

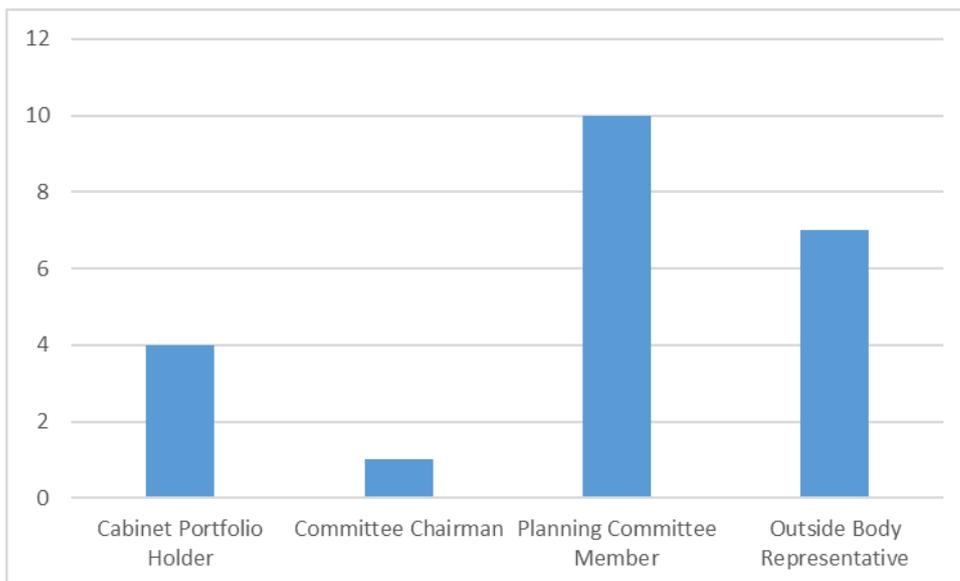
## COUNCILLOR QUESTIONNAIRE – DATA

### 1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A questionnaire exercise took place with councillors to further support the Council Size submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as part of the Electoral Review of New Forest District Council. The data arising from this exercise is summarised in this document which is an appended background document to the submission.
- 1.2 The questionnaire sought to establish some basic identifiable patterns relating to councillor workload, alongside the type of casework and requirements in connection with the role of the councillor in the community.

### 2. **SUMMARY**

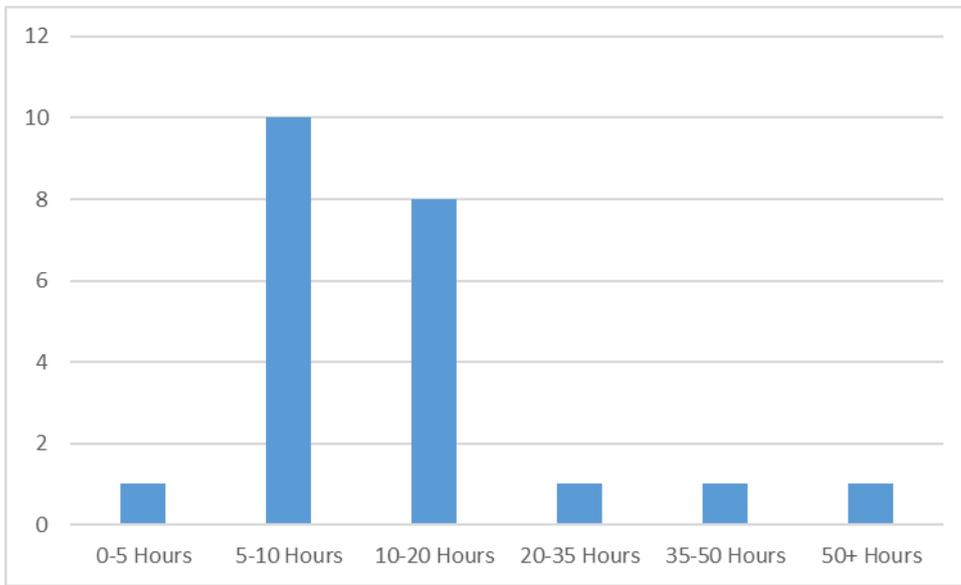
- 2.1 22 councillors of 60 responded to the questionnaire, a response rate of 37%.
- 2.2 Responses came from across 18 of the 34 current wards, representing 53% of the District Council area.
- 2.3 Of the 22 responses, 14 councillors also held office for Town or Parish Councils, representing 64% of respondents. 3 councillors also held office for Hampshire County Council and 3 councillors were National Park Authority Members.
- 2.4 Of the 22 responses, 16 councillors had a councillor ward colleague.
- 2.5 Of the 22 responses, the following positions on the Council were held:-



