

How Meetings are Held – Summary of Survey Responses.

This survey was sent out on 17th November 2023 until 12th January 2024. The survey went out on Microsoft Forms with an introduction that covered:

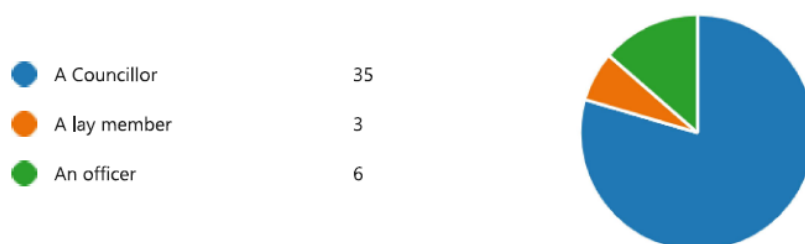
“This survey is being issued to all Councillors, lay members and the Senior Leadership Team officers of Denbighshire County Council. This survey seeks to provide the Council with information on the views of participants of the Council's discretionary meetings. These 'discretionary' meetings are the non-statutory meetings which are not open to the press and public.

Please note that responses to the questions and comments will be anonymised”.

In total during the above time frame 44 responses were received.

The following illustrates what responses were given for each question in the survey, taken directly from Microsoft Forms.

1. Please indicate whether you are:



Question 1 illustrates who has contributed to this survey, this survey was sent out to all councillors and lay members, and the corporate executive team and senior leadership team.

Q2. For each of the following meetings, please state how you would prefer the meetings to be held.

The following table illustrates the non-statutory meetings which are not open to the press and public the Council can choose how they are held. These are listed in the meeting column, and the green highlights represent the single most popular answer.

A breakdown for the above against Councillor, Officer or Lay Member responding can be found in the appendices.

Meeting	Face to Face	Hybrid	Virtual	I don't attend these meetings	Prefer not to say / no opinion
All Members Briefing	11	17	11	3	
Asset Management Group	2	15	10	16	
Capital Scrutiny Group	3	15	11	14	
Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Group	2	15	15	9	2
Corporate Parenting Forum	3	15	17	7	1
Council Workshops	15	14	14	1	
Joint Consultative Committee for Health and Safety Employee Relations	1	14	14	13	1
Member Area Groups	14	13	14	3	
Task and Finish Groups	10	12	15	5	1

Responses for All-Members' Briefings, the Asset Management Group and the Capital Scrutiny Group illustrate the popularity of a hybrid choice for those meetings.

The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Group, and JCC responses were equally favouring hybrid or virtual.

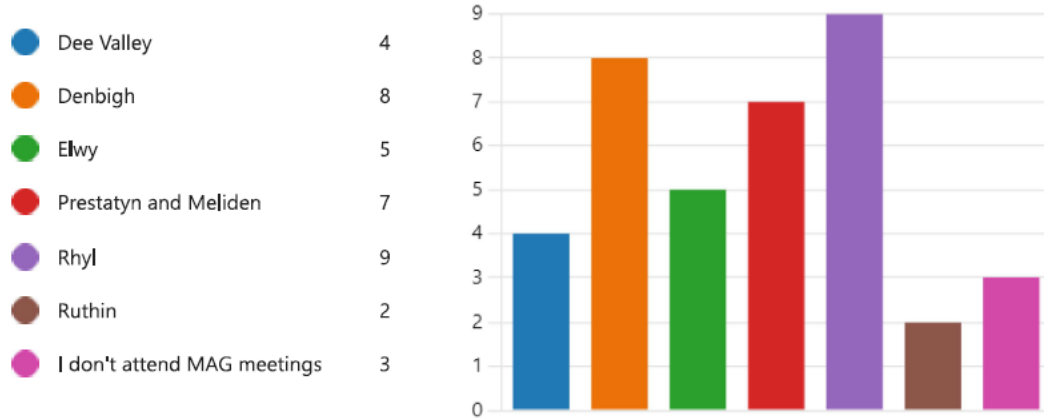
The single most popular choice for Council Workshops was face-to-face.

The responses for the Member Area Groups were very close for all 3 options and tied face-to-face and virtual meetings, with hybrid votes narrowly behind.

The survey favoured virtual meetings for Task and Finish Groups.

