

## Member Survey Autumn 2022 – Full responses

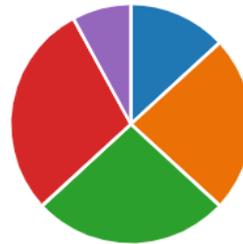
This is 'appendix A' to the [April 2023](#) Standards Committee report on Member Survey Results.

*For presentational reasons, responses are not listed in survey order, however they are numbered in survey order.*

Twenty-four members responded, out of 42 councillors (57%).

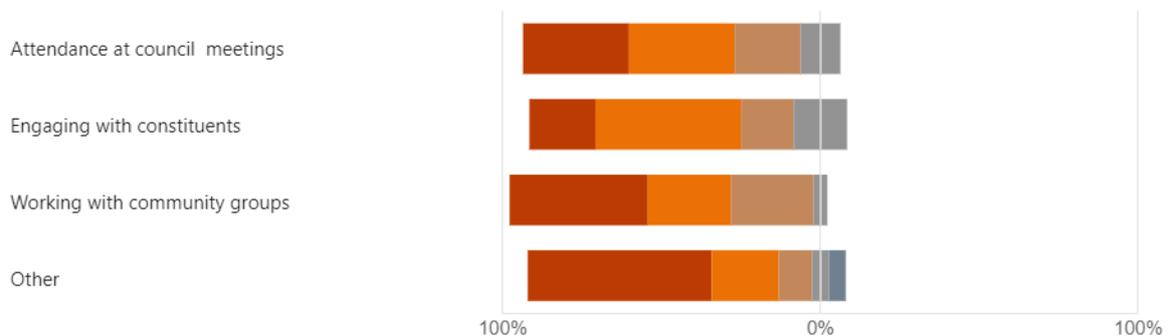
### WHAT COUNCILLORS DO

33. What position(s) do you hold at SBC?

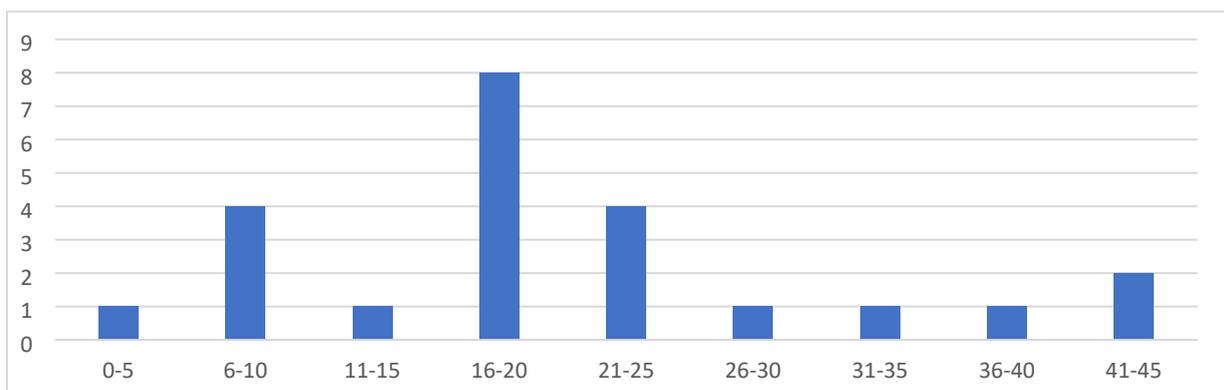


34. Roughly how many hours do you spend on the following council business in an average week?

■ 0-5 hrs  
 ■ 6-10 hrs  
 ■ 11-15 hrs  
 ■ 16-20 hrs  
 ■ 21-25 hrs  
 ■ 26-30 hrs  
 ■ 31+ hrs



35. Roughly how many hours in total do you spend on your councillor role in an average week?



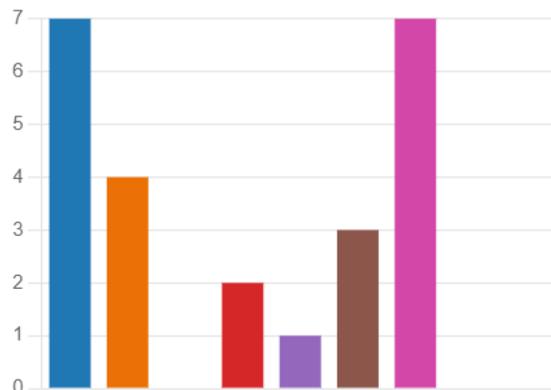
## Appendix A

The average time spent by SBC councillors on their councillor role in an average week was 21.7 hours.

For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 was 22.4 hours.

### 36. What are your current circumstances? (select one)

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> In full-time paid employment	7
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> In part-time paid employment	4
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Not in paid work - in full-time e...	0
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Not in paid work - looking after ...	2
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Not in paid work - other reason	1
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> Retired	3
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Self-employed or freelance	7
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> Unemployed	0
<span style="color: olive;">●</span> Other	0

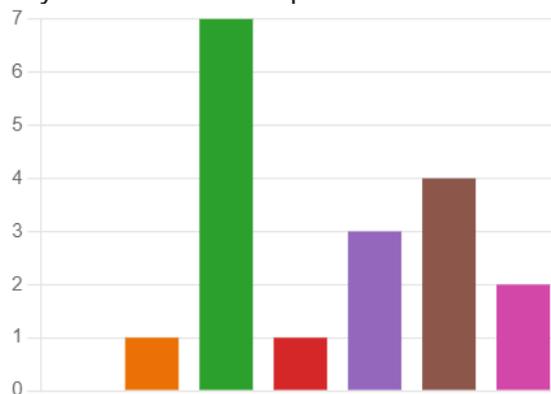


For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

In 2022, 40.0 per cent of councillors were retired (SBC's figure is 12.5%). The proportion in full-time employment was 20.3 per cent (SBC's figure is 29.1%).