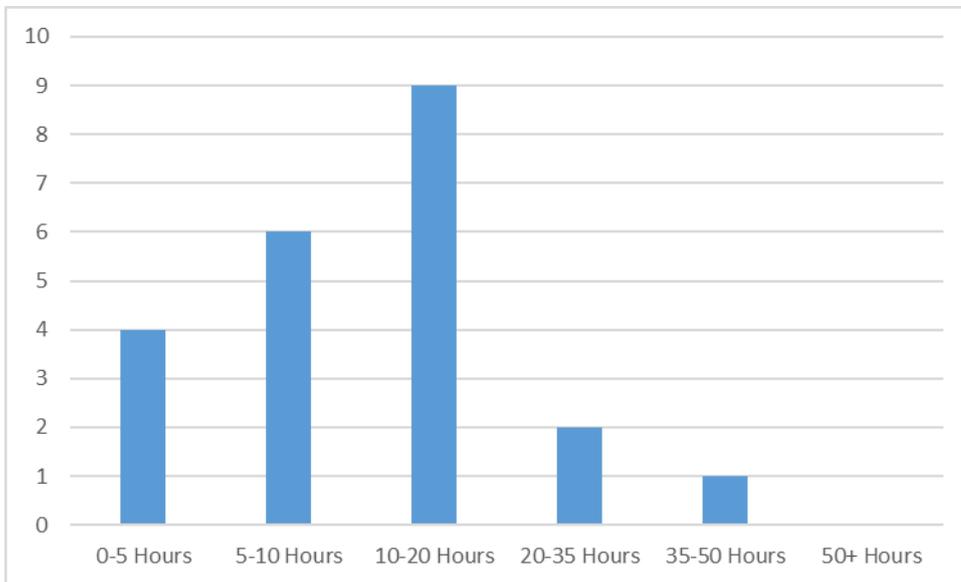
### 3. **TIME COMMITMENT AS A NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

- 3.1 Councillors' responses to the monthly hours spent on various activities is summarised in the following tables:-

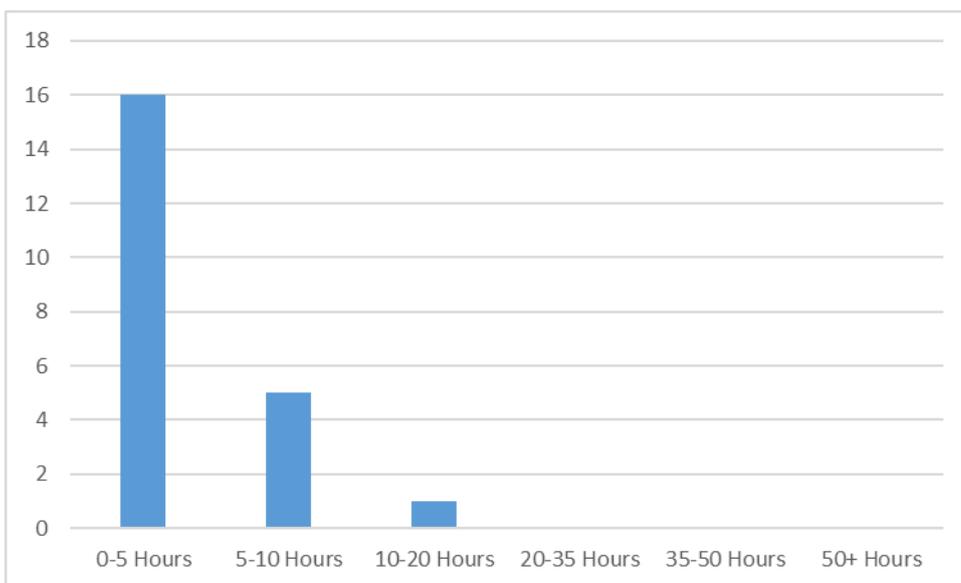
Attending formal meetings of the Council i.e. Council, Cabinet, Committees and Panels:-



