

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

REPORT TO

Council

17 November 2021

Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendix A
Member Survey Results November 2019

Members survey – November 2019

25 councillors completed the survey–16 provided their names...

- Gill Burnett
- Graham Hutton
- Gary White
- Gill Heesom
- Helena Maxfield
- June Walklate
- Barry Panter
- Mike Stubbs
- Kenneth Owen
- Simon Tagg
- Jill Waring
- Brian Johnson
- Andrew Fox-Hewitt
- Andrew Parker
- John Williams
- Sue Moffat

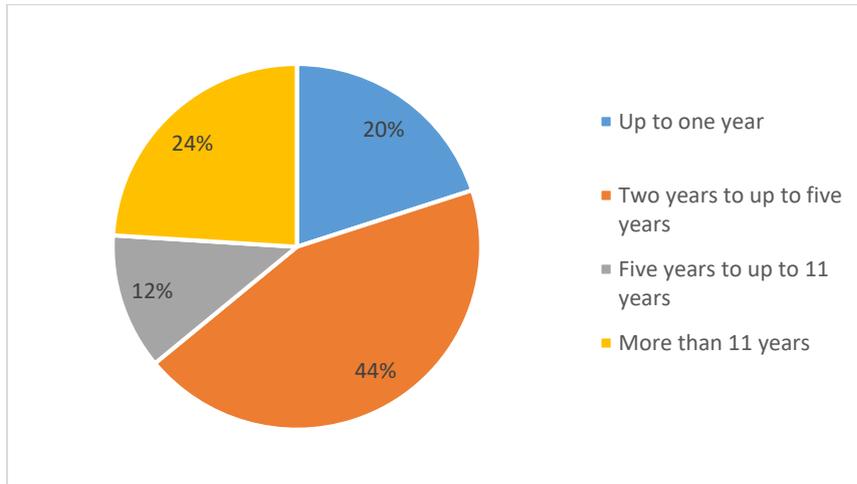
...with nine remaining anonymous. Respondents were also asked to say which ward they represented, and we had submissions from the following wards (one councillor did not tell where they represented):

- Kidsgrove and Ravenscliffe *2
- Maer and Whitmore
- Madeley and Betley
- Westlands
- Thistleberry
- Loggerheads
- Talke and Butt Lane
- Holditch and Chesterton
- Newchapel and Mow Cop
- Bradwell
- Westbury Park and Northwood
- Cross Heath * 2
- Audley

For each of the questions, unless stated otherwise there were 25 respondents.

How long have you been an elected Member?

The most common response was between two and five years, with (44) per cent of responses. 20 per cent had been members for up to one year, with 12 per cent between five and 11 years and 24 per cent more than eleven years.



What do you find most rewarding about being an elected Member? Tick all that apply.

Members were asked to pick from a list of options, but with the request to choose all options that applied to them.

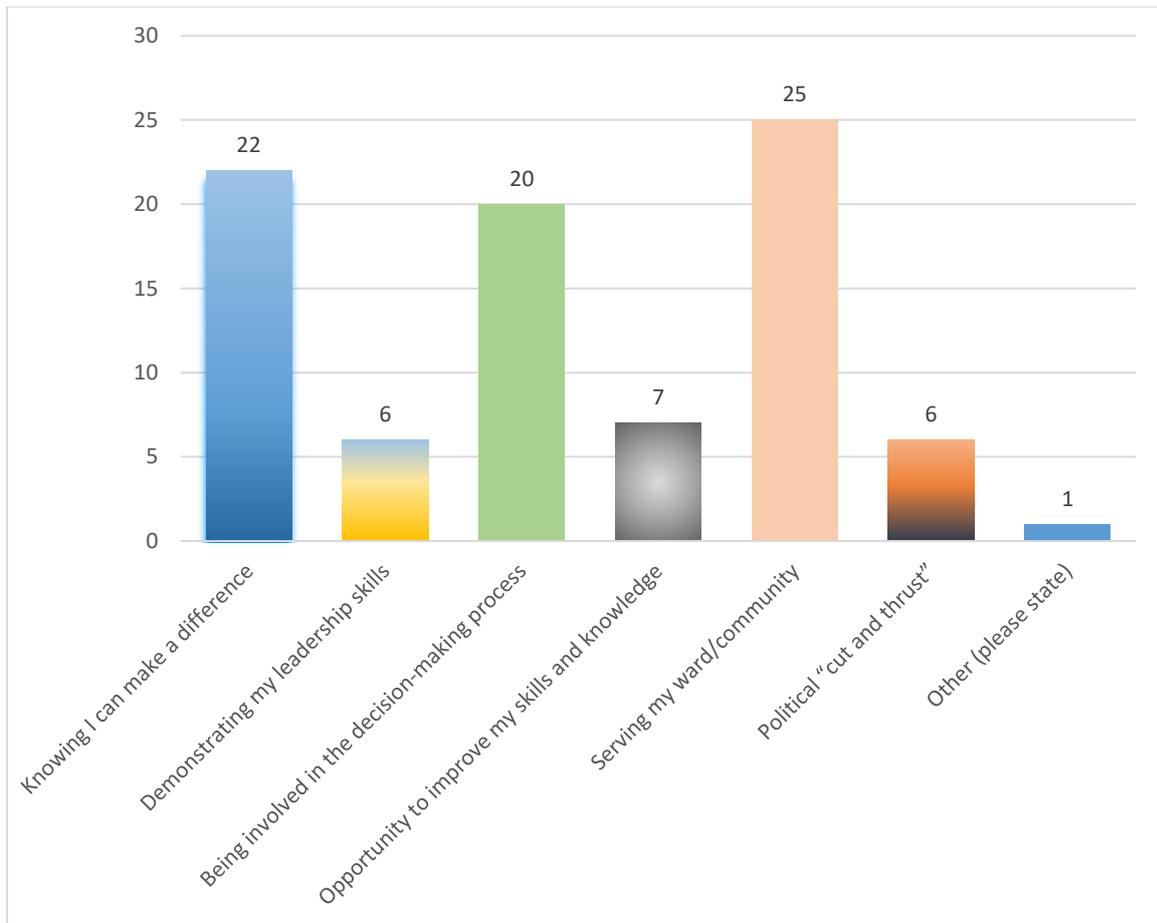
There was a significant between the numbers choosing the top three responses:

- 1) Serving my ward/community (100 per cent)
- 2) Knowing I can make a difference (88 per cent)
- 3) Being involved in the decision-making process (80 per cent)

...and those who chose the other three responses:

- 1) Opportunity to improve my skills and knowledge (28 per cent)
- 2) Political cut and thrust (24 per cent)
- 3) Demonstrating my leadership skills (24 per cent)

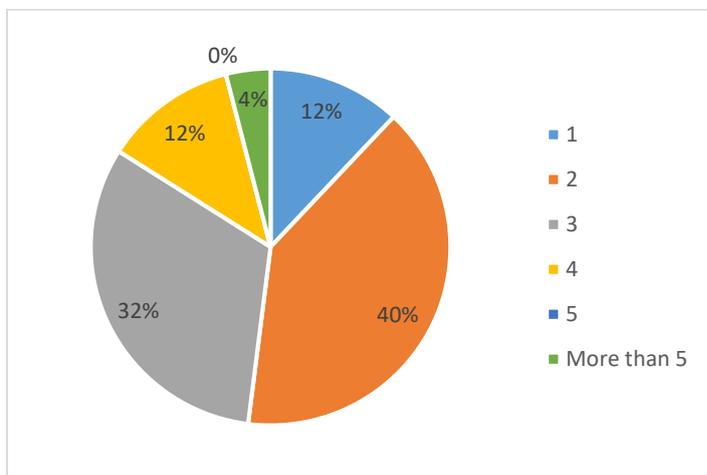
One respondent did choose 'other' as an option, but did not say what they meant. The following chart show how many respondents chose each option.



