

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 - Election by Thirds

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.

- The risk of electing a complete change of Councillors with no experience is mitigated
- Allows the electorate to judge the Council three years out of four
- 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)
- More opportunities for people to stand for election
- More opportunities to vote
- Possible by-elections can be scheduled to co-incide with the next election by thirds to reduce cost

Proposed change - Whole Council Election

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.

- 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
- Allows for a complete change in Councillors
- The Council has a longer term to deliver its mandate before being judged by the electorate
- 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
- Over a 4 year cycle whole council elections could cost £138,000 - £195,000 less than election by thirds

Let us know what you think below.

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. The meeting will take place at the Town Hall. Interested parties and residents are welcome to attend. The meeting will be webcast at www.brentwood.gov.uk

More information on the council election process can be found at www.brentwood.gov.uk

*1. Should we change the way in which we elect our Borough councillors?

- Yes - The council should change to 'whole council' elections, with all 37 Brentwood Borough Councillors elected once every four years.
- No - The council should retain the present system of electing Brentwood Borough Councillors by thirds.

You are welcome to leave a comment in the box below.

General Information (Voluntary)

The questions on this page are optional. You may answer as many or as few questions as you wish. Any information you give will be kept confidential.

2. Are you a Brentwood Resident?

- Yes No

3. What is your postcode?

4. How would you describe your gender?

- Female
 Male

5. What is your age group?

- Under 18 46-55
 18-25 56-65
 26-35 66-75
 36-45 75+

6. Did you vote at the last Borough election held in May 2014?

- Yes No

7. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

- White British Black or Black British - African
 White Irish Any other Black background
 Any other White background Asian or Asian British - Indian
 White and Black Caribbean Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
 White and Black African Any other Asian background
 White and Asian Chinese and Other ethnic groups - Chinese
 Any other Mixed background Any other ethnic background
 Black or Black British - Caribbean

If this is a paper copy, please return it to Brentwood Borough Council, Town Hall, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, England, CM15 8AY, or hand it to your Ward Councillor.