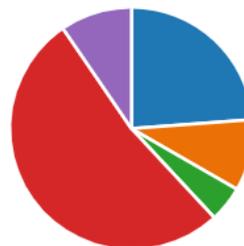
### 37. If you are in paid employment, what is your current occupation?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Administrative, clerical, secretari...	0
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Lecturer, teacher or researcher	1
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Managerial or executive	7
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Manual or craft	1
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Professional or technical	3
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> N/A (not in paid employment)	4
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Other	2



### 38. Do you hold additional democratic/voluntary/unpaid positions?

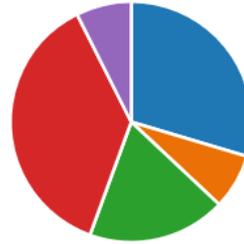
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Parish councillor	5
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> School governor	2
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Magistrate	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span> No such positions	11
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> Other	2



Appendix A

39. Do you have any caring responsibilities (as a primary carer)? (select any which apply) (optional)

● Child(ren)	8
● Partner	2
● Relative	5
● None	10
● Other	2



For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

In 2022, more than two-fifths of councillors (45.9 per cent) had responsibility as a carer, higher for women (50.6 per cent) than men (38.9 per cent). Most commonly councillors cared for a child or children (19.7 per cent, 25.5 per cent of women and 17.1 per cent of men). Most of the rest cared for a relative (11.1 per cent) or partner (9.8 per cent). The overall proportion with a caring responsibility had previously ranged between 24.2 per cent and 27.9 per cent between 2004 and 2013, before increasing in 2018 and 2022.

40. This space is yours for any comments on this topic.

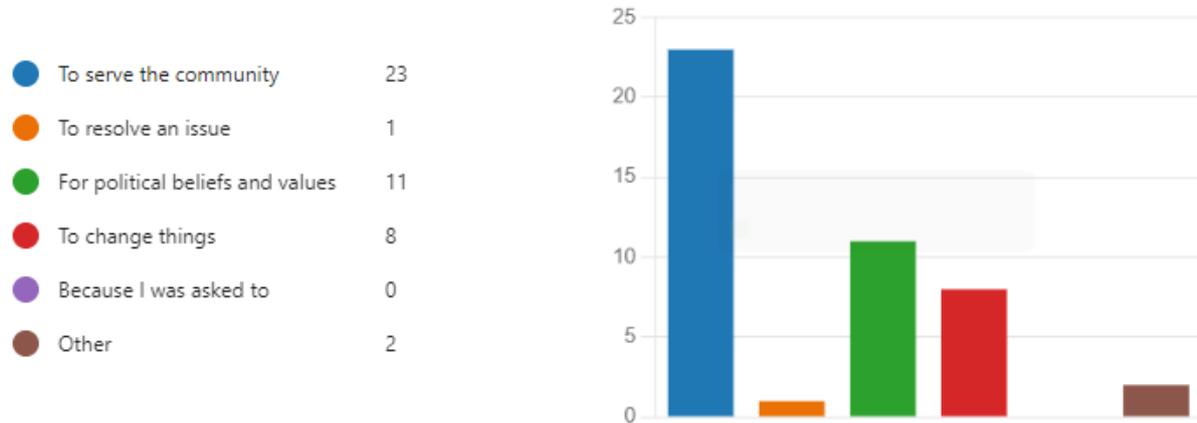
Trustee

I am loosing lot of time in dealing with caseworks & follow up/chasing officers. If systems & procedures are working well then there will be less caseworks and less chaseups but that is not the case. Senior officers do not even respond to councillor emails. Member Casework team is only a mediator but what can they do if officers are not acting.