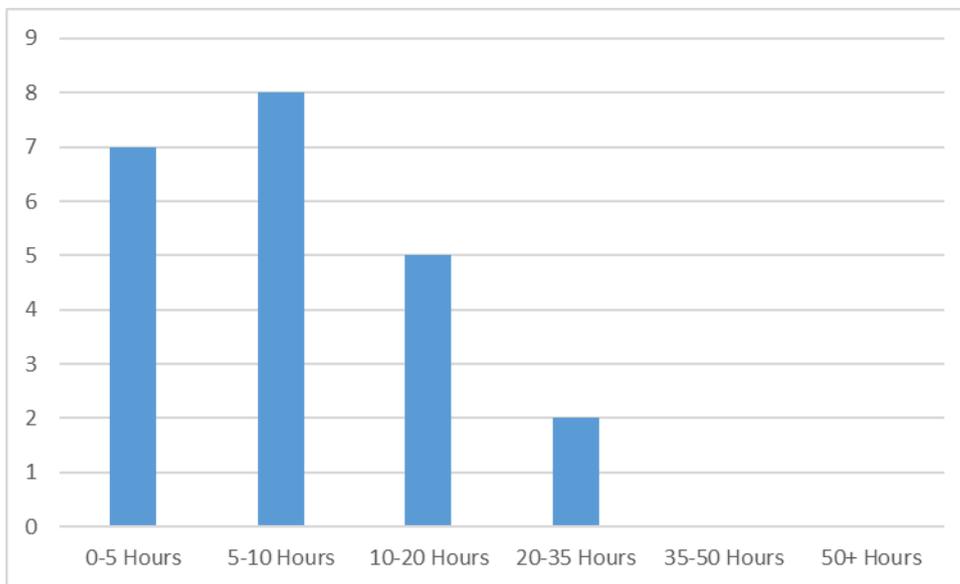
Preparing for meetings, including reading background papers and reports:-