Excluding Council, how many Committee(s) are you appointed to?

It was most common for members to be appointed to either two (40 per cent) or three (32 per cent) committees.

- 12 per cent were appointed to one
- 40 per cent were appointed to two
- 32 per cent were appointed to three
- 12 per cent were appointed to four
- 4 per cent were appointed to five
- No one was appointed to more than five.



How often do they meet? If you are appointed to one Committee only, please complete the first row, if two Committees row 1 and 2, if three Committees, rows 1, 2 and 3. If you are appointed to four or more, please select the three that meet most frequently. 23 responses

Almost half (45 per cent) meet monthly. One-quarter meet every other month and the same proportion meet quarterly, with the remaining 5 per cent meeting on an ad hoc basis.

	Every month	Every other month	Quarterly	Twice a year	Ad hoc
Committee one	65%	26%	4%	0%	4%
Committee two	33%	24%	43%	0%	0%
Committee three	25%	25%	33%	0%	17%
Average (mean)	45%	25%	25%	0%	5%

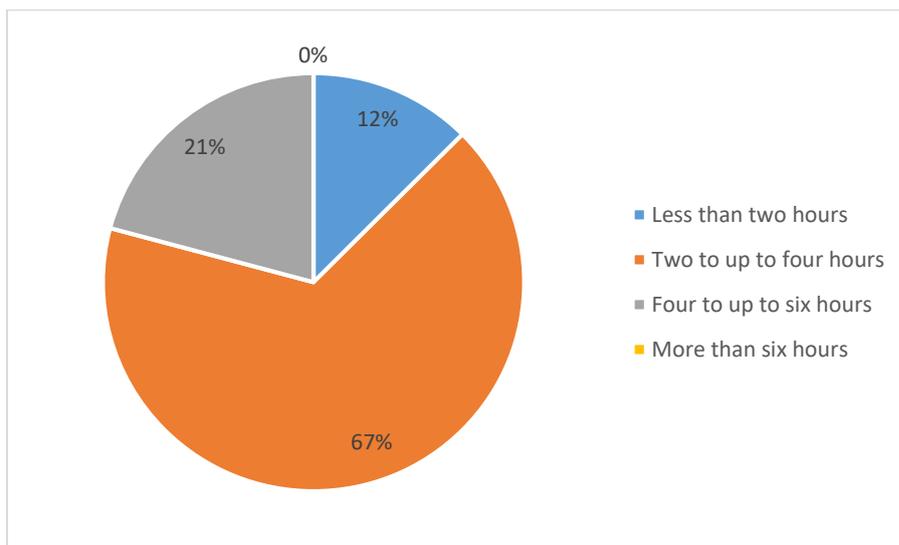
The meetings are held mostly in the evening. On average around 80 per cent are, with 18 per cent in the afternoon and 2 per cent in the morning.

At what time of the day are the meetings usually held? 23 responses

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Committee one	4%	22%	74%
Committee two	0%	5%	95%
Committee three	0%	36%	64%
Average (mean)	2%	18%	80%

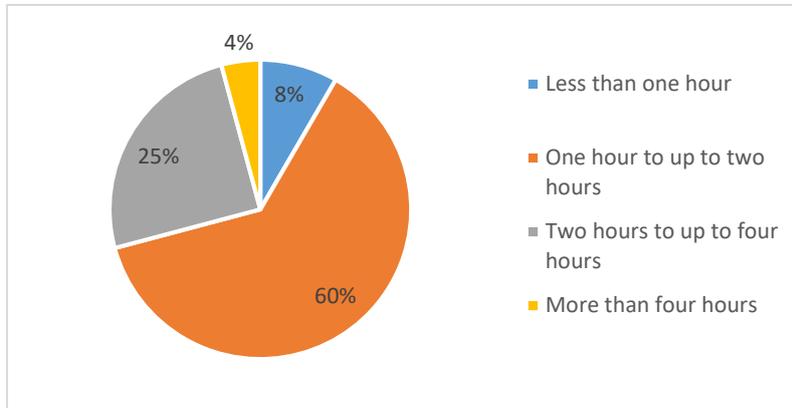
Including travel time, how long are you usually away from home?

Two-thirds (67 per cent) of respondents said they were away from two to four hours. 12 per cent were away for less than two hours, with 21 per cent for four to six hours. No one said that they were away for more than six hours.



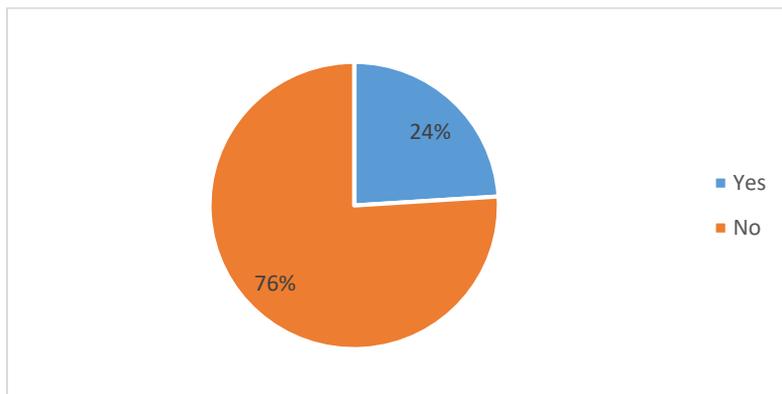
How much time do you spend preparing/reading papers for a meeting?

- 60 per cent said that they spend between one and two hours
- One-quarter (25 per cent) spent between two and four hours
- Eight per cent spent less than one hour
- Four per cent spent more than four hours

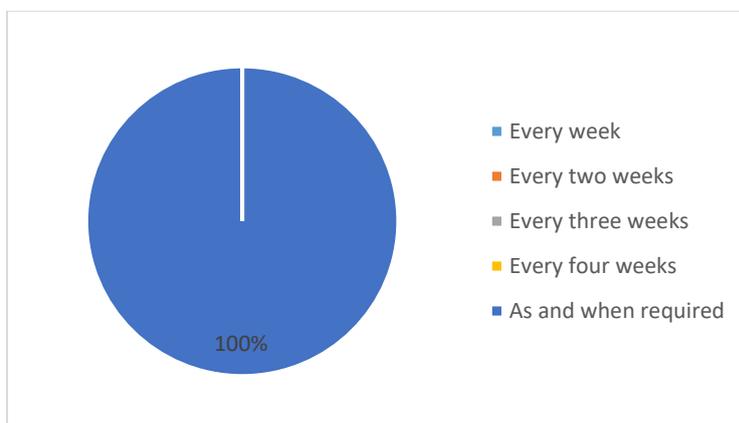


Are you required to attend site inspections as part of your Committee role?

