

Review of Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Member Survey and Responses

15 Full responses were received to the survey which ran from 20 January to 3 February 2023.

Question 1: The Council has now operated a single Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 7 months. How effective out of 10 do you think these arrangements are to the performance of the Council and the service it provides?

Average Score: 5.27/10

Question 2: Please explain what would prompt you to score this more highly:

Better interaction with all members, and proactive leadership

More reports from scrutiny at council. And reports from the various working groups.

Return to specialised scrutiny panels

There is no scrutiny. There is not enough time to look at items coming forward on the forward plan. Papers are coming to full council that are poor and have not been through scrutiny. It has lost any teeth that the 3 panels previously had. It is worthless.

Too many topics for one committee. Most members not reading papers or taking part in the meetings.

The main Committee is being asked to cover too much work in each meeting and is therefore not addressing the issues which it faces

More recommendations to Cabinet Focussed approach- completion of tasks for T and F groups and working groups

I do not think there is as much involvement as there should be, or could be from Members not on the Committee. I have also found things have been coming to the Scrutiny Committee after going to Cabinet and it has caused issues.

Agendas are huge, there is little consultation with the exec, recommendations to the exec have not come forward. Im not sure what has been delivered. It needs to fulfil the objectives as defined on the previous page

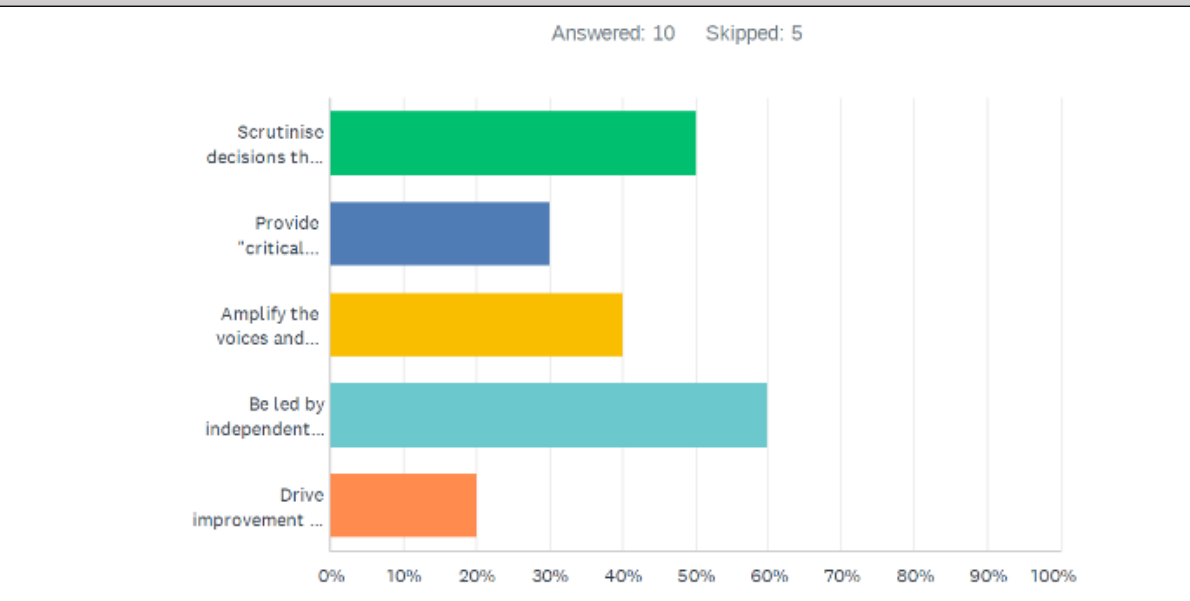
The previous separate committees had the focus and time to look at matters in the perspective their subject deserved. Now, for instance, C&YP new been discussed at all through. The current system is subject to the potential dominance of the only Chair

We are in the last year of a municipal cycle and in my experience some councillors, especially those not seeking re-election, are "winding down" and not prepared to put in the necessary work. Further, and far more significant, is the political balance at RCC. The size of the committee means the Conservative group members are not on it by choice but by necessity as there are only six of them in total, three are cabinet members leaving 2 of the remaining 3 having to sit on scrutiny as well as cover other committees. This gives RCC councillors far more committee meetings to attend than our counterparts in, say, Leicestershire or Lincolnshire. One solution would be to reduce the number of members to 7 to be

consistent with the other Council committees. Also, when we set this system up one "solution" to our 3 committee system was to have 2; one for places and one for people. Not all councillors are interested in all topics and therefore are not fully engaged all the time at the meetings. Finally, training is needed for scrutiny members; specifically on how to question effectively.