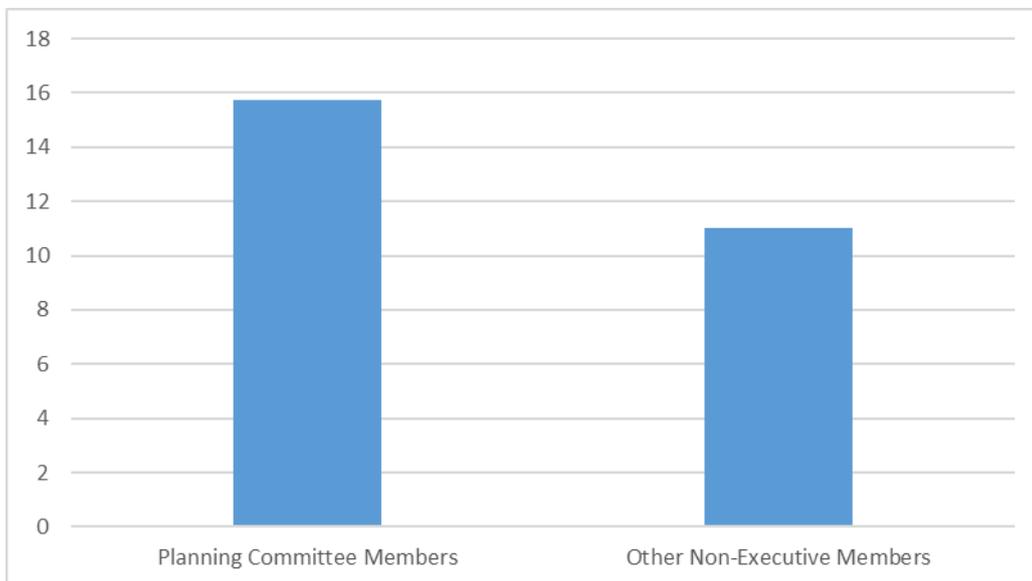
Outside Bodies meetings:-



Interacting with residents i.e. by telephone, email, meetings, surgeries:-

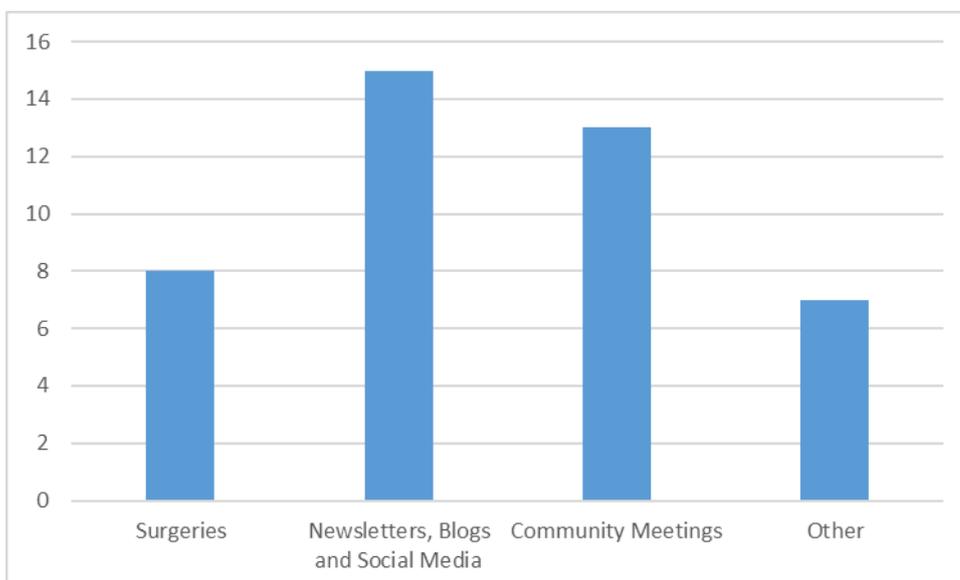


3.2 The average monthly hours preparing for and attending meetings if you are a Planning Committee Member, compared to the formal committee work of other Non-Executive Members is summarised in the table below:-



**4. ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR IN THE COMMUNITY**

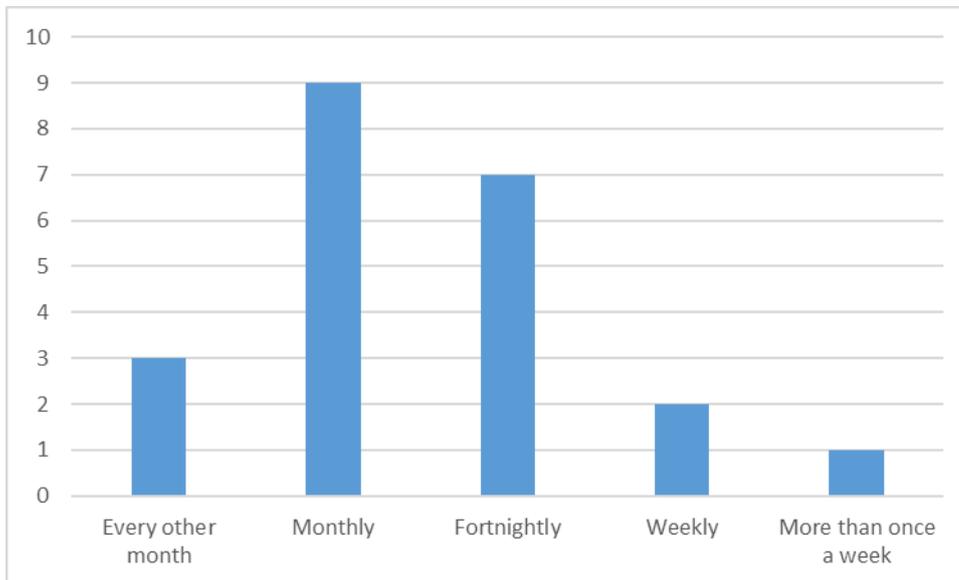
4.1 In undertaking their role as a Ward Councillor, respondents to the questionnaire identified the following activities:-



- 4.2 Councillors cited canvassing, neighbourhood watch and other community activities under the “Other” category.

## 5. **PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

- 5.1 As the District is fully parished, all respondents to the questionnaire identified that there were one or more active Town or Parish Councils in their area. Respondents attended Parish and Town Council meetings within their ward at the following frequency:-



## 6. **OTHER COUNCILLOR COMMENTS**

- 6.1 Comments made by councillors on how the role of the councillor has changed, are listed below:-

*“Historically my Ward only had one District Councillor. I think one Councillor could manage the workload. More communication is done via email rather than phone. A lot of my contact with residents takes place when I am walking to the shops or out and about.”*

*“More contact by email. The longer you serve you become more involved with community engagements.”*

*“Too new to the Council for me to be informative.”*

*“I have taken on more roles in the community since becoming a councillor. I believe these are complimentary to my councillor role, including joining my neighbourhood watch committee and becoming a school governor. I don't think the role has changed that much, though means of communication has obviously changed to mostly email. While email is quicker and cheaper to use it does lead to more contact, hence more work. Over all I think the workload is much the same as it was 20 years ago.”*