3. This question is for Councillors and Officers who attend Member Area Group meetings only.

Which Member Area Group (MAG) do you attend?



4. Please state how you would prefer your MAG meetings to be held?

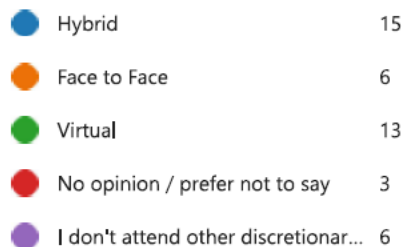


For questions 3 and 4 the table below shows how the survey responses were allocated across the six member area groups.

	Face to Face	Hybrid	Virtual
Elwy	2	1	2
Denbigh	4	3	1
Prestatyn and Meliden	1	3	3
Rhyl	2	3	4
Dee Valley	1	2	1
Ruthin	1	1	

Although the table above is the best data we currently have on the preferences for individual MAGs some caution is required owing to the size of some of the responses, particularly those for Ruthin MAG.

5. If you are a member of, or participate in other discretionary meetings (for example the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group, Service Challenges, the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group, Strategic Governance Board for Denbighshire Leisure Ltd, the Strategic Planning Group etc) how would you prefer those meetings to be held?



It is evident from the above figures that there are a range of other internal meetings where face-to-face meetings are not favoured and responses for hybrid, closely followed by virtual meetings were the most popular choices.

Q6. If you have answered Hybrid, Face to Face, or Virtual, please state which meeting or meetings your responses refer to, e.g. the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group.

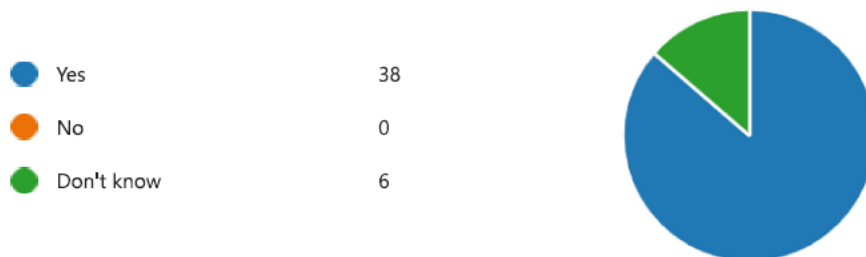
This table shows the main summary for the panels identified in question 5.

	Face to Face	Hybrid	Virtual
Service Challenge	2	3	2
Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs	1	4	4
Strategic Planning Group	0	2	4

7. Are you aware that the Council has a protocol for participating in hybrid meetings?



8. If you answered 'Yes' to Question 7, do you think the hybrid meetings' protocol plays a beneficial role in hybrid meetings?



Q9. If you would like to leave comments on question 8, please do so here:

- A lot of Members (and some officers) don't have their cameras on when they attend meetings. I think that needs to be enforced more robustly.
- Sicrhau bod y camera ymlaen trwy gydol y cyfarfod. Sicrhau bod dim a all amharu ar allu aelod i ganolbwyntio ar y trafodaethau. *(Ensure that the camera is on throughout the meeting. Ensure that nothing impairs members' ability to concentrate on the discussions).*
- Lots more to do to make them as professional as should be.
- It allows greater participation however I believe people do not engage fully in hybrid meetings.
- The saving of travel.
- Enforcement of onscreen viewing of camera also in person must use microphone
- The only point i would make is that all attendees should have their cameras on, because that isn't always the case.
- Members of a committee should on the whole attend in person. It is OK for observers to be remote.
- Angen pwysleisio i Aelodau/Cynghorwyr i beidio a siarad ar-lein cy y cyfarfodydd pan mae aelodau'r cyhoedd yn debygol o fod yn bresennol. *(Need to emphasise to Members/Councillors not to speak online before the meetings when members of the public are likely to be present).*
- I do feel people need to be reminded about the protocol regularly.

10. Do you think improvements can be made to how virtual, face to face or hybrid meetings are held?



Q11. If you answered 'Yes' to question 10, or if you would like to leave your observations on the above question, please do so here:

A lot of the responses below relate to the ICT, however it must be highlighted that the enforcement of camera's being on has also been highlighted on multiple times within this question also.

