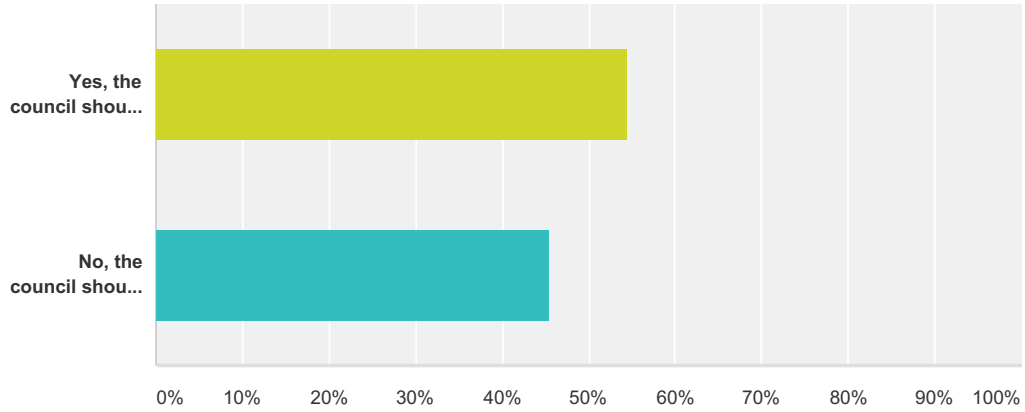


Q1 Please tell us whether you believe the Council should or should not consider requesting an electoral review of the District Council to take effect from District elections held in 2019.

Answered: 33 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes, the council should consider a review aimed at reducing the number of Members to take effect from the 2019 district elections	54.55% 18
No, the council should not consider a review aimed at reducing the number of Membes to take effect from the 2019 district elections	45.45% 15
Total	33

Electoral Review Survey for Members

Q2 In the box below please tell us why you believe the Council should request an electoral review for the district

Answered: 18 Skipped: 15

#	Responses	Date
1	For the past ten years, councillors have been taking difficult decisions to continually make efficiency savings in almost every line of the budget, nearly halving head count in the process. One of the few exceptions is councillor allowances. It is unconscionable that we spend nearly £400,000 of our residents' money to remunerate ourselves. Assuming councillors would not wish to reduce their allowances – and I do not advocate that for the reasons discussed each time they are reviewed by the JIRP – the only alternative is for us to be fewer in number if a cost reduction is to be achieved. We must not forget that councillors exist to champion their communities but can we do that as well or better with fewer councillors? Yes. Can we help protect services by reducing the cost of councillors? Yes. Should we therefore look at it? Absolutely. There are of course other considerations and I would be pleased to join a working party to discuss these should Members decide they wish to give this further thought. M.	3/19/2016 7:29 PM
2	SDC has the lowest number of electors per councillor in the county. Modern methods of communication reduce or eliminate the need for members meeting electors physically in most situations. Size of electoral area reduces in importance because of improved communication. The business of the council coupled with a sufficient number of members to represent a range of views, whether through differing political affiliations or within any particular group can probably be achieved with approx. 2/3rds of the current number of members. As the current disparity in the number of electors per councillor is not sufficiently imbalanced to trigger automatically a LGBCE review then this needs to be called for by the council.	3/18/2016 8:56 PM
3	In view of funding constraints I feel that the Council must not only look at staffing levels etc but also at whither it could make cuts in the number of members. This does not mean we must cut but we must look at the option.	3/18/2016 10:29 AM
4	When some areas were put together it resulted in Councillors having less people to look after This has of course to be evaluated against having sufficient members to service the desired no of committees	3/17/2016 3:12 PM
5	It would help residents to see that councillors are serious about looking for all opportunities to reduce costs. There are significant discrepancies in the representation between wards which should be addressed. In particular, there is potential for most 3-member wards to be reduced to two members without the need to adjust ward boundaries. The review process should include an assessment of how Councils that have been through a similar reduction in the number of councillors ave coped with the change and what impact it has had on the ability of councillors to function as advocates for their community and their workload as members of committees. An important aspect must be to ensure that prospective councillors who are in full-time employment are not discouraged from standing for election because of the potential time commitment. The review also ought to look at some changes to ward boundaries where they do not reflect local preferences such as the inclusion of Hodsoll Street in Hartley rather than Ash and New Ash Green and the possibility of splitting Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth into two wards.	3/17/2016 1:42 PM
6	Cost of Members allowances Cost to SDC of communicating with / administration for 54 Members. Electors in 3 Member wards could be looked after by 2 Members	3/17/2016 11:03 AM
7	I believe that there are wards which are too big and Councillor representation is not representative in terms of proportionality. Whilst geographically there are wards which can merge to absorb less Councillors. Therefore a review should be undertaken to encompass boundaries, number of Councillors per ward and proportional representation	3/17/2016 10:58 AM
8	The number of councillors representing the council needs to be reduced, presumably by enlarging each, or some of the wards.	3/17/2016 10:47 AM
9	Cut numbers to save the Council money	3/17/2016 10:25 AM
10	I believe most of the work could be undertaken with fewer people	3/13/2016 10:47 AM
11	There are several inequalities in the number of electors per member.	3/11/2016 4:20 PM
12	The council is now top-heavy with too many Councillors with little to do More single member wards are needed to ensure equality of numbers and workload.	3/11/2016 12:14 PM
13	The number of District Councillors in Sevenoaks is excessive for a District of our population-size.	3/10/2016 10:28 PM
14	To bring the number of electors per Member going forward more in line with other Kent districts	3/10/2016 10:22 PM
15	Because half the councillors do nothing, and far to many are parish reps to with a very narrow view and tiny parochial perspectives	3/10/2016 10:01 PM