A little under one-quarter (24 per cent) were required to, meaning that just over three-quarters (76 per cent) were not.

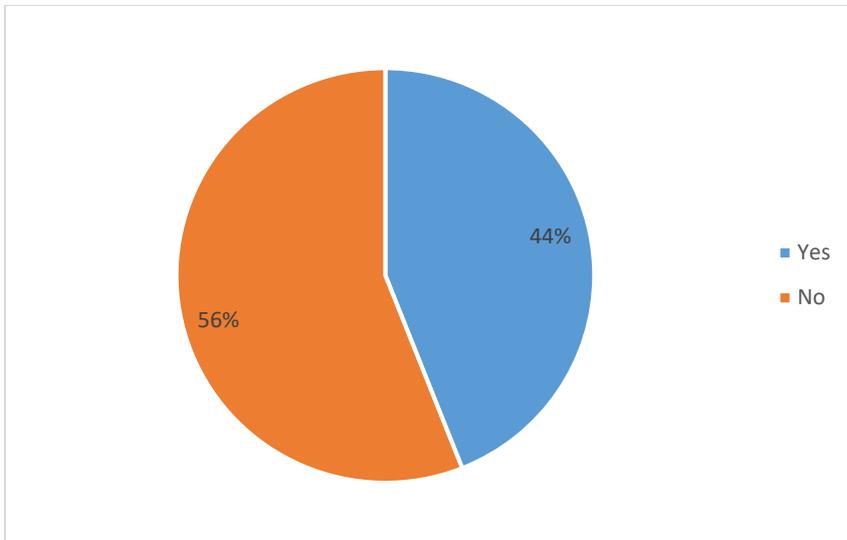


How often are you expected to attend? Those six who were required to attend site inspections were asked to answer this question. As the following chart shows, four options were offered, but all six respondents answered 'as and when required'. The chart is only included to show the options that were given to members.



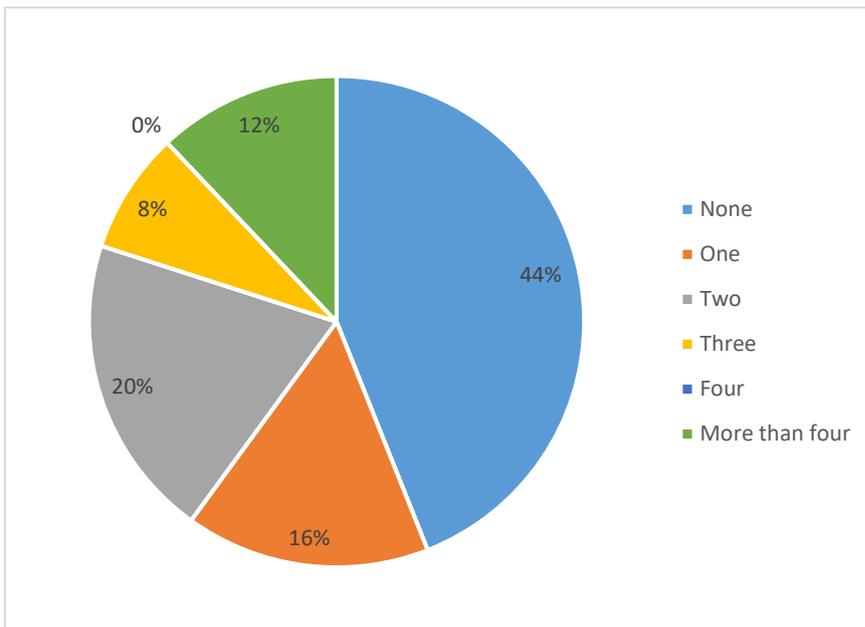
Are there any other meetings which you are required to attend (excluding duties associated with those roles which attract a Special Responsibility Allowance)?

44 per cent said that there were other meetings that they had to attend, with 56 per cent therefore saying there were not.



How many Outside Organisations are you appointed to?

- The most common answer, with 44 per cent, was none
- 16 per cent were appointed to one
- 20 per cent were appointed to two
- Eight per cent were appointed to three
- No one was appointed to four
- 12 per cent were appointed to more than four



Respondents were then asked where the meetings were normally held, and the following responses were submitted:

- Newcastle Borough, Stafford Police HQ, Staffordshire Moorlands
- Newcastle-under-Lyme
- My ward
- Lancaster Buildings NuL
- Stafford - Care & Armed Forces Covenant Champion
- LGiU as i am the Rep AGM London
- Various
- Newcastle, Stafford, Kidsgrove
- Newcastle Town
- St Barnabus, Bradwell WMC, Bradwell lodge
- Newcastle LAP South
- Castle house/ Ramsey Centre/ Various in Newcastle
- Castle House / Ramsey Road Community Centre

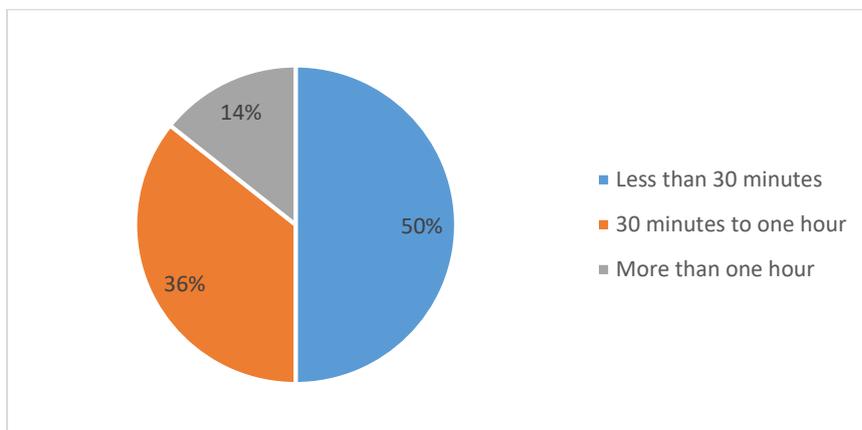
At what time of day are the meetings held? If you are appointed to one organisation only, please complete the first row, if two organisations rows 1 and 2, and for three organisations, rows 1, 2 and 3. If you are appointed to four or more organisations, please select three examples. 13 responses

Looking at an average shows that afternoons and evenings were equally the most common time for meetings, with 41 per cent each. The remaining 17 per cent were held in the mornings. However, for those who were only appointed to one organisation, the afternoon was by far the most common.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Organisation one	23%	62%	15%
Organisation two	11%	22%	67%
Organisation three	14%	29%	57%
Average (mean)	17%	41%	41%

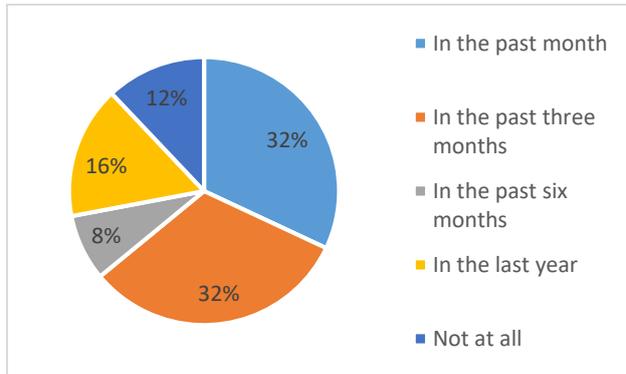
On average, how long does it take to travel from your home to meetings? 14 responses

Exactly half (50 per cent) took less than 30 minutes, with just over one-third (36 per cent) taking between 30 minutes and 1 hour, and the remaining 14 per cent taking more than one hour.



