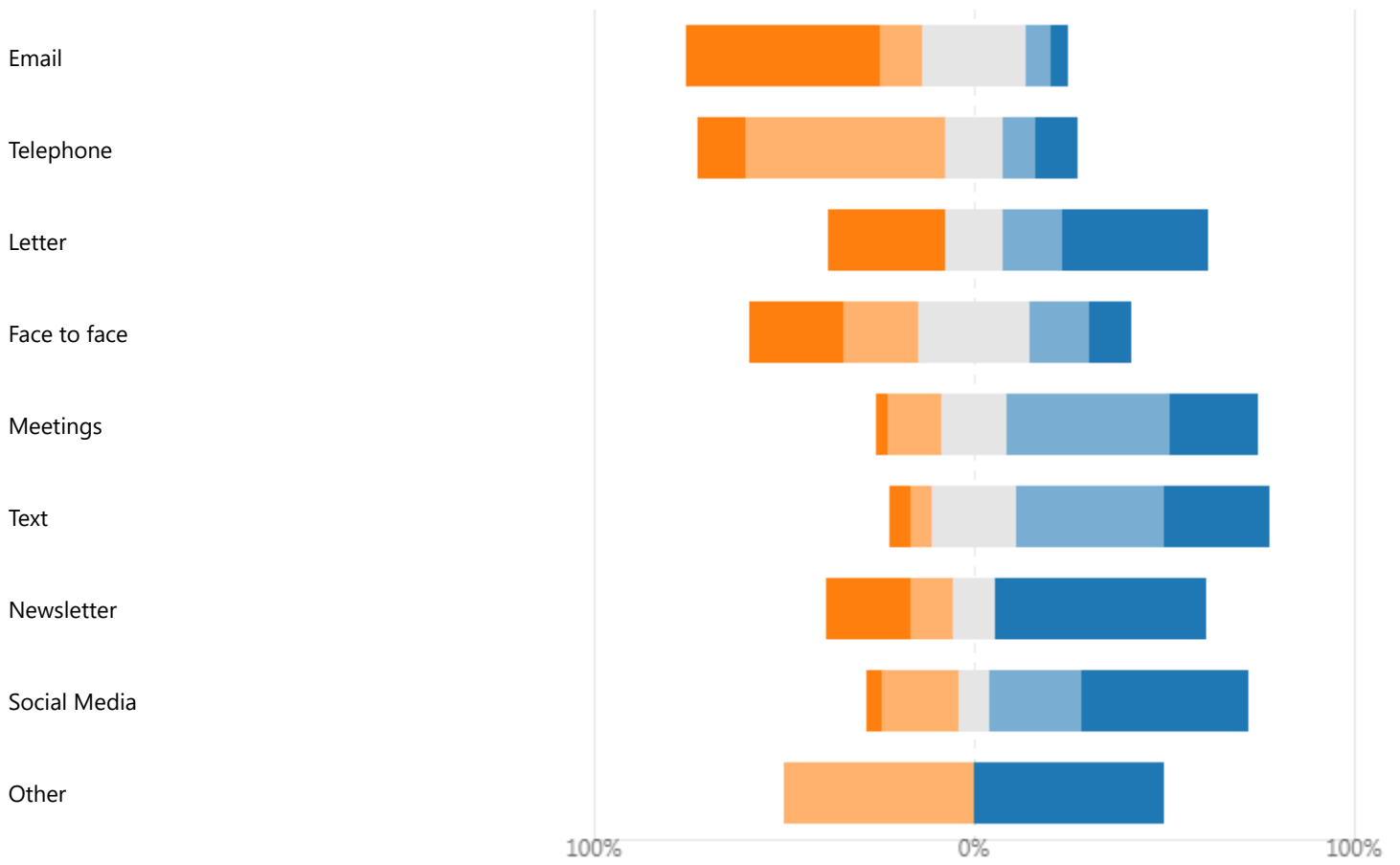
14. What methods of communication do you use when engaging with your constituents? (Please select any that apply.)