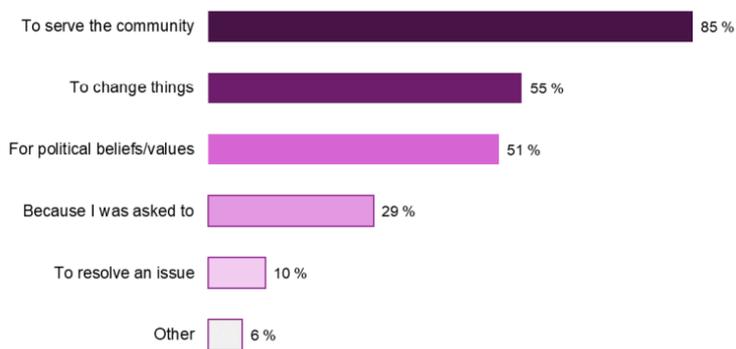
I am a grandparent

## **COUNCILLORS' MOTIVATIONS AND ATTITUDES TO THE ROLE**

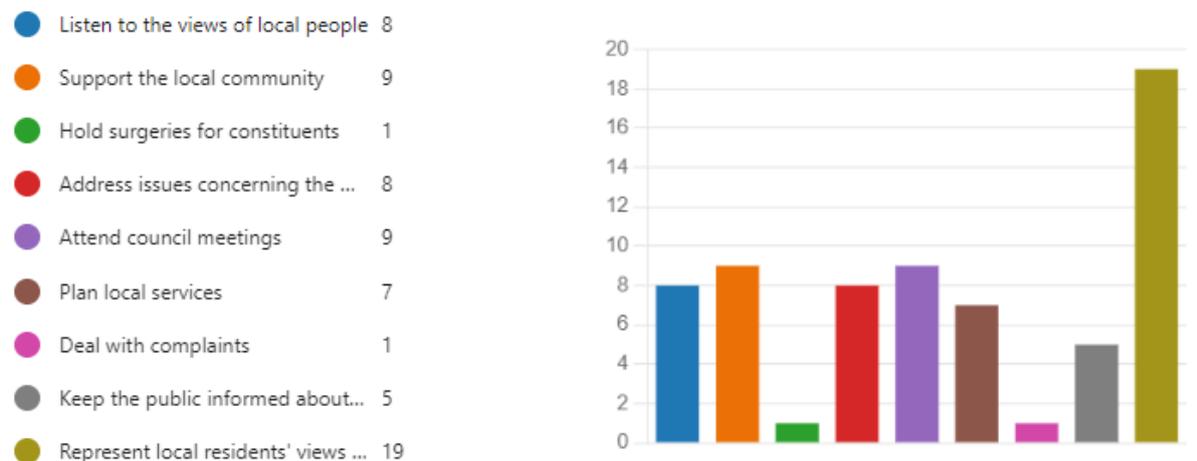
1. What were your main reasons for becoming a councillor?  
(Options from LGA's councillor census)



For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

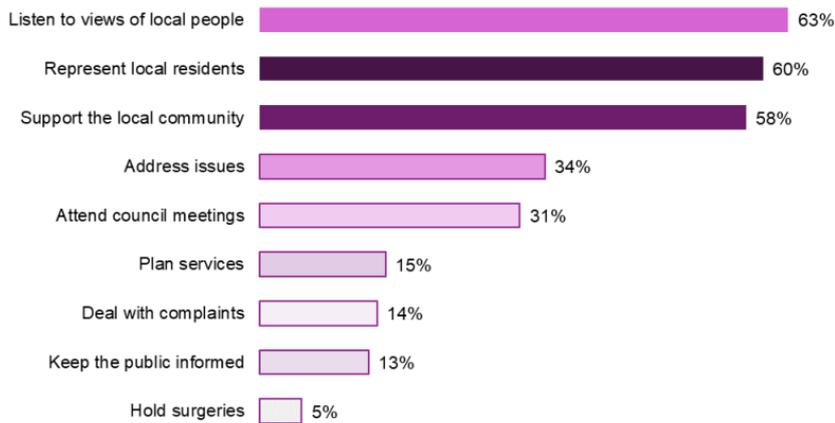


2. In your view, which are the most important things that councillors do?  
(Options from LGA's councillor census)



## Appendix A

For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

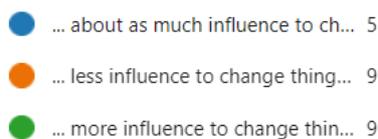


### 3. I feel that I have...

'...about as much influence to change things as I expected'

'...less influence to change things than I expected'

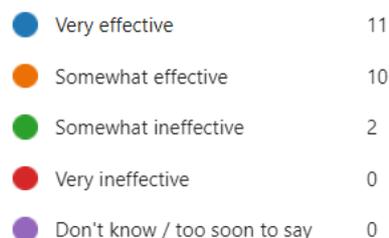
'...more influence to change things than I expected'



For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

In 2022, 33.9 per cent of councillors thought that they had about as much influence to change things in their area as they expected before they were elected (SBC's figure is 22%), while 33.3 per cent felt that they had more influence than expected (SBC's figure is 39.1%) and 32.8 per cent felt that they had less influence (SBC's figure is 39.1%).

### 4. How effective are you in your role as a councillor?



For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

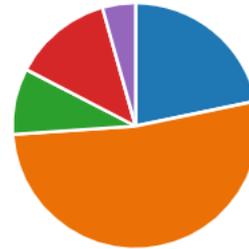
A little under a third of councillors (31.9 per cent) thought that they were very effective in their role in the council (SBC's figure is 47.8%) and 59.6 per cent rated themselves as fairly effective (SBC's

## Appendix A

figure is 43.5%). Only 5.7 per cent regarded themselves as not very or not at all effective (SBC's figure is 8.7%).

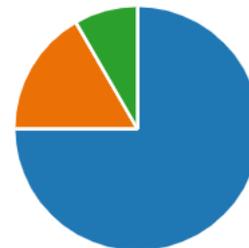
### 5. How effective are most Slough Borough Councillors in their roles as councillors?

Very effective	5
Somewhat effective	12
Somewhat ineffective	2
Very ineffective	3
Don't know / too soon to say	1



### 6. Would you recommend becoming a Slough Borough Councillor?

Yes	18
No	4
Don't know	2



For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

In 2022, 79.0 per cent of councillors nationally would recommend the role to others (SBC's figure is 75%), 8.6 per cent would not (SBC's figure is 16.7%), and 12.4 per cent did not answer or could not say (SBC's figure is 8.3%).