Electoral Review Survey for Members

16	Sevenoaks District is now out of line with all other Districts in the County in having under 1,500 electors per Councillor. I believe that given all the technological advances allowing electors to effectively serve themselves on-line that the need for one Councillor per 1,500 electors is not there anymore and that fewer Councillors could serve more electors without a corresponding drop off in quality of service received. This would have the knock on benefit of saving considerable sums of tax payer money.	3/10/2016 6:03 PM
17	The number of councillors is ridiculously high. Having made so many efficiency savings, councillors should play their part. Losing 10 from the 56 would save the Council £1 million over ten years, losing 15 would lose £1.5 million. We should look at reducing numbers of 3 member wards, there is no need for 3 member wards - they can become 2 members and make a saving.	3/10/2016 5:52 PM
18	Financial burden to residents for so many. Too many Councillors resulting in some feeling surplus and not included. Some Councillors do no work at all except turn up occasionally for a meeting where they haven't even read the agenda papers because they rely on other ward Councillors. Every Councillor should be included and part of the work of the council so the numbers need reducing.	3/10/2016 5:42 PM

Electoral Review Survey for Members

Q3 In the box below please tell us why you believe the Council should not request an electoral review for the district

Answered: 15 Skipped: 18

#	Responses	Date
1	1) Greater mix of councillors from different backgrounds 2) Tied more closely to place 3) we already have some of the highest elector to representative in the country 4) public aren't calling for it I think the data that was sent out was biased and probably wrong or at least out of date	3/19/2016 10:27 PM
2	we need to look outwards not navel gaze	3/19/2016 10:23 PM
3	Currently the data shows a decrease in the number of electors over sevenoaks district. This makes no sense given the additional building. In my ward there are an additional 300 houses being proposed. It is likely therefore that the number of electors will be increasing. Given dubious data and likely increase in development, it would be ill advised to change things at present.	3/18/2016 2:16 PM
4	I believe it to be unnecessary as we will be building many more homes in the district over the coming years. Until we know the number per ward, any review is flawed before it starts.	3/17/2016 6:16 PM
5	I don't believe the Data provided from Kent and District is realistic.	3/17/2016 4:55 PM
6	The electorate data provided for Shire and District is seriously flawed. Projections of electors and therefore electors per Member do not take into account either the recent increase in population or the forthcoming high rate of house building agreed in the two local wards. Therefore the data cannot be used as a basis for consultation or decision making	3/17/2016 4:34 PM
7	Sevenoaks District Council has been public ally acclaimed as being one of the best managed and run District Councils in England. This would therefore follow that our system of governance works, that councillors are being highly effective and proactive. There is an old adage 'if it ain't broke don't fix it'. This more than applies to our current situation.	3/17/2016 3:09 PM
8	A possible reduction in the numbers of Councillors in the district is likely to result in the following: An increase in work load for councillors in a more demanding environment Reduction in the skill diversity of councillors that will in turn favour the recruitment of retired members. Limit the range of expertise that could support the development of the council at a time of greatest need for diversity. Reduction in efficiency where there is an increase in single member wards, particularly in planning matters.	3/17/2016 11:22 AM
9	Makes no sense unnecessary distraction	3/17/2016 10:21 AM
10	The strength of the make up of members of SDC is that it reflects the communities it serves, with multi member wards it allows those who work, particularly in London (as a large proportion of our residents do) to participate fully as members. If we reduced the number of members this would (in some cases) mean that we would rule out some of our members from standing and this in turn would lead to a less diverse membership	3/14/2016 4:57 PM
11	I consider no reductions need to be made - particularly as the Council is aiming towards self sufficiency	3/11/2016 8:55 PM
12	The system currently works very well - so why change it? You stated that each ward has a roughly equal share of the voters so if the ward boundaries are moved that would imply that some members would have to "share" parishes - not good.	3/11/2016 8:31 AM
13	It would be a total distraction . If you are concerned regarding costs reduce the expenses allowances by , say , 20%	3/10/2016 11:11 PM
14	Reducing the number would increase the workload of the remaining Councillors. This could lead to a reduction in the number of working people willing to stand for election leading to an unbalanced representative base which does not reflect the population	3/10/2016 6:55 PM

Electoral Review Survey for Members

15	<p>1. Reducing the number of councillors could reduce diversity and substantially increase work loads particularly amongst the more active councillors - who would end up shouldering a lot of work . Less active councillors (due to other commitments) are a valuable asset the the council so should not be not discouraged to stand - but this could be an unintended result. The council could be resrepresented mainly by retired people who have the time to do it properly. 2. Reducing the number of councillors could increase the size of wards. As a rural district some of these wards could be come difficult to represent. 3. Reducing the number of councillors could lead to more single member wards which causes problems if that member is sick or away for a period of time. 4. Sevenoaks has very active members - we are a member-led authority - meaning our residents are electing people who are enacting their wishes every day. Reducing the number of councillors, and increasing the ward work could result in less direct member involvement in policy and strategy development etc as they are so busy with ward work (attending Parish councils and other commitments, planning applications etc) 5. We can not guarantee being in complete control of the process once it starts, and we could end up with something that is not in the interests of our residents. Just look at what happened to the KCC boundaries. The new Darent Valley division is the second largest in Kent both geographically and in terms of population and will be difficult for one person to represent effectively. 6. If you are going to try and cut the cost of democracy why not get rid of all councillors and save the whole amount. In order for residents to be properly represented they need a diverse bunch of councillors: retired, working, commuters, parents, men, women, young, old etc. Reducing the number could seriously impact on this. Sometimes there is a premium for democracy. 7. One of the advatanges of District councillors is that we are close to the communities we represent. Bigger wards will severe this link. Residents like being close to their elected members.</p>	3/10/2016 5:46 PM
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