Revert to the original 3 committee system

Question 3: Which of the following functions of a Scrutiny Committee do you feel the Committee has been able to meet? Please select all that you think apply:



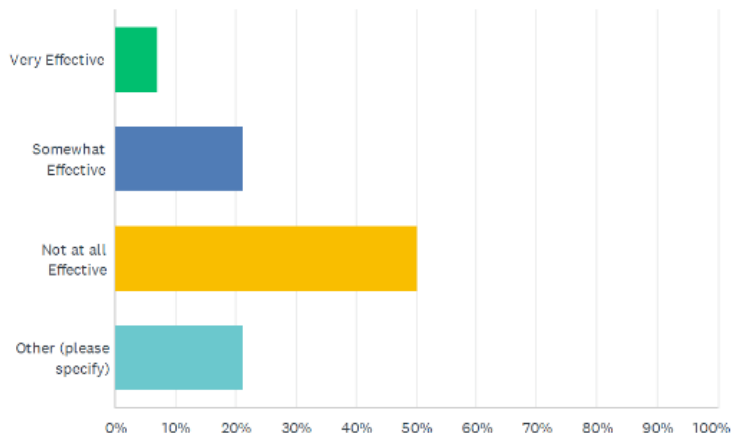
Detail: 10 Councillors Responded:

- Scrutinise decisions the Cabinet are about to or have taken - 5
- Provide "critical friend" challenge to the Cabinet - 3
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public – 4
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role – 6
- Drive improvement in public services – 2

Question 4: How effective has the single Committee been at scrutinising all areas of Council services across the Places, People and Resources

directorates?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 1



Detail: 14 Councillors Responded:

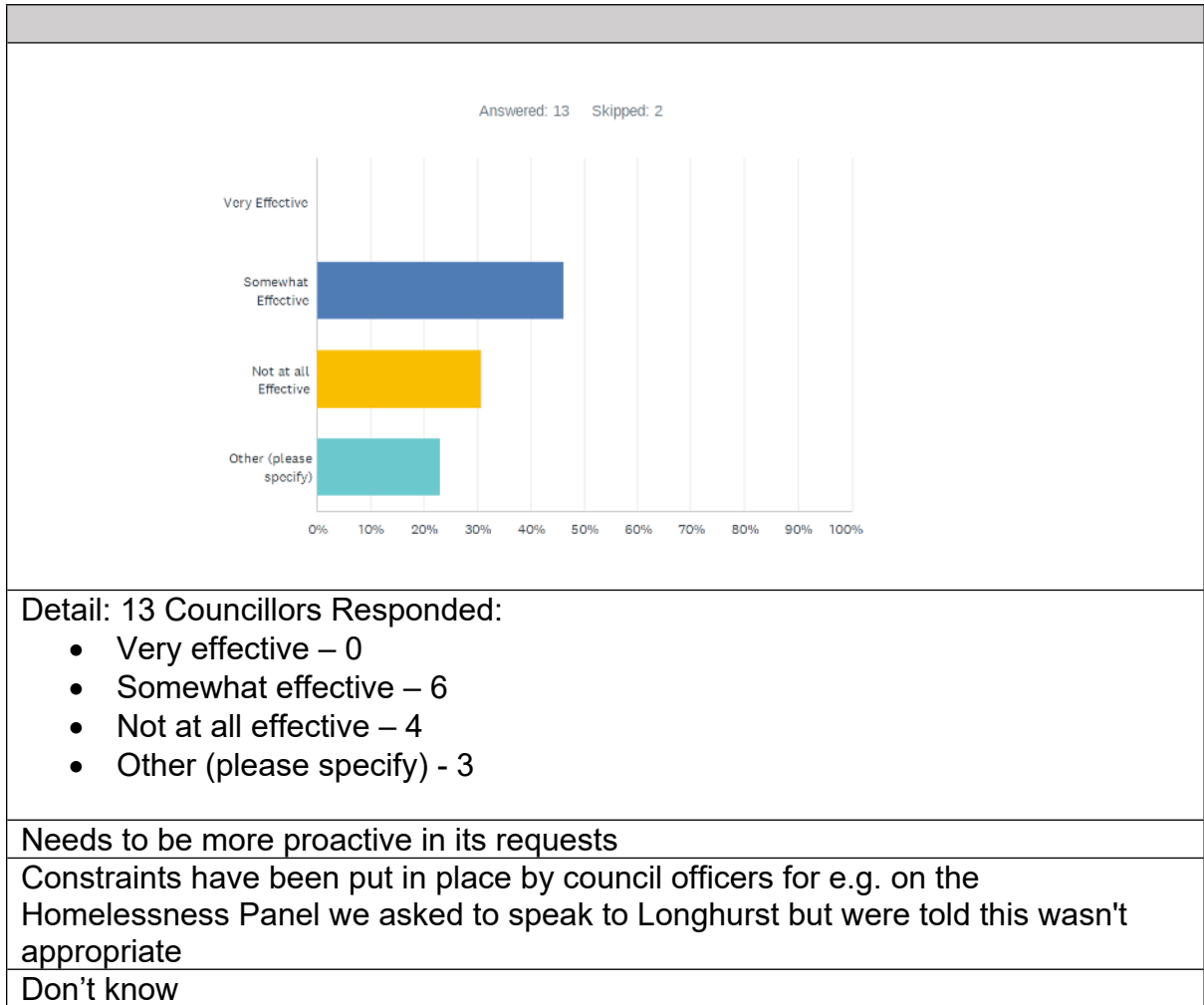
- Very effective – 1
- Somewhat effective – 3
- Not at all effective – 7
- Other (please specify) - 3

