

Appendix 1 – Responses to Survey (timing of Full Council meetings)

Q1 - Do you prefer morning, afternoon or evenings for Full Council meetings?

Morning – 9

Afternoon – 18

Evening - 2

Q2 - What time in the morning is most suitable to you for a full council meeting?

9am – 4

10am – 13

11am – 5

Question skipped by 7 members.

Q3 - What time in the afternoon is most suitable to you for full council meetings?

1pm – 10

2pm – 14

3pm – 3

Question skipped by 3 members.

Q4 - What time in the evening is most suitable to you for full council meetings?

5pm – 13

6pm – 0

7pm – 4

Question skipped by 12 members.

Q5 - Are there any days or times that are particularly problematic for you to attend full council meetings? If yes, what are those days/times.

- Wednesday afternoons/evenings are difficult due to childcare
- School dropoff and pick up times (3:30-5:30pm)
- Mondays and Tuesdays
- I would not be able to attend full council on Mondays
- No evenings at all
- Evenings are difficult due to childcare
- Monday and Wednesday
- Tuesday and Friday
- Prefer not to have meetings in the evening
- Before 2pm and Fridays
- No problems with which day. Although I have entered times for all the above I would favour they remain the same as they are now. And as a second option to be a morning meeting. I would not favour an evening meeting.
- Tuesdays

- Wednesdays
- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday day times are problematic.
- Monday AM, Monday Evening
- Mondays, morning and evening
- Evenings are always a problem, also Friday
- Thursdays and Fridays

Q6 - Do you have caring responsibilities that cause difficulties with attending meetings of full council at a certain time?

Yes - 11

No - 15

Comments:

- Holding meetings in the morning allows those who work to work the afternoon, and those with children to collect them from school.
- I have two children who are school-age. One is primary and one is secondary. Their schools are 13 miles apart. Therefore, afternoon meetings can be a challenge, especially if they run into the evening.
- I have a child to collect from school.
- I do not agree with evening meetings. I live in Caldicot an approx 35 to 45 mins drive away. I am a part time carer for my husband and i will be unable to attend evenings
- Wed and Monday – childcare
- I have children and I care for parents. There is really no one time which is perfect but I do my best to fit in, however short notice matters/meetings are difficult. One is equally disadvantaged whatever time a meeting is. However, first thing or 4pm are easier for work also.
- Just lifestyle preferences. So happy to adhere to the concerns of those who do have caring responsibilities.
- If we are going to change full council to afternoon/evening meetings this should be applied to selects
- My strong preference for Full Council is Thursday afternoon (as is) and failing that Friday either morning or afternoon
- I say Mass every Wednesday morning
- I have work commitments, and morning full council would not allow any run over in time.
- Sometimes but its a matter of juggling things at home with my wife.
- No times of the morning or afternoon are suitable and it is disappointing that this is not a response option.
- I would not want to attend any meetings after 5pm. I find evenings difficult as I am a member of several committees and act as Secretary on two of them. Volunteer meetings are almost always in the evening to accommodate working volunteers. Full council meetings in the evening would be likely to impact on the voluntary work I do in the community.
- Much prefer an earlier start, as January was a marathon!

- I have three children at school and live rurally with no bus services, so most days either my wife or myself have to collect children from Monmouth - sometimes in the evening as they all have part-time jobs. With enough notice, we can usually coordinate between us who is doing the pick ups but that is not guaranteed if she is working away or has a clashing meeting.

Q7 - Does remote attendance help you to attend meetings of full council that you would otherwise not be able participate in?

Yes – 25

No – 3

Comments:

- I do not always have access to a vehicle and the offices are difficult/impossible to access via public transport due to its location/times of buses. The opportunity to attend meetings remotely means I am still able to attend
- Remote attendance is helpful but it does not support relationships and trust. Group leader roles are more complex and require more in person interaction. Equally, with a new council it is important to develop relationships and trust. For this reason I think online attendance ought be of last resort.
- I feel that I should be in the Chamber
- Yes, these are very beneficial
- I prefer to attend in person and try to do that, but the option to attend on line is a life-saver in certain circumstances
- Yes
- I usually attend full Council in County Hall and will do as long as I am able
- It's been transformative as a working councillor.
- Although I've always attended in person, I think it's useful to have the "back up" option of remote attendance in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- I cannot continue to attend meetings and would need to resign if Hybrid is removed.
- It is my preference to attend in person but new hybrid working is here to stay I feel. It allows you to join even if you are unwell or unavoidably in another location.
- I would always try to attend in person but it is helpful to have an alternative, eg Holidays.
- If necessary, but i prefer to be in the chamber if at all possible

Q8 - Do you prefer to attend meetings of full council in person or remotely?

Overall what is your experience of remote attendance at full council meetings and could the process be improved upon?

- Prefer in person, but having a remote option is very valuable if one is not able to get to County Hall.
- Prefer to attend remotely. This saves time travelling and carbon emissions and fuel.
- Overall remote attendance experience has been good, though sound can sometimes be an issue.