## DEMOCRACY

### 26. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

I have a good understanding of the work of the cabinet

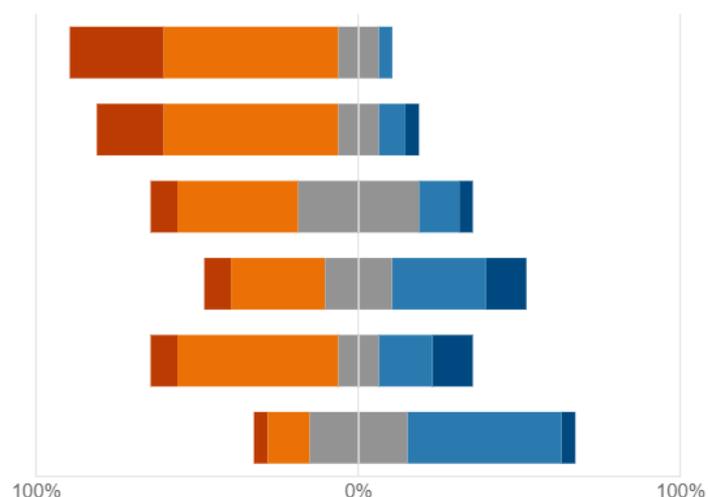
I am able to have my say about issues affecting Slough, its residents and the council

The public are able to have their say and influence decisions made by councillors

The council communicates well with residents about the big decisions it makes

Committee and Council reports provide sufficient information for me to make informed decisions

Committee and Council reports are written in a way which helps councillors and the public to understand...



27. This space is yours for any comments on this topic

**Responses**

Reports are not fit for purpose, and even the Commissioners have commented on this. Councillors are , therefore, not equipped with the means to get to the bottom of problems and have full opportunity to change things for the better.

NEEDS SIMPLE REPORTS NOT IN A COMPLEX WAY

There has been some limited improvements in papers for scrutiny but still some are not being made available in time and in a way that actual allows good questioning by Cllrs. Information and figures are sometimes duplicated and almost laid out in a way that makes the information to confessing given the time to understand and put meaningful questions forward!

Only cabinet knows what they are doing but we are not aware other than that they participate in cabinet meetings and some officers meetings. I am not able to have my say about issues affecting Slough, because there is no platform for it. All meetings are agenda based so I can not raise anything that is not in agenda. We are always told to raise casework for something that we wanted to discuss, but case works are for residents issues, if councillor wanted to discuss then there is no opportunity. It is also difficult to find which officer is responsible for what, departments hierarchy should be self explanatory. We need to have briefing sessions or brainstorm sessions with each directorate so we can discuss various matters that affects Slough.

it would help if there were good introductions and executive summaries.

I think that as we are within age of digital transformation it is a time of dynamic communication, some residents would benefit from non digital forms of communication.

The last question, the reports need to be in more laymen terms

Council usually consult residents

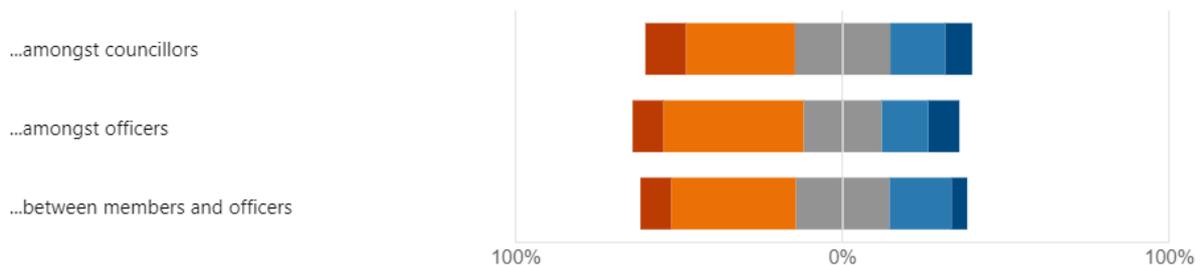
Reports are very specific and meant to be all encompassing which is fine for decision makers but are not 'user friendly for the publicic .

reports are still far to complex and far too much detail

## CULTURE

### 8. There is a healthy culture and good ways of working overall...

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree



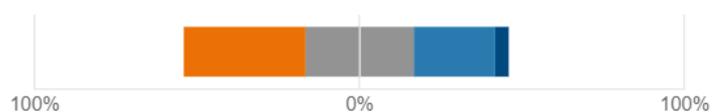
### 9. I have confidence in...

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree



### 10. Senior officers understand councillors and how politics works in Slough

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree



### 11. This space is yours for any comments on this topic.

#### Responses

I am critical of the current organisational culture, which I think is prone to bully, but I do think there are lots of good intentions. Reports to members are often not helpful in providing real choice and sometimes don't disclose key information. Officers overwhelmingly have good intentions, but are prone, like anyone to manipulation and often pursue their own agendas. Most senior officers don't live in Slough and, therefore, lack historical perspective, don't fully understand the complexities of the local community, and are not affected by the decisions they make here in the same way as these who actually live here - not enough live local or would ever want to live in Slough!

it could do better for officers to under little more that how does politics works in slough.

Lack empathy local people who come disadvantage background as most middle class and white.

**Responses**

As the two recent independent investigations have found there was and remains in my view a real cultural, ownership, communication issues within the organisation. This includes the political neutrality of some officers in my personal opinion sadly.

Officers lack of professionalism and accountability

The majority of councillors are affective in their role and the relationship between councillors and officers is positive.