The system is great it just needs to be delivered as instructed, such as recommendations to Cabinet and using the option of additional meetings for critical issues

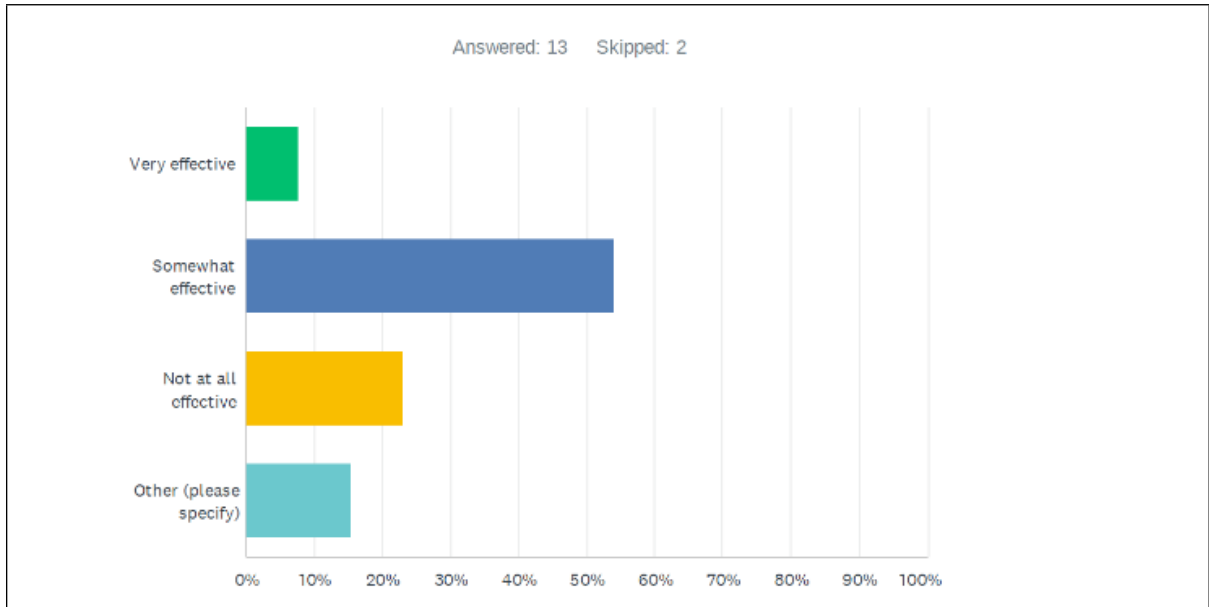
Completely pointless

Comments above apply

Question 5 - How effective has the Committee and its Task and Finish Groups/Evidence Panel been at engaging with external partners and the wider public?