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

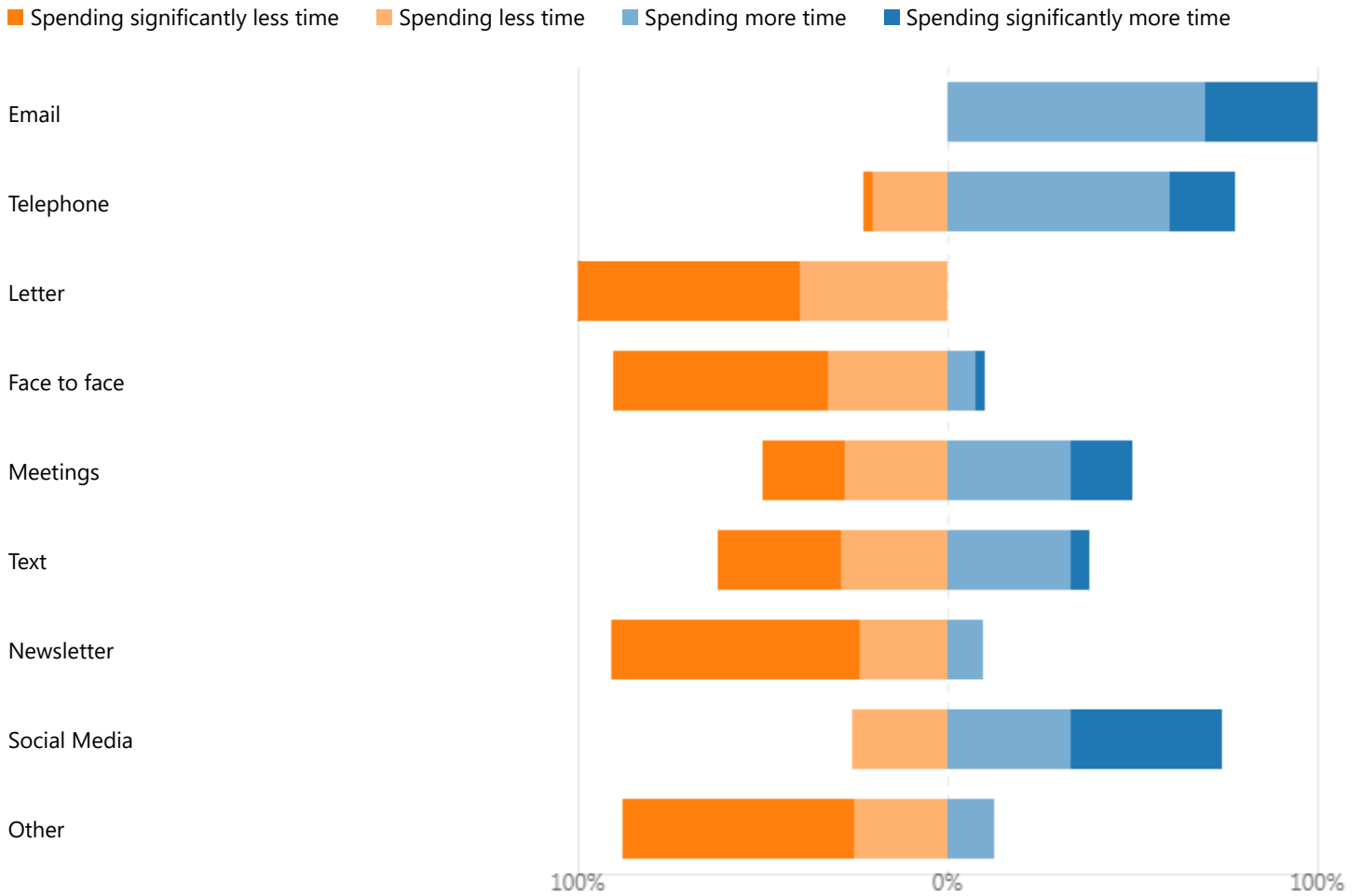


15. What is your preferred method of communication? Please select your top 5 only and rank them in order with 1 being the most preferred.