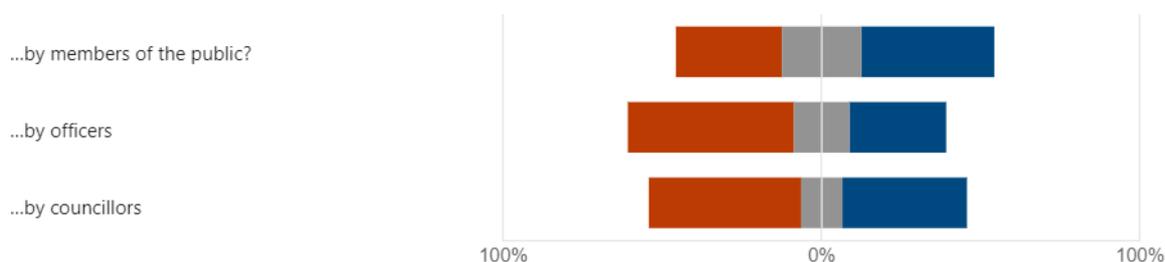
If in doubt I consult officers.

Officers have to really understand the community we all serve in order to understand the politics of the town. Particularly the drivers for why most councillors stand for public office. South Asian countries being a councillor or mayor is a role of prestige and influence. Has little to do with genuinely helping people or even understanding how to system works in order to assist.

**MEMBER WELLBEING AND HANDLING ABUSE OR INTIMIDATION**

28. Are effective arrangements in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour...

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



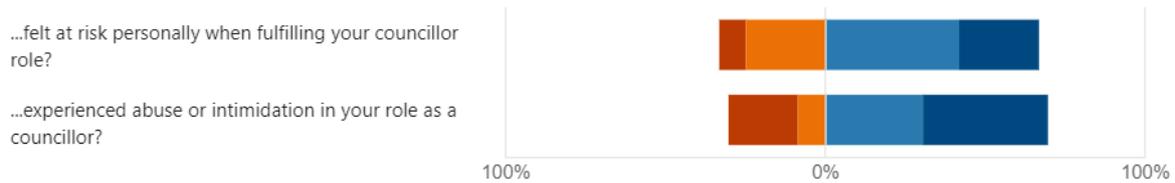
Please note that the blue colour represents 'Don't Know'.

For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

In 2022, most councillors thought that their council had appropriate arrangements in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour towards them in their role as councillors. The proportion varied between 69.6 per cent in respect of such behaviour by council officers, 56.8 per cent in respect of councillors, and 54.8 per cent in respect of members of the public.

### 29. How often over the last twelve months have you...

■ Frequently ■ Occasionally ■ Rarely ■ Never



For comparison, the national results in the LGA Councillor Census 2022 were:

Just under a half of councillors (45.1 per cent) reported that they rarely felt at risk personally when fulfilling their role as a councillor, while 26.8 per cent never felt at risk, 24.1 per cent occasionally felt at risk, and 4.0 per cent frequently felt at risk.

Around one in ten councillors (10.3 per cent) had frequently experienced abuse or intimidation in their capacity as a councillor over the last twelve months, 29.4 per cent had experienced abuse or intimidation occasionally, 33.4 per cent had rarely experienced them, and 26.9 per cent had never experienced abuse or intimidation over the last twelve months.

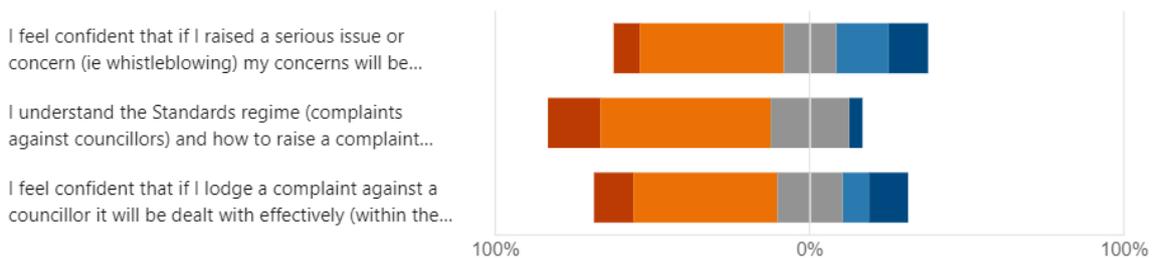
### 30. If you have experienced abuse or intimidation, was it from... (select any that apply)

- SBC Officer 1
- SBC Councillor 4
- A member of the public 8
- Other 4



### 31. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



### 32. This space is yours for any comments on this topic.

#### Responses

Some complaints have not gone as far as I have wished. There has not been positive resolution. There is more to complain about today than ever before.