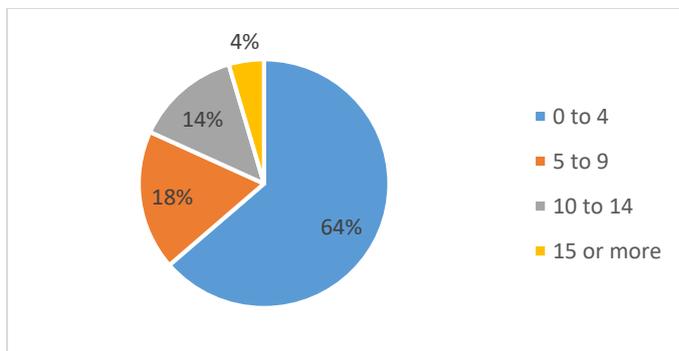
Have you attended any of the Training and Development sessions arranged by the Council in the past year?

- 32 per cent had, in the past month
- 32 per cent had, in the past three months
- 8 per cent had, in the past six months
- 16 per cent had, in the past year
- 12 per cent had not.



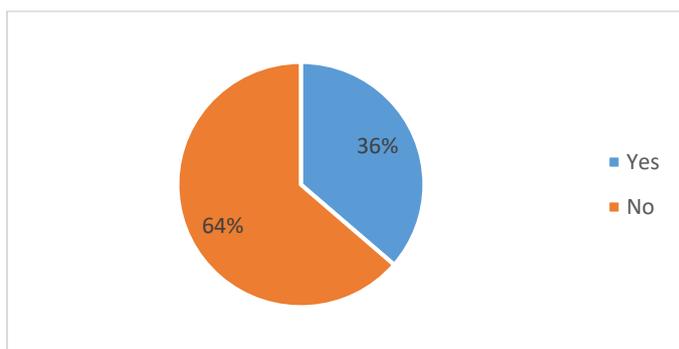
Over the past twelve months, how many sessions do you estimate you have attended? 22 responses

- Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) had attended four or fewer
- 18 per cent had attended 5 to 9
- 14 per cent had attended 10 to 14
- 4 per cent had attended 15 or more.



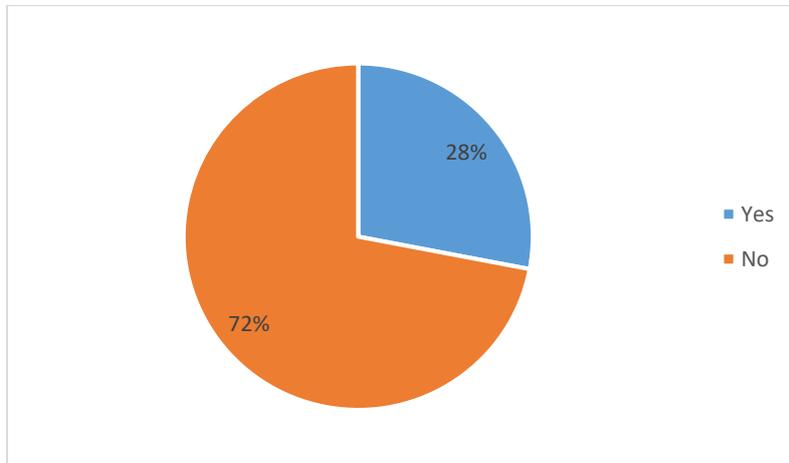
Outside of the main Development Programme, do you attend training sessions as part of your Committee Role? 22 responses

- A little over one-third (36 per cent) said they did attend training sessions
- Almost two-thirds therefore (64 per cent) said they did not.



Have you attended any major conferences which were pertinent to your role in the past twelve months? 25 responses

- Just over one-quarter (28 per cent) had attended some
- Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) had not.



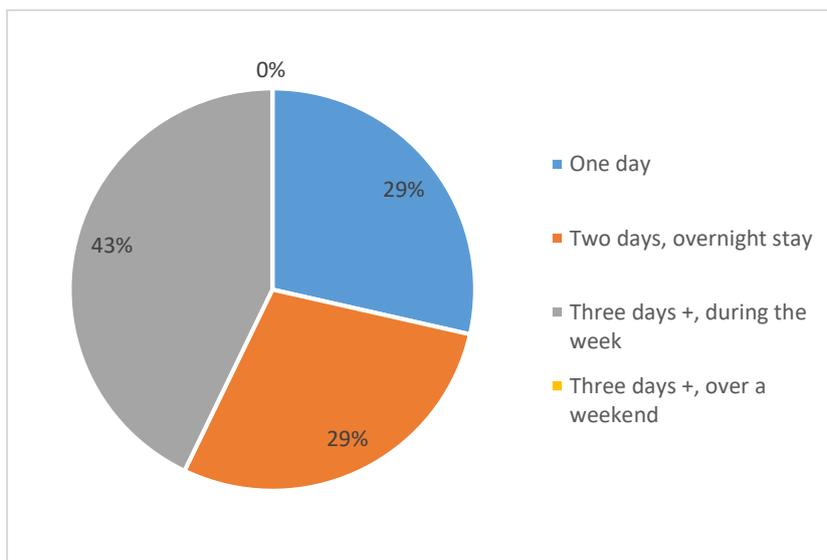
Those who had attended any major conference were asked how many conferences they estimate they have attended. Seven responses.

Of the seven respondents:

- Three had attended one conference
- One had attended two
- Two had attended three
- One had attended eight.

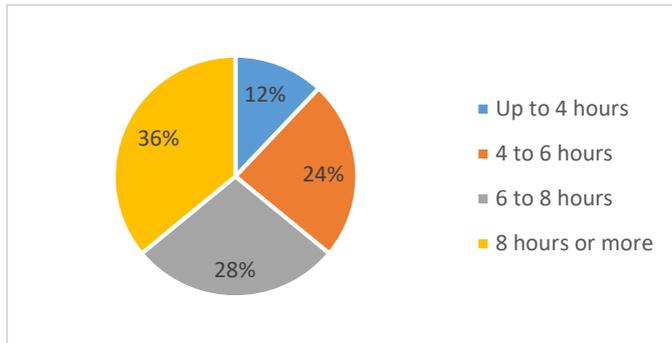
What was the duration of the conference(s)? Seven respondents

- 29 per cent (two respondents) said one day
- 29 per cent (two respondents) said two days with an overnight stay
- 43 per cent (three respondents) said three days or more, during the week
- No respondents said three days, over a weekend.