Question 6: How effective has the Committee been in work-planning with a particular focus on one or two main issues at each meeting?



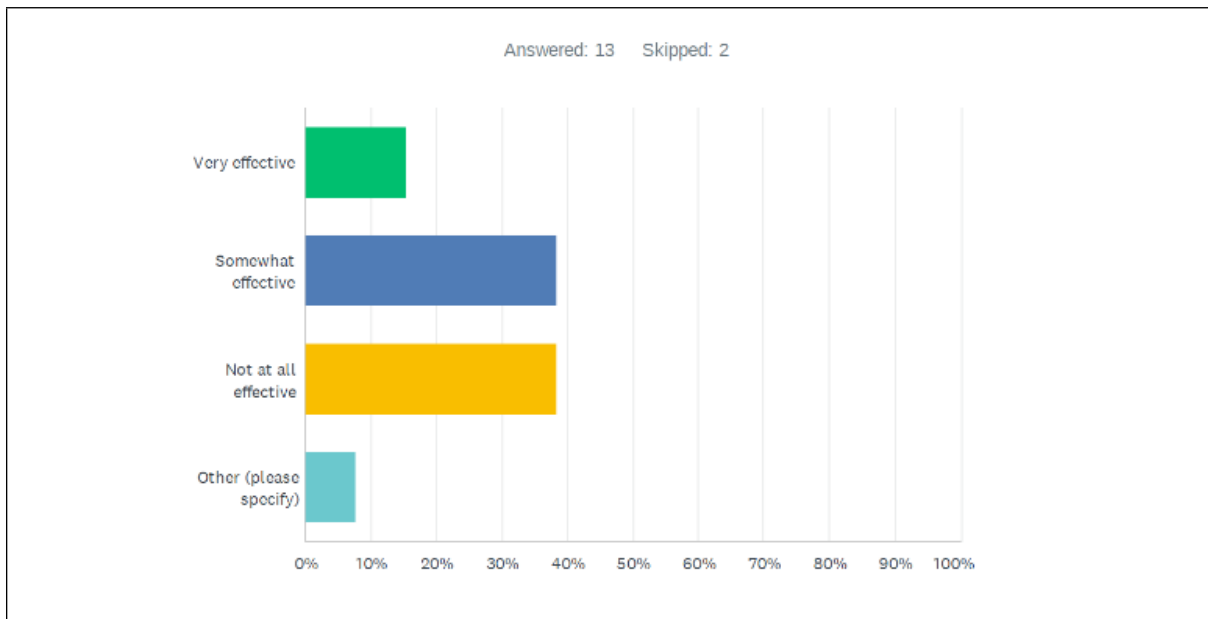
Detail: 13 Councillors Responded:

- Very effective – 1
- Somewhat effective – 7
- Not at all effective – 3
- Other (please specify) - 2

Don't know

insufficient experience of meetings

Question 7: How effective has the Committee been in aligning its work with the priorities of the Corporate Strategy?



Detail: 13 Councillors Responded:

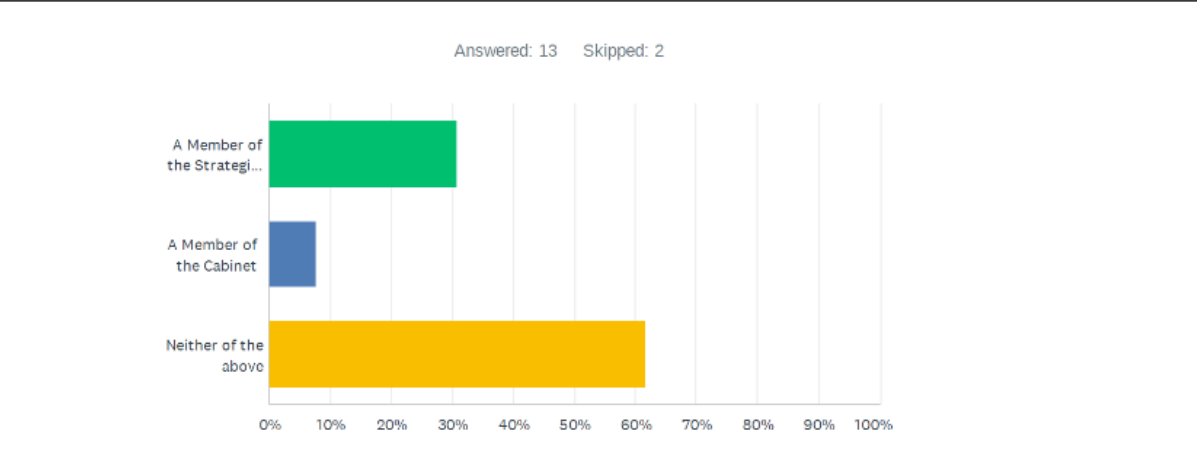
- Very effective – 2
- Somewhat effective – 5
- Not at all effective – 5
- Other (please specify) - 1