**Responses**

My personal experience has just underlined how biased and in many ways it is pointless to hope for a fair out come but it is important to at least register your complaint as a matter of official record for any later independent review has access to such official records. Such investigation internally still are inappropriately affected by the poor biased culture that remains within SBC sadly

i feel issues i raise as important are not dealt with effectively

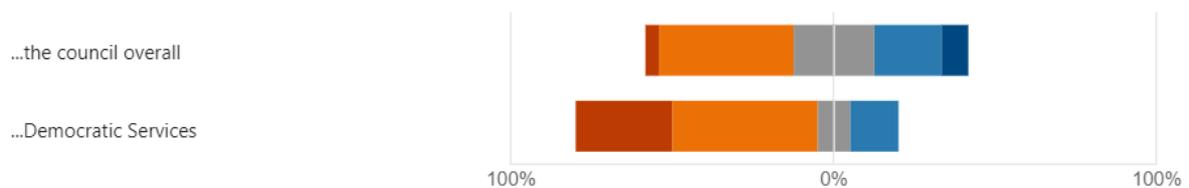
I have full confidence in officers

little confidence in the system

**MEMBER SUPPORT**

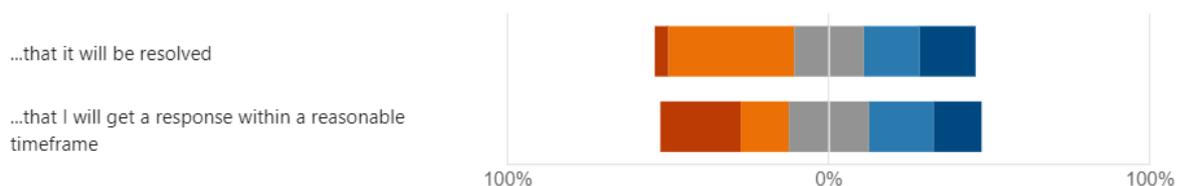
7. I am satisfied with the quality of the member support provided by...

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree



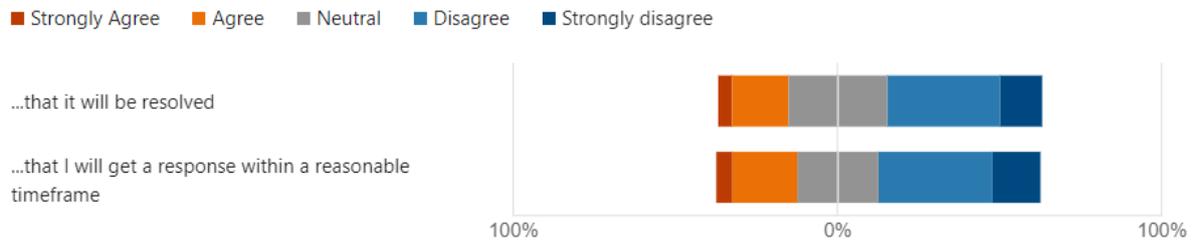
12. When I submit casework I am confident...

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

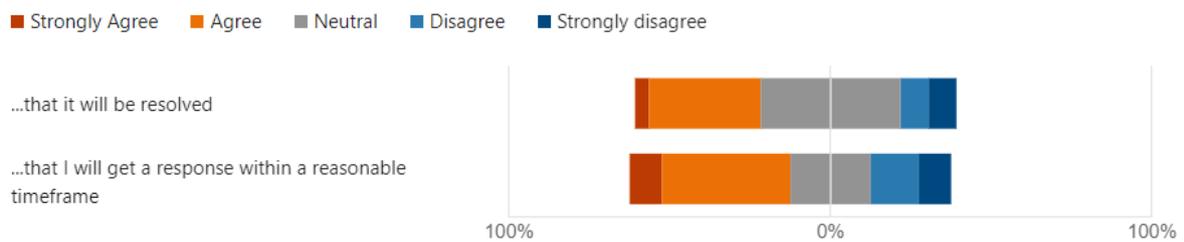


Appendix A

13. When I submit a service request (eg via the council's website) I am confident...



14. If I contact a senior officer with a question or an issue, I am confident...



15. This space is yours for any comments on this topic.

**Responses**

Many inquiries are not responded to, requiring follow up; some are passed around with no closure; responses are generally not within an agreed or acceptable timeframe. Some positive response still don't resolve the issue. Generally, SBC provides poor customer service, is not customer focused, and does not offer good value for money.

with short of staff it hard.

My answer to the above are neutral and disagree as depends on officers and type of casework! some are better than others

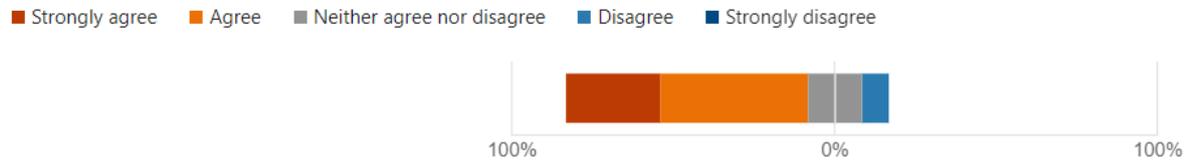
I am tracking my own caseworks/Service Requests as I am not confident enough that they will be resolved/concluded without me following up/chasing.

Officers are very help full

All depends on department who the responsible officer is. Huge inconsistencies across the council. Big issues when responding to a multifaceted case - as its rare to get a consolidated response.