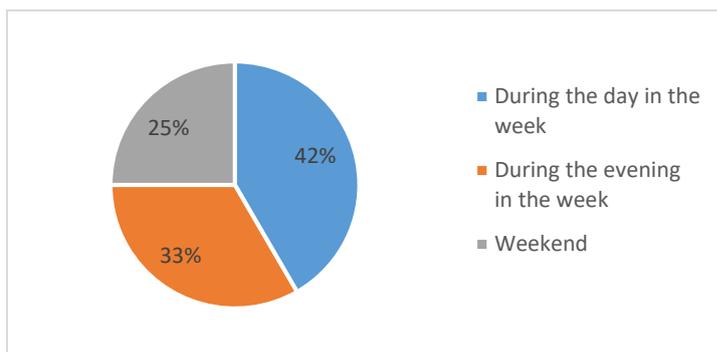
On average, how much time per week do you spend on constituency work?

- 12 per cent said they spent up to four hours per week
- 24 per cent said they spent four to six hour
- 28 per cent said they spent six to eight hours
- 36 per cent said they spent at least eight hours.



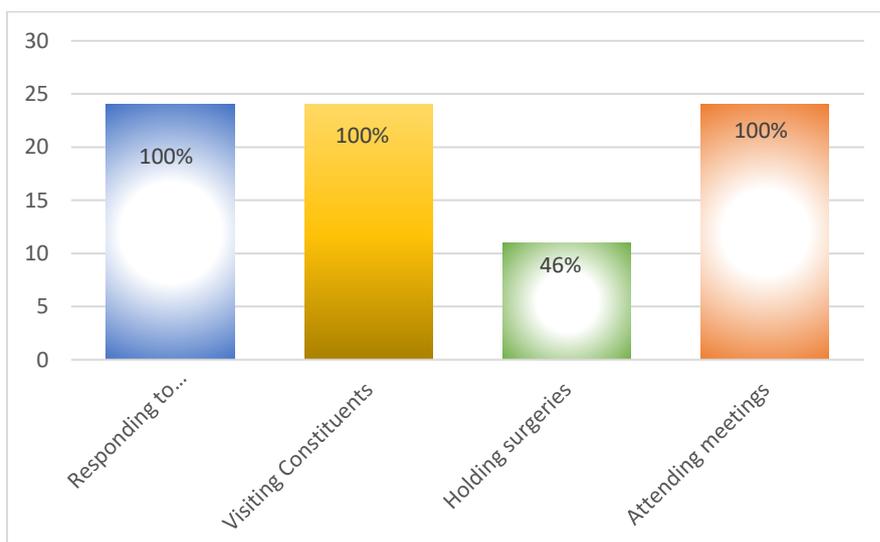
When is the work mostly done? 24 responses

- 42 per cent did most of the work during the day, in the week
- 33 per cent did so during the evening in the week
- 25 per cent did so at the weekend.



What form does this work take? Tick all that apply. 24 respondents

All 24 respondents said they responded to emails/correspondence, visited constituents and attended meetings. 46 per cent of them (11) also held surgeries.

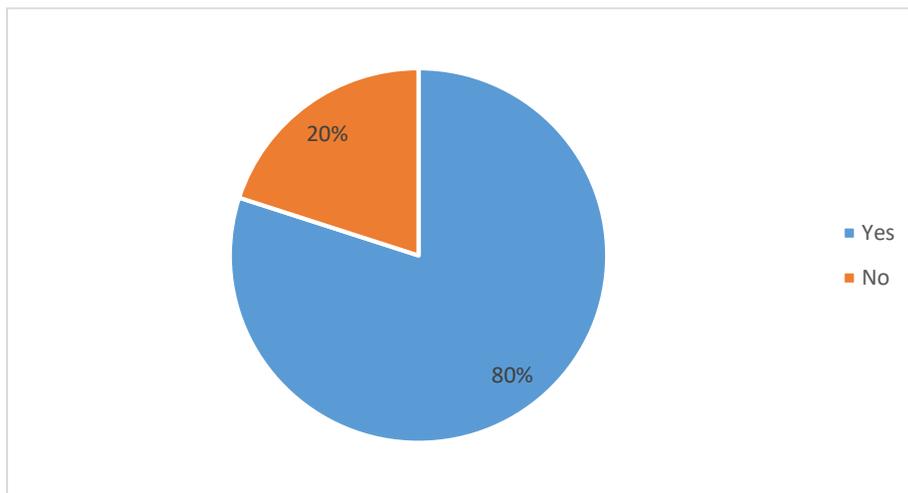


What other commitments do you have in addition to your role as a Councillor (please include work, caring responsibilities, etc.)? The commitments mentioned are included in full.

- County Councillor & cabinet support member for adult safeguarding & Town councillor
- Home husband, parish councillor, MAT trustee, school governor, chair of SNP, chair of LAP, secretary to residents HS2 panel
- Work for NHS. Look after grandson. Board member of local charity and member of carnival committee.
- Teacher, grand-parent (baby-sitting), first point of call for elderly parent with Parkinson's
- work full time, run external international organisation, local party Chair
- N/A
- Parochial Church Council
- I have a Full Time job as well as being a parent. I'm a Trustee for a national charity and I'm active in several community groups.
- i am a volunteer for the DMHospice Shop in Newcastle
- Work
- 21 hours per week caring and voluntary work.
- Full time work, caring responsibilities.
- Full time job. Parent to two young children. county councillor
- Working for two fire and rescue services, and caring for my two children
- I have two Children and I work fulltime
- Voluntary Work
- Odd Jobs Alms-house Trust/Ramsey Centre
- Run a local community centre. Cleaning. Opening up for Groups.
- Full time job; Trustee and Treasurer for Period Power; Vice Chair North Staffs MI

Do you attend any of the Civic events that Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council hosts each year?

- 80 per cent said that they did
- 20 per cent did not.



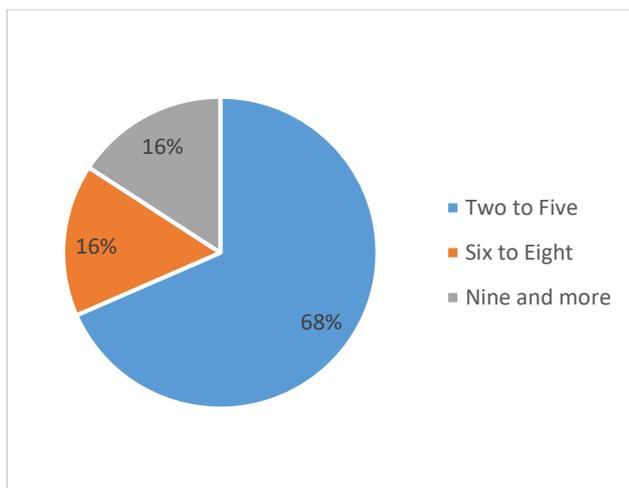
Which events and in what capacity, e.g. as part of a Civic delegation, as a representative of the Council, personal choice? Please list. Again, they are listed in full here.