Don't know

Question 8: Taking into account your answer to question 1-7, what improvements or adjustments do you think could be made to the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee?

- Careful selection of future Chairs and good Governance support
- I get the impression that some members need training especially on questioning skills
- Cabinet ought to have more obligation to follow scrutiny recommendations.
- Return to specialised panels
- Revert back to 2 or 3 committees as previously. This does not work
- We need to move back to 2 or 3 committees with members actually doing what they are paid for.
- Move to a two committee system with one covering Adults, Health and Children and the other covering Places and Resources
- Do less things but in more depth to add value- narrower scope but focus on Corporate Strategy priorities
- Abolishing the system and returning to the separate committees system that previously existed, to me, is the only answer to achieving any degree of satisfactory scrutiny, but I realise that the officials do not want to contemplate that option, hence the wording of this questionnaire. I believe there are logical reasons for their views
- More clarity from officers on what we can and cannot do and far more help from officers to the Task and Finish groups around scoping, planning and organising
- Revert to the original 3 committee system

Question 9: What is your role as a Member in relation to Scrutiny?



Detail: 13 Councillors Responded:

- A Member of the Committee – 4
- A Member of the Cabinet – 1
- Neither of the above – 8

Question for Members of the Committee only:

Question 10: As a member of the Committee, do you have any suggestions for improving the Committee?

More committees and members actually doing their role.
See comments on officers above. Have regular meeting of chair/vice chair and cabinet diarised as agenda setting meetings
Revert to the original 3 committee system

Questions for Cabinet Members only:

Question 11: If you are a Cabinet Member, have you been able to do the following?

Detail: 1 Councillor Responded:

- Proactively suggest areas of potential Scrutiny to the Committee - 0
- Informally meet with Scrutiny to discuss Scrutiny topics - 1
- Attend Committee meetings to present items - 0
- Attend Committee meetings to provide updates - 1

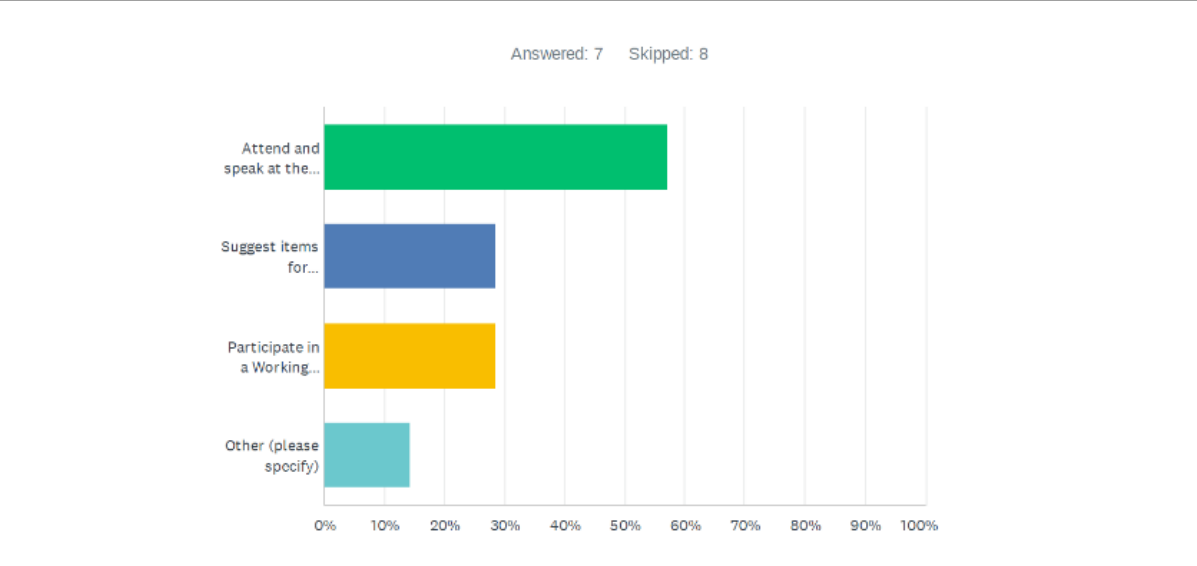
Question 12: As a Cabinet Member, how effective have you found these involvements with Scrutiny?