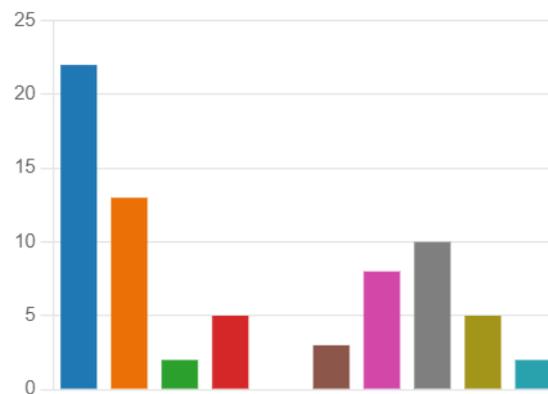
## MEMBER SUPPORT - IT

16. The council provides me with IT equipment and infrastructure which enables me to carry out my role effectively



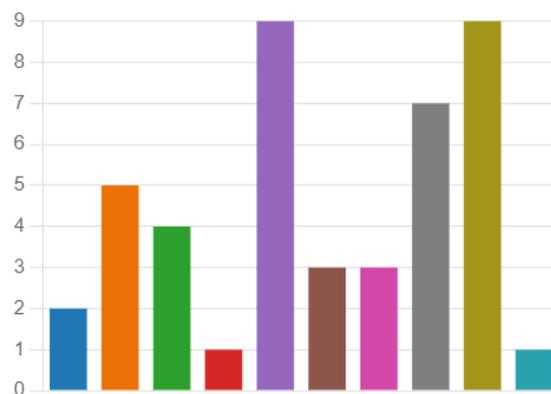
17. What digital tools are most important to enable you carry out your role effectively?

- Email 22
- Microsoft Teams (video calls & c... 13
- Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Ex... 2
- Internet access 5
- The Intranet 0
- Smartphone 3
- Wifi connectivity on council pre... 8
- Access to meeting papers digita... 10
- Ability to annotate meeting pap... 5
- Other 2



18. Which digital tools would you most benefit from more training about?

- Email 2
- Microsoft Teams (video calls & c... 5
- Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Ex... 4
- Internet access 1
- The Intranet 9
- Smartphone 3
- Wifi connectivity on council pre... 3
- Access to meeting papers digita... 7
- Ability to annotate meeting pap... 9
- Other 1



19. This space is yours for any comments on this topic.

**Responses**

Our systems are intermittent and especially our webcasting and internet connectivity re speed and capacity are poor

Officers/Councillors not using MS Teams as much as they could to interact

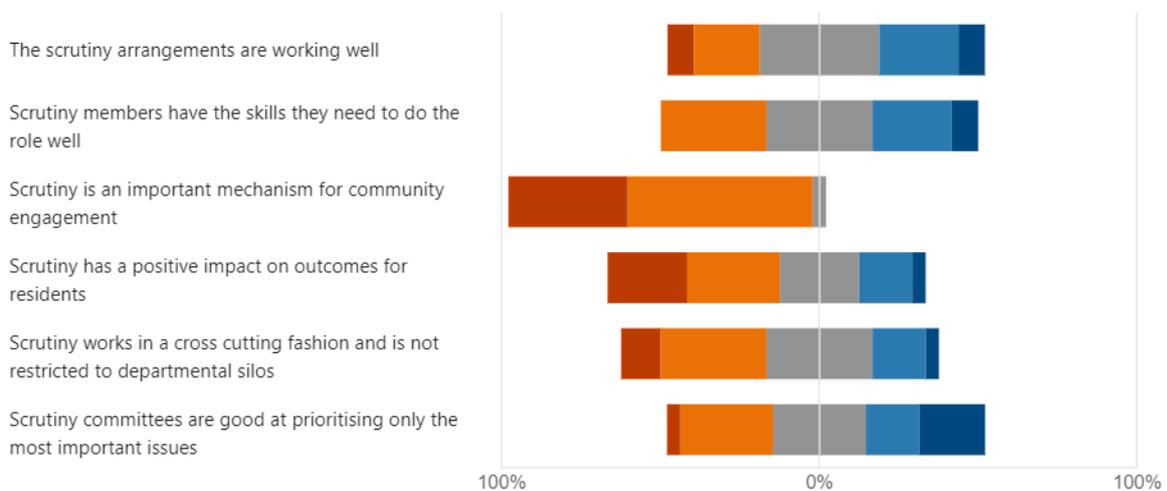
For planning meetings I am provided with paper copy If I need

wifi and connectivity in Observatory house is very poor and causes issues with signing during meeting. leading to going paper based. Many councillors sttend meetings with neither papercopies nor devices. How can these councillors be engaged and partcipate if they dont come prepared for the meetings? Who's responsible for doing these checks? surely the MO should be asking questions.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

20. When it comes to our Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three Scrutiny Panels...

■ Strongly Agree 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Neutral 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Strongly disagree



21. This space is yours for any comments on this topic.

**Responses**

Efforts have been made to look at issues in a cross-cutting setting but this effort is often undone at the follow-through stage - there is insufficient follow through and too much silo mentality, and convention.

**Responses**

SCRUTINY IS TO REVIEW THE POLICIES .

The ability to be able to scrutinise both departments and lead members has been further demised in my opion this year and remains politically biased to ruling group in a manor i feel is unacceptable

Scrutiny structure is change so this section is not of important anymore

poor training of councillors effects how well they can do their job

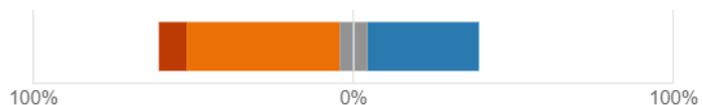
Scrutiny committee is free from political pressure which act as watchdog to the delivery of all services.

Scrutiny is made up of good officer support and councillors that are engaged and participate in the meetings. They need to have a good knowledge and understanding of the council and in particular the area they are scrutinising - which many don't.

**MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

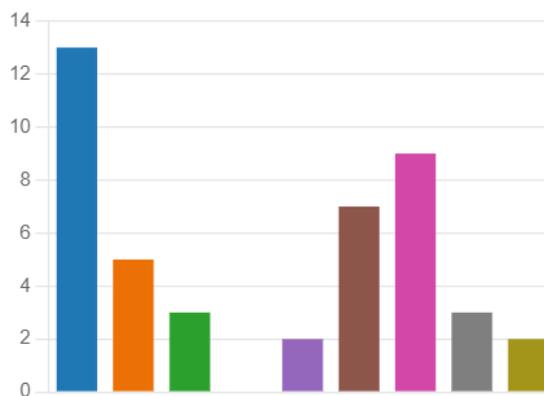
22. Councillors have the training and development opportunities they need.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree



23. What would you say are the main things which prevent you from attending more member development sessions?

- Nothing prevents me - I go to t... 13
- I am not aware of them 5
- I am too busy 3
- I am sufficiently skilled and kno... 0
- The topics do not seem relevant... 2
- They happen at an inconvenient... 7
- They are not online 9
- I don't have confidence that the... 3
- Other 2



## 24. What top 3 things should be included in the all-councillor induction during May-August 2023?

### Responses

Casework resolution IT training Understanding Council decision-making processes and review points

Training, Development,

CODE OF CONDUCT, REGISTER OF INTEREST, CASEWORK MANAGEMENT, OVERVIEW OF THE FULL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT,

-Role of a Councillor -Understanding Budget reports and to how Finance works (MRP & Budget) -Improve Communication Skills (improve skills to speak at Council meeting)

Meeting conduct What relevant questions to ask planning, overview scrutiny etc not policy issues. Lots of things can't be done by Councillor due to budget constraints, ideas for better engagement with residents.

- Communication skills with residents and colleagues - Understanding budget reports  
- Role of Cllr - casework management

A proper up-to-date chart of organisational department contacts with full contact details including mobile phone/landline ext as well as email addresses! Full training on Best Practice Scrutiny practices giving full details of both officers' requirements to respond and for Cllrs to be best assisted in making Scrutiny work!

1) Detailed hierarchy of officers and which portfolio each one owns and what departments fall under each portfolio. For example, potholes ---> highways, parks?, green verge ---? garage sites?, street lamps? We need a clear self-explanatory chart of which section of various public services falls into which directorate and their low-level breakdown till their group manager 2) What procedures to follow if Senior officers do not reply to Councillors. Residents have a complaints procedure to follow and what about Councillors, where can councillors complain if something they are not happy. 3) About new scrutiny committees, scope of member questions in Council meetings

Department area leads contacts Overview of scrutiny Finance training

Support documents

understanding finance and audit. safeguarding how to report requests for service.

SBC's Officers contact list which we used to get with up-to-date contact numbers. All the facilities available to use in council offices for members

Training for all Cllrs on scrutiny

Finance, officer responsibilities, clear guidance of roles on different committees

**Responses**

Communication with officers training of what to expect and how to contribute in council meetings Support network for councillors with particular needs

Raising case work Acceptable Conduct at meetings. Header level finance training

Finance, Budgeting and Scrutiny and what a good local authority is supposed to do.

Residents First rather than Party Politics Understand your role is not only sitting in a council chamber, it is to be part of your community, let them know who you are rather than only seeing them at the time of canvassing Take on board the concerns of residents and make them your priority

Your actions-Never put council in disrepute. Honesty Integrity

Responsibility to whole Borough not just ward explained more clearly Need to engage on long term work streams not just attend meetings/ask questions Take specific training for area of interest, maybe even outside of council - LGA etc

S114 - Deep dive in to local government finance How a council operates - show n tell how the different departments works How to effectively serve your community when things go wrong Casework - who, how, where to report - self service platform etc Health & Safety safeguarding Local Plan Corporate plan - what is it and why is it important Officer/ member conduct - do's and dont's

25. What additional training or development opportunities do you think councillors most need?

**Responses**

IT training Scrutiny training Local Government Finance and statutory obligations

USE OF IT , ROLE OF COUNCILLOR , SCRUTINY TRAINING , MEETINGS TRAINING , DEALING WITH RESIDENT AND OFFICERS , TRAINING FOR ROLES THE COUNCILLOR HAVE WORK FOR .

-Questioning Techniques (to ask officers right question in Scrutiny meetings as full information is not provided in the reports) -Casework - Pathways

New Members given training on how to conduct themselves in meeting and not be pointed out others for asking questions or made feel inferior. Learning process of life. Think outside Box . Taster sessions of different department . Especially Education , planning and complaint.

- Communication development - Casework submission

The skills on how to be a good Cllr, where to acquire the Council functioning information and the actual issues the Council is facing

## Appendix A

### Responses

Budget setting

Casework procedure

how to use lap tops to annotate documents

How to submit casework and follow up Importance of Member Development Financial situation of the Council

Effective scrutiny and withstanding community pressure

N.a

Scrutiny Meeting Training What are the right questions to ask

An understanding of what a well ran local authority does on behalf of its residents.

Officer and Councillor relations

Chairing skills Critical Thinking Ability to Analyse Information prior to decisions

Understanding the role of a councillor particularly when attending meetings - etiquette, paperless - bring your devices!! These are for you use for council business not as home computers. Code of conduct How not to be influenced by peers, residents or businesses

## **OTHER**

41. If you would like to make any further comments you may do so here:

### Responses

The survey was rather long - it might be better to break it down into several surveys on different themes.