- As representative of the Council
- Church services, attending newly opened organisations- Amity, Approach
- Mayor's church service, events in the borough. Both as a councillor and personal choice.
- mayoral civic roles, remembrance day, church service etc. as mayor's consort - many
- Church events. Mayor events. Theatre. Charity events. Town centre events. A combination of delegation, representatives of the council and personal choice.
- Mayoral events, Alderman appointments, special awards.... part of Civic delegation
- Personal choice and representative of council Battle of Britain Parade/Service Remembrance /Carol service/Foreign Markets
- I attend events as and when required usually as a Councillor but sometimes through personal choice.
- Remembrance Day Mayor making Xmas Light Switch on
- Various
- Councillor: Civic Service, Freedom of the Borough, Partnerships events, Worshipful the Mayor Charity events
- Representative and personal choice
- Remembrance Day Mayors Inauguration ceremony & other events if available to do so. Attendance is in a personal capacity
- Remembrance Sunday When and where when asked
- Personal choice Mayoral Functions. Church

On average, how many events per year do you attend? 19 responses

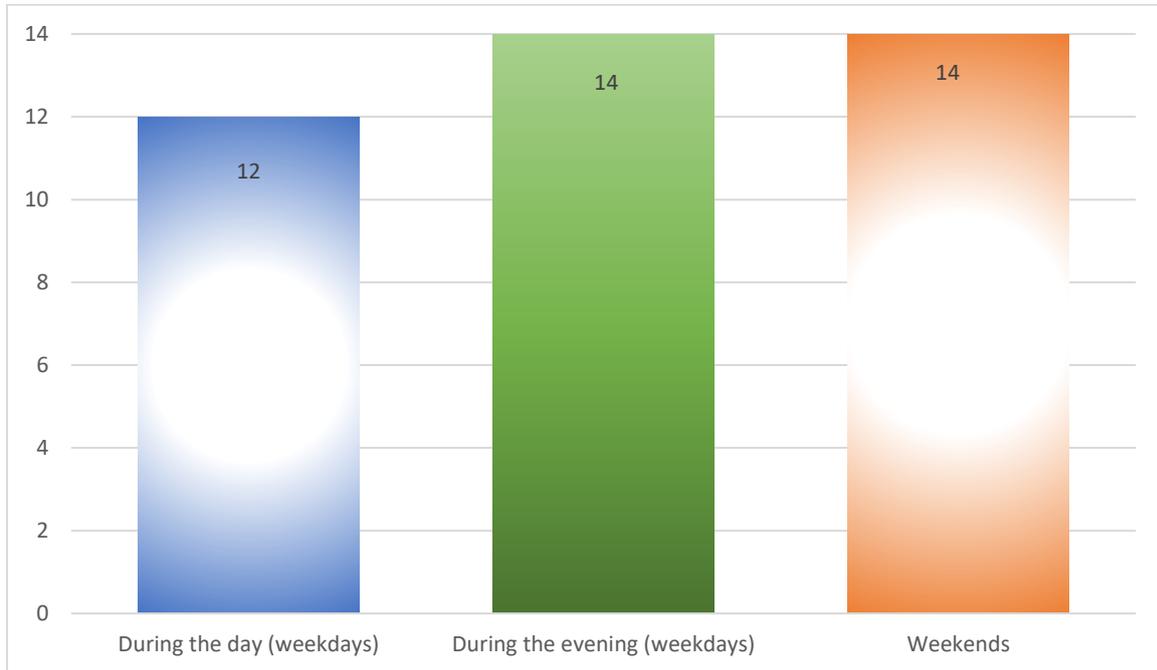
There were 19 responses. Note that the bands used are not evenly-spaced because some respondents put answers such as "Two to four" or "Two to five" so one band had to be two to five.

- 68 per cent attend between two and five events
- 16 per cent attend between six and eight
- 16 per cent attend nine or more



At what time of day are the events usually held? Please tick all that apply.

- 14 respondents chose weekends
- 14 respondents chose during the evenings in the week
- 12 respondents chose during the day in the week



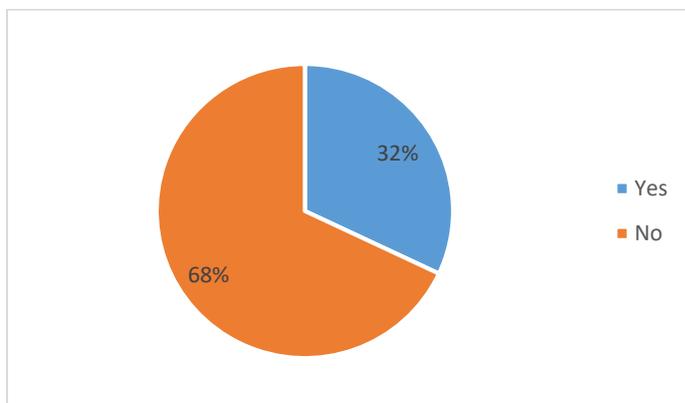
Are there any other matters which have not been included in the survey that you wish the Panel to take into account? If so, please enter here.

They are included in full here:

- increased IT training/familiarisation
- Member elected to serve on Waste recycling Centre
- Residents homes any time of day 24/7

The present level of Basic Allowance payable to all Councillors is £3,365.05. Do you think this is appropriate?

- A little over two-thirds (68 per cent) did not think the present level was appropriate
- Almost one-thirds (32 per cent) thought it was.



Those who answered no to the last question were then asked if they thought it should be lower or higher. All 17 respondents said that it should be higher.

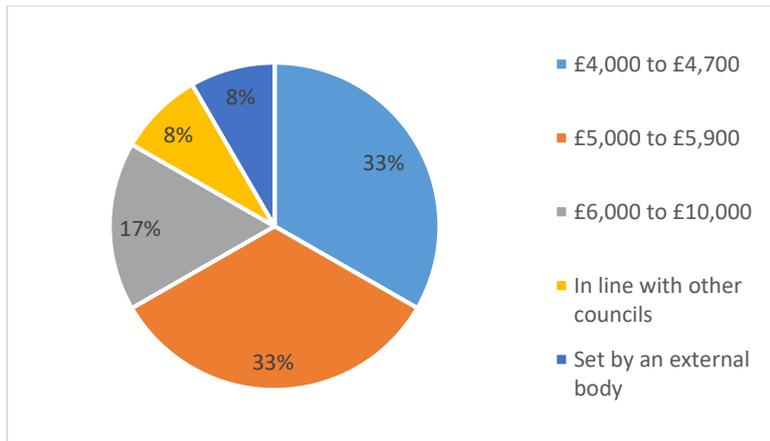
Please give a reason for your answer. They are, once more, included in full.