Responses:

- The tech could be more reliable. I think the Chair needs a separate screen on their desk showing all virtual attendees.
- Improve Hybrid facilities at County Hall
- The requirement to have cameras on. Also, for hybrid meetings, usually the Chair will take all requests to speak in the room and then move to those online, and I wonder whether that is right? When I say that all discretionary meetings should be virtual, I mean. However, there is a place for face-to-face meetings at times. It creates a different dynamic that can be very beneficial. For example, the Members workshop on 17th Nov was very good, and I think it had more impact because it was face-to-face.
- Technology didn't work on one occasion when I was meant to address a Performance Scrutiny meeting. Also, when I chair meetings in the Council Chamber, the names shown on the screen of members / officers attending virtually is too small to read.
- Better discipline, technical capability,
- Faultless system needed. Speaking into the mic needs to be much better. Members backgrounds need to be sorted before going live. Some chairs need to chair much better. Stop the online chatter before a meeting that can be heard by all, including the public, in the chamber. Chairs taking as much notice of online participants as in person ones e.g. for proposing /seconding/speaking in general.
- IT improvements so they run smoothly but accept there will always be glitches.
- I think all councillors should attend full council face to face but have hybrid as an emergency. There are only 7 meeting a year and I think councillors should make the effort to attend.
- Meeting minutes for attendance should distinguish between in person and virtual.
- More Community participation
- Chair should insist on cameras being on, or people leaving the meeting.
- Quite often, members who attend virtually and raise their virtual hand to make a comment are not noticed. This can be very frustrating.
- General Point: I have said Virtual for All Member Briefings & Council Workshops....HOWEVER whilst the majority should be virtual, some need to be face to face depending on the topic.
- Better use of mobile equipment to make hybrid possible in other locations.
- Connectivity issues.
- Cameras on always with DCC logo as the background. No voting permitted unless its beyond doubt that a Councillor has fully participated in the debate. Failure to attend 3 or more meetings during the year would then call into question the position of that councillor/s position on a committee/group.
- Refine IT issues.
- Volume of some speakers is a real issue! Some softly spoken speakers are virtually inaudible! This matter really does need addressing please.
- If it's webcast, Ban eating/drinking on camera.

- The requirement for cameras to be on for committee members attending remotely should be more vigorously enforced.
- Better quality sound
- Voting should be the same method for in-person or virtual attendees (roll call or voting button).
- Participants need to understand that conversations between people who are attending virtually can be heard by all, including any members of the public who are observing meetings in the Chambers. Can be embarrassing when people are chatting inappropriately.
- Virtual or Hybrid attendance should be via formal DCC IT accounts unless specific circumstances. Some members dial in as guest at each and every meeting.

Appendix 1 (to the survey document)

The following tables provide more information to Q2 which asked, for each of the following meetings, please state how you would prefer the meetings to be held. The following tables show who responded:

All Members Briefing:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	10		1
Hybrid	15	1	2
Virtual	8		3
Don't attend these meetings	1	2	
Prefer not to say / no opinion			

Asset Management Group:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	2		
Hybrid	14	1	
Virtual	10		
Don't attend these meetings	8	2	6
Prefer not to say / no opinion			

Capital Scrutiny Group:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	3		
Hybrid	14	1	
Virtual	10		1
Don't attend these meetings	7	2	5
Prefer not to say / no opinion			

Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Group:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	2		
Hybrid	14	1	
Virtual	13	2	2
Don't attend these meetings	3		4
Prefer not to say / no opinion	2		

Corporate Parenting Forum:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	3		
Hybrid	13	1	1
Virtual	16		1

Don't attend these meetings	1	2	4
Prefer not to say / no opinion	1		

Council Workshops:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	15		
Hybrid	11	2	1
Virtual	9		5
Don't attend these meetings			
Prefer not to say / no opinion		1	

Joint Consultative Committee for Health and Safety Employee Relations:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face			1
Hybrid	13	1	
Virtual	13		1
Don't attend these meetings	7	2	4
Prefer not to say / no opinion	1		

Member Area Groups:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	11		3
Hybrid	12	1	
Virtual	12		2
Don't attend these meetings		2	1
Prefer not to say / no opinion			

Task and Finish Groups:

	Councillor	Lay Member	Officer
Face to Face	9		1
Hybrid	11	1	
Virtual	12		3
Don't attend these meetings	1	2	2
Prefer not to say / no opinion	1		