1 2 3 4 5



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



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

● Yes 32
● No 14



18. Why do you think this is?

45
Responses

Latest Responses

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

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

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



20. If you answered 'other' please comment.

12
Responses

Latest Responses

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

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



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

45

Responses

Latest Responses

"51"

"as now, 2 per ward"

"2 per ward works well"

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

36

Responses

Latest Responses

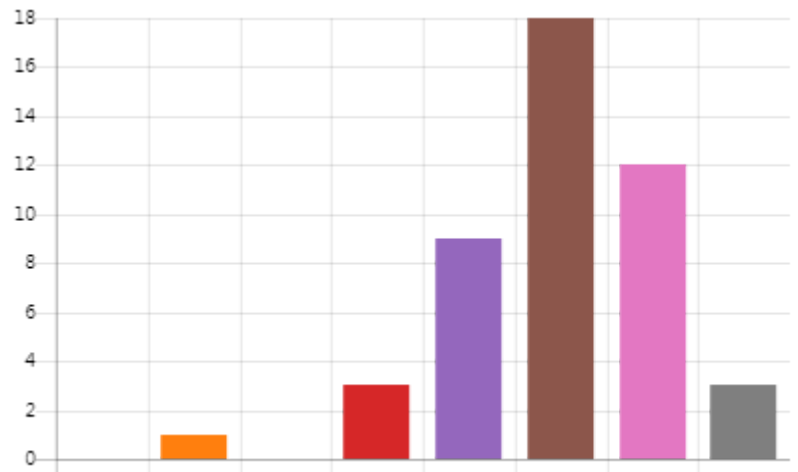
"All (or almost all) wards should be a similar size and should be multi-..."

"no"

"no"

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

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



25. Gender

💡 Insights

Female	16
Male	25
Prefer not to say	5



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

No	36
Yes	8
Prefer not to say	2



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

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

Others not willing to do the work

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

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

Joined the Executive; became Group Leader

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

Covid

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

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

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

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

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

Now on the Executive

People are more aware and require help and advice

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

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

More, longer meetings

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

More issues need attention

more need

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

Additional meetings

Meetings and research/preparation

Prep for meetings, online and resident contact

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

meetings internal and external and leading the Council

Residents enquires

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matters get resolved

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

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

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

Face to face group meetings not possible,

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

Seems to work

Useful to have written record of matters raised

Still accessible

Less time travelling, more readily available

Covid

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

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

Time pressures

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

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

Covid has stopped us meeting our constituents face to face.

Council doesn't actively engage with the community

Remote meeting via Zoom have increased

it's what I do

residents contact me easily

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

Q20. If you answered 'other' please comment.

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

Nothing to compare it with

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

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

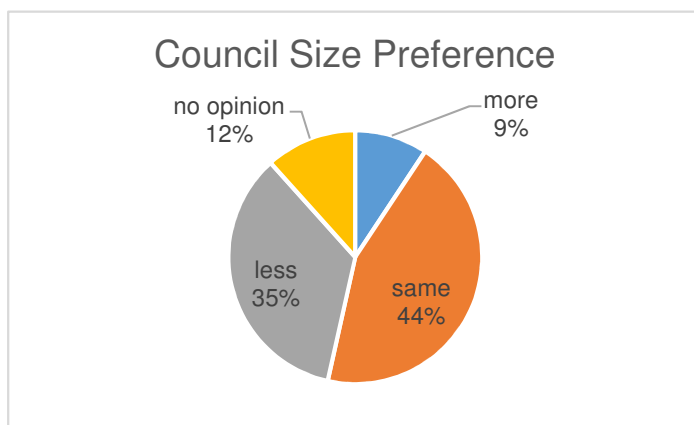
Facebook and emails have increased the communication with residents - still require visits to see problems and dealing with older residents
Made things easier sometimes, but not all residents are familiar with the technology
Being easier to contact is better for residents / engagement but that does tend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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Committee size

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The overloaded planning system that is designed to fail.

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