- No changes for many years
- We don't claim expenses and for rural members this can be quite high.
- It does not reflect the time and personal effort put in and should be benchmarked against other similar Boroughs
- The wards have become larger which has an impact on contacting constituents in terms of financially e.g. postage stamps, fuel, stationery and telephone. There is more of a time commitment due to the sizes of the wards
- It pre-empts people from low incomes taking part and full-time workers being able to reduce their hours to allow for time to work on council work. Also as expenses are not claimed for this allowance is taken up in general costs
- Due to distance between home and ward
- The allowance has been frozen for several years and it simply does not come close to covering expenses such as fuel and office costs. Councillors are expected to be on call at any hour of the day, 7 days a week. You can restrict access time by phone but this does not stop people knocking on your door or stopping you in the street.
- It has been frozen since 2006. With annual inflation of on average 3% annually then it should now be around £5,000. Members also have to provide their own phones and Wi-Fi etc.
- Within comparable other sector councils the level of allowance is significantly below the average
- I believe it should be linked to the NJC rises that council staff get, if they get a rise the members allowance should match that, if our workers do not get a rise then members should not get a rise.
- This should be independently reviewed to determine whether the allowance reflects the work undertaken. Following the lack of increase for the past many years, the rate of inflation and the increased workload for councillors since the boundaries changed
- I think it should have a small increase as it has not changed since my time as an elected member
- IT has increased in price More responsibilities - allowance needs to be revised
- We have not had a rise in our allowances for over 10 years. Our wards are now extended. Less Councillors

If you are able to, please indicate an appropriate level (£).

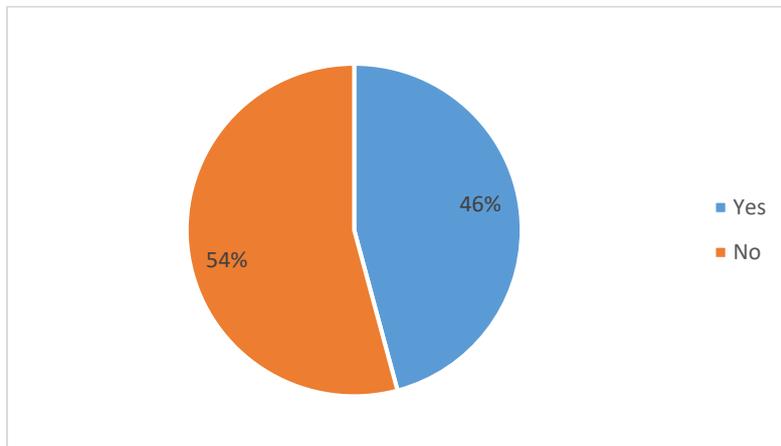
12 responses were left:

- Four suggested between £4,000 and £4,700
- Four suggested between £5,000 and £5,900
- Two suggested between £6,000 and £10,000
- One suggested that it should be in line with other councils
- One suggested that it should be set by an external body.



Do you incur any significant costs that you believe are not covered by your present allowance? 24 responses

- Just over half (54 per cent) did incur costs
- Almost half (46 per cent) did not.



Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are currently paid as follows: [To assist the Panel to produce a more consistent group of allowances, please can you score each role/position in respect of importance and impact: 1 – 10, with 1 being unimportant and 10 being extremely important. 23 responses

- The Leader of the Council role was seen as most important. 83 per cent rated it its importance as at least eight out of 10
- 78 per cent rated Chair of Planning Committee at least eight out of 10
- 74 per cent rated the Deputy Leader role at least eight out of 10
- 74 per cent rated Chair of Scrutiny Committee at least eight out of 10
- 73 per cent rated Chair of Audit and Standards Committee at least eight out of 10
- 19 per cent rated the Deputy Mayor role as no higher than three out of 10
- 17 per cent rated the Mayor role as no higher than three out of 10

Note that in the following table any blank cells mean 0 per cent.

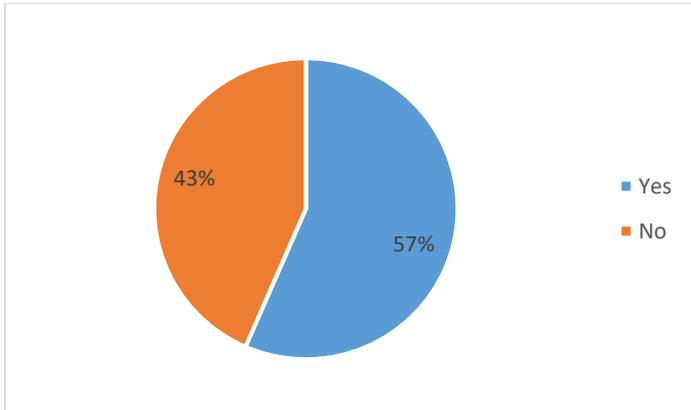
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leader of the Council	4%				4%		9%	4%	9%	70%
Deputy Leader	4%	4%		4%	4%	9%		4%	22%	48%
Cabinet Member with Portfolio	9%			5%		14%	9%	9%	9%	46%
Chair of Scrutiny Committee	4%			4%	13%	4%		22%	17%	35%
Chair of Audit and Standards Committee	5%			14%	5%	5%		14%	23%	36%
Chair of Planning Committee	4%				9%	9%		17%	26%	35%
Chair of Licensing and Public Protection Committee	4%				9%	17%	4%	26%	4%	35%
Vice Chair of Scrutiny Committee	4%		4%	4%	17%	4%	21%	13%	4%	29%
Vice Chair of Planning Committee	4%				22%	13%	17%	13%	4%	26%
Vice Chair of Public Protection Committee	4%				22%	17%	13%	13%	4%	26%
Vice Chair of Audit and Standards Committee	4%		4%		22%	13%	13%	13%	4%	26%
Vice Chair of Licensing and Public Protection Committee	5%			5%	23%	18%	5%	9%	9%	27%
Mayor	4%	9%	4%	13%	17%		9%	4%	4%	35%
Deputy Mayor	14%		5%	14%	9%	9%	9%		9%	32%
Minority Party Leaders	5%	5%		16%	16%	11%	5%			42%

Which post do you hold which attracts a Special Responsibility Allowance? 20 responses

- None * 12 responses
- Vice Chair Licensing & Public Protection
- chair of scrutiny
- Vice chair of scrutiny
- Chair of Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Vice Chair of Health & Wellbeing
- Audit and Standards Vice Chair
- Leader of the council
- Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Community Safety and Wellbeing