- I prefer to attend Full Council meetings in person, but occasionally I attend remotely.
- I would much prefer to attend in person
- Prefer in person. While it has its merits, remote attendance does seem to encourage lower standards and distraction in meetings.
- I prefer to attend full council in person . Rarely attend via Teams. Some councillors rarely attend in person which I think has a negative effect re public perception.
- In person is preferred.
- I would discontinue the option of remote attendance. It makes the Council meeting a less significant public democratic event. We need to talk to people in the margins of the meeting. We need to make eye contact with those who are sharing our debate and decision taking - although the lay-out of the chamber inhibits this.
- I prefer in person, but welcome the chance to attend online when other responsibilities don't allow for travelling time.
- I like both, and do both
- No experience of remote full council meetings
- This is not a yes or no answer as you are asking one or the other
- In Person. Remotely - you feel cut off from the meeting.
- Yes I prefer to attend in person The kit and process is very good, in comparison with other bodies I am a member of. My preference to attend in person is because of the dynamic of "being in the room", I dont think there is much that could be done to achieve that on line!
- Don't mind
- Both
- I feel Full Council with as many councillors attending live is better but understand there are some who because of circumstances need to join on line.
- I think the new digital tech installed makes the process very smooth in terms of audio/visual interaction. You do need good chairmanship to keep an eye on those remotely to ensure they are engaged and allowed to participate. Vice Chairmanship can help with that process too.
- Don't care if it is remote or in person.
- I prefer to attend in person whenever possible.
- I like to be in person where possible.
- Prefer in-person. Remote works quite well and I'm not sure how it could be improved.

Q9 - Would alternating the start time of full council meetings help with your attendance at those meetings? For example, one meeting starting at 10am, the next starting at 2pm.

Yes – 3

No – 23

Comments:

- Would prefer the same time because it can get confusing if it's alternated. It is easier to plan if at the same time. It would be easier to plan both childcare and

other work commitments if ALL council meetings were scheduled on the same days, for example, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and then Thursday and Friday's are no-meeting days. That way it is easier to fit in another job role. Currently meetings are ad-hoc.

- If we want this to be a public even then the public need to feel they know when the events are
- I would prefer 10 am, to allow the democratic process to be maintained. Where full debate is not stifled because of time, as I feel has happened in some previous meetings. I understand that other members have family and caring responsibilities, so am happy to accommodate their needs over mine.
- Due to work commitments, if it was am would not able to run over, or ever attend in person.
- Content with the Thursday 2pm time
- I could do either and if it assisted others, happy to alternate, although my preference is for the afternoon
- Stay as we are
- Would not be able to do mornings.
- I would be happy trialling this approach.
- That would actually make it more difficult!
- This would be more complex to manage
- I am not averse to the idea of alternating so long as this is clearly published to the general public a long way in advance.
- it wouldn't help me, especially if an evening meeting was part of the mix, but happy to go with it if it helps others.

Q10 - Should democratic services committee explore the issue of length of meetings and length of contributions at full council meetings to ensure the time spent in Full Council meetings is used effectively? Additionally, for longer meetings what are your views on the frequency of the breaks being used during the meeting?

Comments:

- yes, breaks every 90 mins works well.
- Yes, the length of contributions. Some of the comments are repetitive or unnecessary. Questions should be limited to x3 per person, for example. Breaks should be more frequently. It can be uncomfortable sitting for so long. Also, it is not possible to concentrate for such long periods of time.
- When meetings are extremely long and go over mealtimes a short snack /drink break would be appreciated
- I think its important to let members have their say, so I don't feel times for contributions is necessary. However timings of meetings is critical because on occasion meetings can go on for long periods of time.
- Yes.....Comfort break needed after 2 hours
- It is difficult to concentrate when meetings exceed 4 hours even with breaks.ten minutes is long period of time to speak and to listen to someone . 5 minutes would be more appropriate.Breaks every two hours seems reasonable . Some agendas are too long and meetings become ineffective with people leaving

before the end due to childcare etc. perhaps council meetings could be more frequent but shorter!

- No. I would prefer to break only after 2 hours.
- If we start at 5pm we will discipline ourselves to keep to sensible time so that we can get home
- Yes, continuous review and improvement is always good. The breaks offered currently meet the needs. But if the meetings started in the morning, that would be more useful. Or change to monthly County Council meetings.
- no not really, like having regular comfort breaks
- Yes to the length of contribution may be of benefit. Breaks are useful, but the Chair seems to manage these well
- We haven't needed them before
- No
- Length of meetings: it is hard to concentrate fully at meetings that are excessively long (particularly if attending on line). Given the number of meetings in the diary, however, I would rather bite the bullet and finish on the day, than reschedule to a second date. We should however explore the issue of length of contributions at full council, which in my view are often excessively long without enhancing the debate. Eg: Group leaders could be afforded full whack, further contributions could be halved, Or the chair might be empowered in new rules to decree that contributions would be limited to a shorter length when the agenda is crammed or everyone is determined to speak. THis for a discussion at Dem Services . Breaks are fine, chairs of the committees I sit on generally agree in advance to break "between 60 and 90 minutes in" which allows them to call this at a natural break
- Stay as we are
- I believe it should stay the same
- A review would be good. A break near a logical end is just prolonging the meeting.
- Again it's about good chairmanship but also councillors taking responsibility for their contributions. Every two hours for breaks is acceptable.
- I think that the breaks around every 90 minutes is about right. Having those set break times is useful to allow a bit of breathing space and some informal conversation between members. It's also less disruptive than people randomly going in and out of the chamber at all times if they need to go to the loo, etc.
- I need regular breaks as a reasonable adjustments
- No, there are methods in place to curtail length of contributions already that work well.
- Definitely. I think speakers should be allowed a maximum of 4 minutes. Obviously not people presenting. Breaks should be every 90 mins