

## Appendix D – Councillor Survey Results

Between 20<sup>th</sup> March and 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024, councillors were surveyed as to their most preferred ordinary council meeting start time. They were also invited to make any specific comments.

60 of 77 councillors (78%) responded to the survey, with the following results and anonymised summary of responses being detailed below:-

● Morning (10am)	8
● Afternoon (2pm)	19
● Evening (6pm)	33



Councillor Preferred Start time of 10.00am	Councillor Preferred Start Time of 2.00pm	Councillor Preferred Start Time of 6.00pm
8 cllrs (13%)	19 cllrs (32%)	33 cllrs (55%)

Councillor Preferred Start time of Daytime	Councillor Preferred Start Time of Evening
27 cllrs (45%)	33 cllrs (55%)

### Summarised Version of Anonymised Comments Made

#### a) Councillors in favour of 10.00am start time

- Easier to travel to and from meetings during the daytime including driving and use of public transport for both councillors and officers;
- Helpful for school runs;
- Earlier in the day allows for proper debate and less need to guillotine the meeting as there is still time in the day;
- A 6.00pm start allows little time for those at work to attend and refresh themselves, or to have time for an evening meal until late at night;
- Given the advance notice of the meeting dates, councillors should be able to make themselves available as appropriate;
- Length of working day for officers;
- Concern at quality of decision making in evening meetings following a full day at work.

b) Councillors in favour of 2.00pm start time

- The theory that evening meetings would mean substantially more public involvement has been tested and not been proven;
- A 2pm start, or even a 10am start would mean all business could be completed without the need for very late finishes, which may be more dangerous for drivers due to tiredness;
- Daytime meetings should be able to be accommodated by employers, and if not, there are only about 7 per annum;
- 6:00pm still interrupts a working day (so requires councillors to take time off), plus it requires commuting at the busiest of times;
- 2:00pm means working councillors only have to take a half day off work, the commute is during quieter periods, and officers can attend during their normal working hours;
- Evenings cause problems due to allowing extra time for rush hour traffic and not having a chance to eat in the evening;
- Officers would not have to work late, all attendees' welfare should be considered;
- The journey is unlit for much of the winter time and is dangerous leaving at 10pm.

c) Councillors in favour of 6.00pm start time

- Day time meetings are difficult for councillors who work or have carer's duties to attend;
- Daytime meetings exclude too many members across parties as people have to work. If we want true representation from all parts of the community it is important to make meeting at times for the majority;
- Councillors and members of the public from the working class would be impacted as these jobs are often less flexible in terms of time off;
- Evening meetings enable residents to attend and observe democracy in action;
- The public are able to be present in person more easily as it is not within usual working hours, so has improved public engagement;
- Evening meeting are more accessible for Members with work commitments;
- Childcare commitments during the day could affect the ability of younger people to become councillors, which would only be possible if evening meetings were the norm.

d) Other comments made

- During the autumn/winter months meetings could held in the afternoon and in the spring/summer in the evening;
- Any change should be made at the beginning of any new term, so that candidates understand what is expected.