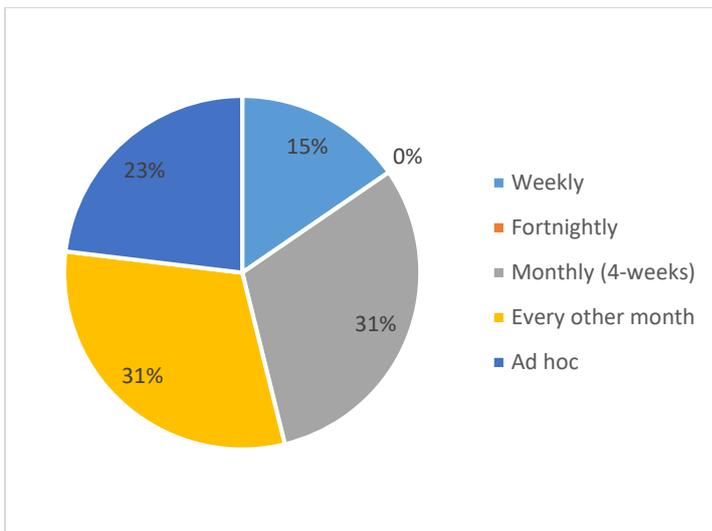
Are you required, as part of your role to attend additional meetings; for example, pre-agenda meetings, briefings, etc.? 23 responses

- 43 per cent said that they did have to attend them
- 57 per cent said that they did not



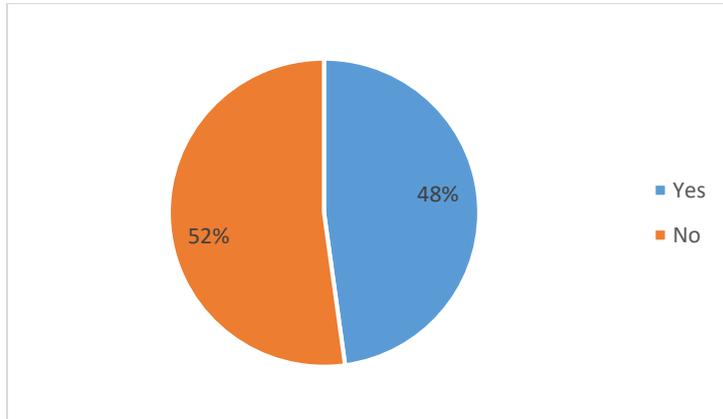
How often are you expected to attend these meetings (for those who answered yes)? Tick all that apply. 11 responses

- 15 per cent were expected to attend weekly
- No one was expected to attend fortnightly
- 31 per cent were expected to attend monthly
- 31 per cent were expected to attend every month
- 23 per cent were expected to attend on an ad hoc basis.



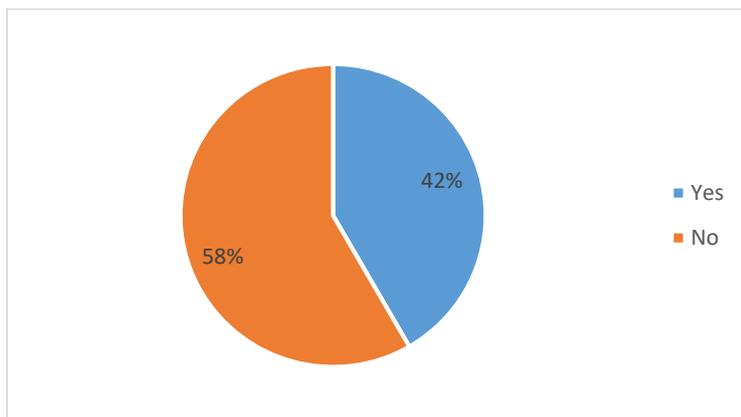
Do you think that the Special Responsibility Allowance is a fair representation of the time and commitment required from the post holder? 23 responses

- 48 per cent felt it was a fair representation
- 52 per cent felt it was not.



Caring Allowance – based on the National Living Wage of £8.21 per hour. Do you think this rate should be increased? 24 responses

- 42 per cent thought it should be increased
- 58 per cent thought it should not be increased.



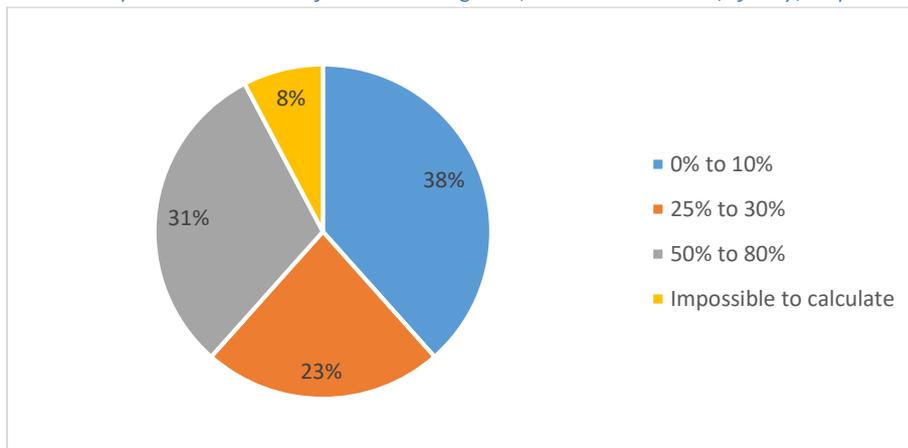
Respondents who answered 'yes' to that question were then asked "Why do you think that - and to what rate should they be increased?"

- Caring can be draining and this might be the only income. £8.50
- Allowances have not been increased for a number of years
- £10 p.h.
- Operating with such a low / minimum figure disenfranchises certain groups of people
- Real living wage
- Most childcare services actually cost more than this amount, meaning councillors having to pay for childcare to attend meetings will not be compensated fully.
- Should reflect money saved by NHS
- £8.21 is not a living wage It should be increased to a real living wage of £10 per hour

Do you have any comments on the current scheme of travel for Councillors? If so, please put them in the following box.

- I am unaware of the current scheme of travel.
- don't know about it and never used it
- As I am a bus & Taxi user I put in my expence sheet at the end of each month Which I Encloses Receipts to back it up
- Adequate
- I was not aware councillors could claim for travel
- I do not claim for travel
- As I only live one mile from Castle House I do not claim travel expenses
- Do not claim for travel

Government guidance states that “it is important that some element of the work of Councillors continues to be voluntary”. As part of their deliberations, Independent Remuneration Panels will assess what Public Service Discount should apply to the basic allowance – that is the percentage of their time Councillors expect to give without any financial remuneration. Accordingly, what do you feel is an acceptable amount of time to be given, unremunerated, if any, expressed as a percentage?



- Five respondents answered between 0 per cent and 10 per cent (Note that these options were not suggested, they were all made unprompted)
- Three answered between 25 per cent and 30 per cent
- Four answered between 50 per cent and 80 per cent
- One said it was impossible to calculate a percentage.

If you have any other comments on Members' Allowances, please put them in the following box. They are included in full here.

- Retain paper copy of attendances/payments notice
- N/A
- The allowance for Mayor is far too high for what is essentially an honorary and ceremonial role and should be reduced to the equivalent of a Planning Committee Chair. The Deputy Mayor allowance should remain
- Mayor role seems to be disproportionately high when compared to the allowance of the council leader the council leader role will require much more work whereas the mayor role is an honorary role. Perhaps they should be portioned as a percentage off the leader of the councils allowance and include the inflation at the same rate as other council workers.
- Members Allowances should not be considered by fellow councillors.