*“I am a newly elected Councillor so can not really answer this question.”*

*“No further comments to make.”*

*“Dramatic increase of social media and more emails.”*

*“Spending much more time on social media engaging with both constituents and other bodies.”*

*“Whilst I do not operate a formal weekly/monthly surgery my office is located within the town centre and I meet with residents when they raise an issue and it is appropriate/necessary.”*

*"I have only been a Cllr since May of this year but I can definitely see my role/involvement growing (my choice) as there are many things I wish to learn, there are local groups I have started to get involved with and support and I am intending to start a surgery once a month and a FB page to enable me to engage more with the local community especially the younger members as they are our future.*

*There is growing concern within the community regarding recycling and global warming and this needs to be addressed and I feel, taken on as a priority. We must all work together on this and do our bit to help the world, starting with our own Community.*

*As I see it - dropping leaflets is not now the answer as the majority of people do not read them - we need to engage publicly with our community and be seen out and about in person, actively showing an interest and support and to be approachable. Definitely FB is a must now as so many people use it."*

*"As Town Mayor of Lymington and Pennington I attend and chair a huge amount of public and community meetings and events. I am also a trustee of a local charity.*

*It is hard to separate much of this work from my role as District councillor as there is obviously a huge overlap.*

*One thing that I have noticed is the amount of "case work" that has come my way since becoming a District councillor. This may in part be because I am very well known around the town – as the Mayor."*

*"I am doing more which involves more reading."*

*"The amount of case work for local residents has increased considerably since I first became a NFDC councillor 24 years ago."*

*"I have held a surgery at Hordle Pavilion at the community association's pop-up café on the first Saturday of every month for the past 4+ years, since becoming Hordle district councillor. This is a great regular contact with the community. (I also arrange for the MP to visit my ward surgery venue twice a year.) I also visit other coffee morning drop ins and other social and activity groups from time to time across the ward. Most case work (2/3?) however, comes in by email or on social media. (I have a councillor facebook page and Twitter account, which are very useful engagement, communication and information gathering tools. These things were certainly not used so widely when I first became a councillor in 2006.) I sometimes meet face to face or can deal with the issue by email. I attend Hordle Parish Council meetings every fortnight. Most district issues are planning related, probably followed by street scene/weeds, waste collection and housing issues. I write a regular article in the three Hordle, Everton & Tiptoe newsletters almost every month/edition, updating residents about topical local issues.*

*Re meeting with officers, I would say that most contact is now through email, with the occasional face to face meeting. It would have been the reverse in 2006, if I remember rightly! Skype could also be used to speak with officers, although I've not yet considered asking to do so.*

*I enjoy being a district councillor and hope to remain one. It is a beautiful place to be a councillor, my ward is wonderfully diverse, the district building is superb and an inspiration and reminder that our council is special! In addition, the core areas of planning, coast, environment and housing are interesting subject areas to learn about and help residents with."*

*"My role feels more valid in my second term in a larger opposition group. Too many decisions are made by Cabinet or Portfolio Holders, away from true scrutiny and in full council where more debate needs encouraging. Using social media and email makes being a cllr easier in that we can communicate with residents and pick up*

*issues more effective. Also, it opens the role up to amore diverse group of prospective cllrs, including those younger, in employment and with young families.”*

*“I was unable to factor in all the different things I do as a Portfolio holder, but I expect you wanted a more “general” view.*

*I receive more emails now from constituents than when I first started, the public are quick to dash off an email of complaint/worry than previously. Email is direct and quick which is how people want to interact. When I was first a councillor people would telephone and it was more time consuming to log and deal with and answer their calls. People are more knowledgeable generally about the working of the council and with the roll out of the new website access for many constituents will be easier perhaps bypassing the councillor until they need “backup!”*

*In this paper I do not see a place to include the time spent on the business of the council. I spend much of my time on the computer, everyday often twice a day I log on and spend more than an hour+ dealing with general matters, reports, parish problems e.g. social housing new builds, the flavour of the month at the moment.*

*Of the 3 Parish meetings I attend most planning applications are in the National Park but a few fall under NFDC. Copythorne Parish has a lot of scout groups, and local interest groups which I am always invited to attend. I attend when I can. I liaise closely with the parishes and have a good relationship with them.*

*Never dull!”*

*“It has got more time intensive in the last 4 years and is looking as though that will increase in the next 4 years.”*