Not at all effective

Questions for those neither on the Committee nor Cabinet

Question 13: If you are neither a Member of the Cabinet or the Strategic

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee, have you been able to do the following?
(Please tick all that apply)**



- Detail: 7 Councillors Responded:
- Attend and speak at the Committee as a non-voting participant - 4
 - Suggest items for consideration - 2
 - Participate in a Working Group/Task and Finish Group/Evidence Panel – 2
 - Other (please specify) – 1

Not felt that it would have added value

Question 14: If you have not engaged in any of these activities, could you explain why? (Please tick all that apply)

- Detail: 1 Councillor Responded:
- Lack of understanding on the methods of participation available - 1
 - Lack of time (due to other Council duties) - 0
 - Lack of time (due to non-Council commitments) - 0
 - Lack of opportunity provided to participate - 1
 - Other (please specify) – 1

No real clarity on who to contact, what information needed

Question 15: If you have not engaged in all or some of these activities, what would make you more likely to engage with them?

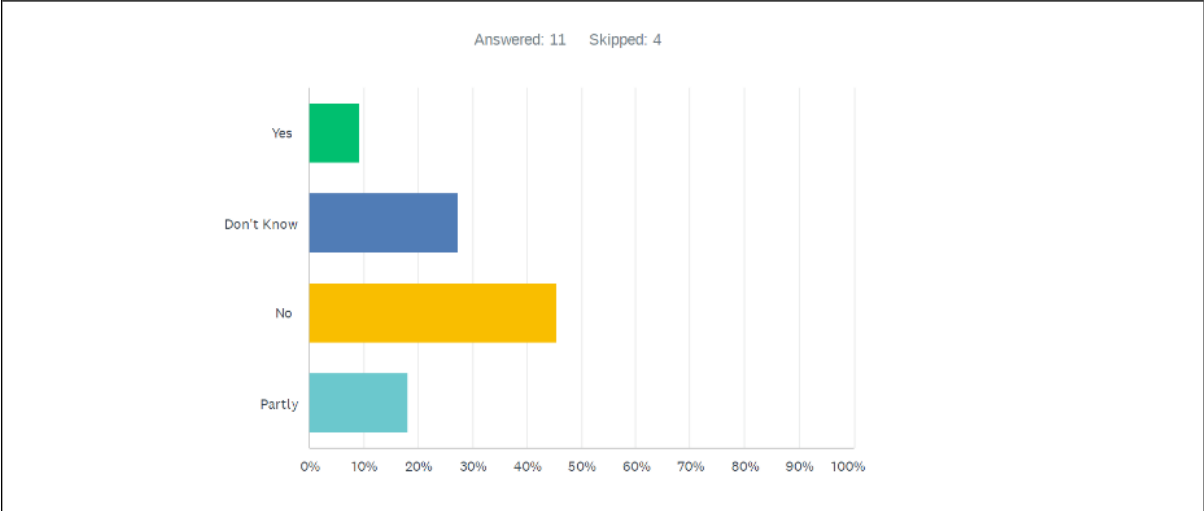
A greater likelihood that recommendations might be followed

Knowing that input would be valued even if not accepted

Questions for all participants:

Question 16: Have the Committees, Task & Finish Groups and Evidence

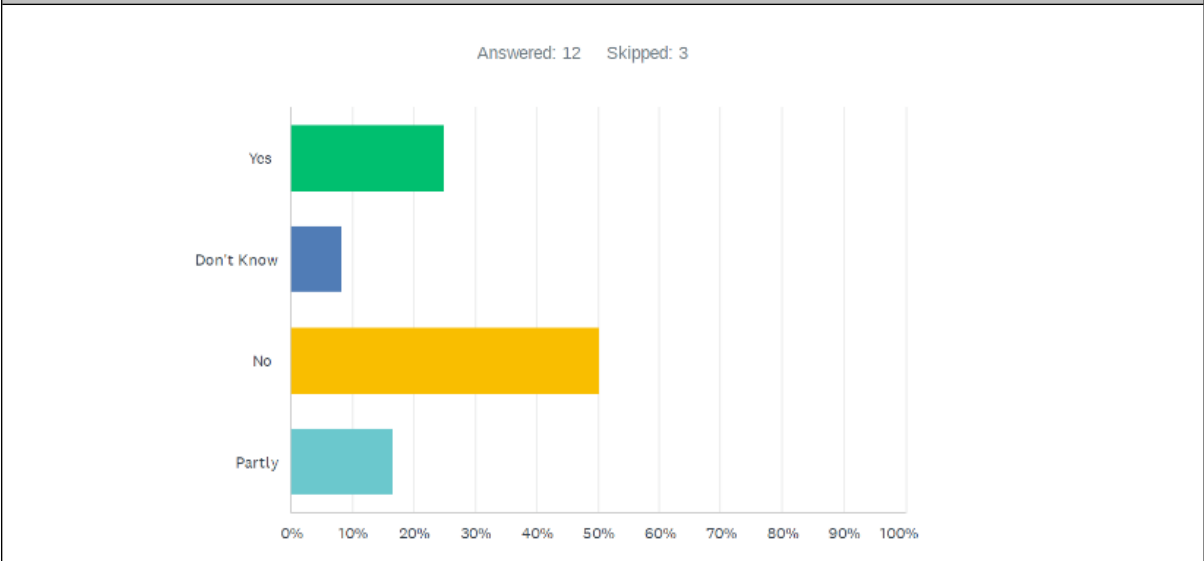
Panels made a meaningful contribution to the work of the Council?



Detail: 11 Councillors Responded:

- Yes - 1
- Don't Know - 3
- No - 5
- Partly – 2

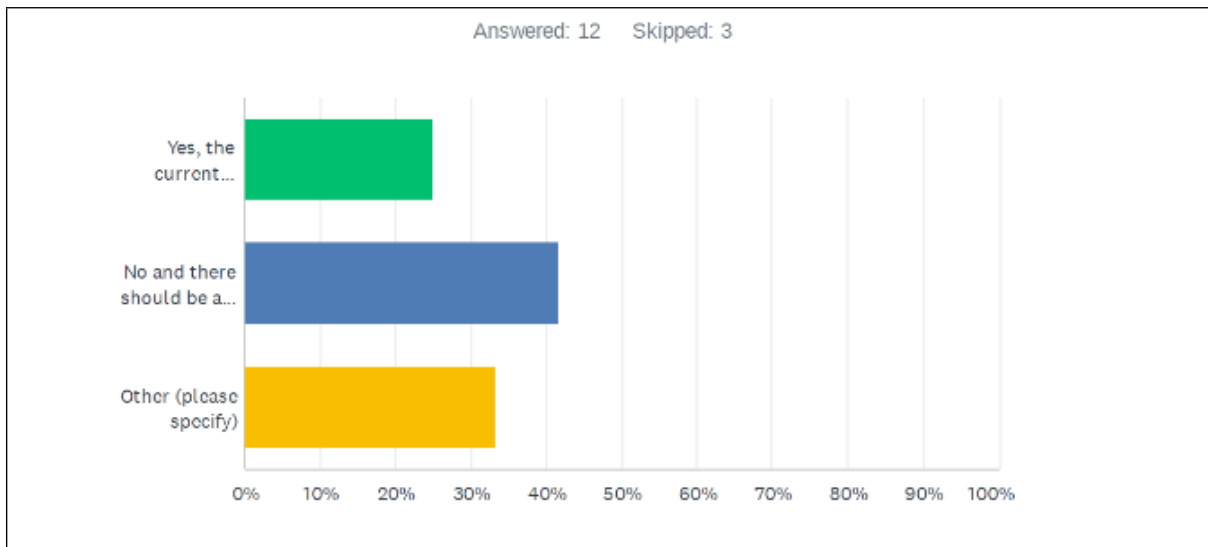
Question 17 Do you think the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is delivering value for money for residents and making a meaningful contribution to the work of the Council?



Detail: 12 Councillors Responded:

- Yes - 3
- Don't Know - 1
- No – 6
- Partly – 2

Question 18 Is the current pattern of monthly Committee meetings providing effective value for money or should there be a change?



