

How often should we elect Borough councillors?

Brentwood Borough Council is considering changing its current election cycle and would like to know what you think. The Council is asking residents how often they should vote for their councillors. Legislation allows the Council to ask interested parties whether to make changes to how often local elections take place.

Current arrangements

The Council currently operates an **election by thirds** scheme where voters go to the polls three times over a four year period. There are 37 councillors who are elected for a 4 year term. Each year one third of councillors are up for election with the exception of the fourth year in which no elections take place.

Proposed change

The Council would like your views on whether to change to **whole council elections**, which means that all 37 councillors would be elected at the same time every four years. The table below shows how the two schemes differ.

Election by thirds	Whole council elections
	A council has a 4 year mandate, allowing it to adopt a strategic approach to policy and decision making in line with a medium term financial strategy
The risk of electing a complete change of Councillors with no experience is mitigated	Allows for a complete change in Councillors
Allows the electorate to judge the Council three years out of four	The Council has a longer term to deliver its mandate before being judged by the electorate
More likely to be influenced by local rather than national policies	
Residents are accustomed to electing Borough councillors 3 years out of 4	
The majority of District Councils in Essex elect by thirds (7 of 12)	
	Parliament and the European Parliament hold whole parliament elections every 5 years
	The County Council has whole council elections every four years
	The Police and Crime Commissioner is elected for a 4 year term
More opportunities for people to stand for election	
More opportunities to vote	
	Over a 4 year cycle whole council elections could cost £138,000 - £195,000 less than election by thirds
Possible by-elections can be scheduled to co-incide with the next election by thirds to reduce cost	

Please visit www.brentwood.gov.uk and complete our short survey form.

This consultation will close at 5pm on 8 December 2014

The Council will decide whether to move to whole council elections on the evening of 10 December 2014 at a special meeting. A two thirds majority of Councillors voting in favour of whole council elections is required. The meeting will take place at the Town Hall and interested parties and residents are welcome to attend. The meeting will be webcast at www.brentwood.gov.uk