Detail: 12 Councillors Responded:

- Yes, the current arrangements are effective 3
- No and there should be a change in the pattern of meetings 5
- Other (please specify) 4

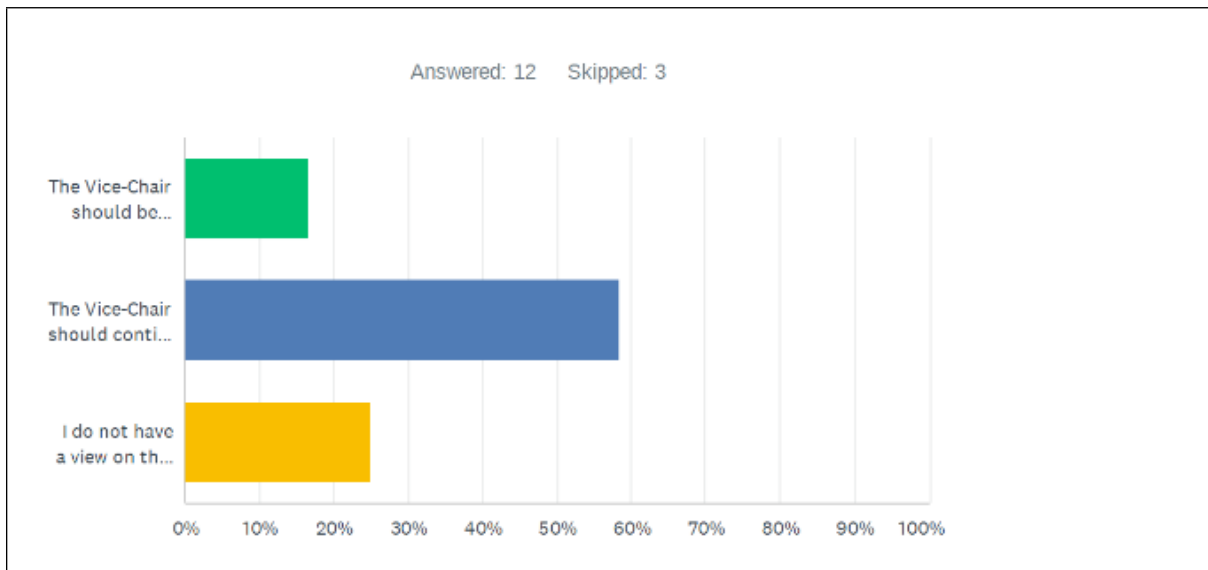
Allow the committee to have genuine decision making

Need to review- every other month may be more effective if gives T and F and working groups time to do work and report back.

revert to the preceding system and then required and detailed scrutiny would be more likely to be productive scrutiny

Without monthly meetings it is difficult to input into the cabinet agenda. This was the major problem of the previous system and in addition we have had to have an additional meeting because of an emergency item going on the forward plan

Question 19: Given the Vice-Chair's enhanced role in work-planning and agenda setting, do you feel the Vice-Chair of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be elected by Annual Council, rather than waiting until the first Committee Meeting?



Detail: 12 Councillors Responded:

- The Vice-Chair should be appointed by Annual Council - 2
- The Vice-Chair should continue to be appointed by the Committee itself as with other Committees - 7
- I do not have a view on the matter - 2

Question 20: Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee?

I would hope that the trial will continue and better engagement between committee and non members

Relies heavily on having a good chair and vice chair

Revert back to the previous 3 committees. This does not work and is completely pointless

We need urgent change, and members have to start realising they have a role outside of taking an allowance. There needs to be more kick back for those who do nothing.

We should consider combining the work of the Employment and Appeals Committee with the Conduct Committee to maintain the same overall workload and have 2 Scrutiny Committees

I support the move to a single committee. My view was that previous scrutiny set up was not particularly effective either. So this is not about how many committees we have but how scrutiny works in practice at Rutland. Difficult to make this work in last year of an administration. Needs more time and longer term plan.

So far as I am aware, since the O&S single committee, there has been no formal sub-committee, task or finish groups, or evidence panels instigated. I am aware there was an informal culture group only.

Each member of the overview and scrutiny committee should take a lead on service areas as, for e.g. is done in Torbay. This role to mirror cabinet and to take responsibility for bringing issues for scrutiny to the attention of the committee.