



Have your say

Wirral Council Local Elections Public Consultation Report



Consultation: 13 December 2021 – 20 February 2022

Report: 21 February 2022

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1.0 Executive Summary

Wirral Council consulted the public on whether it should change to 'whole council' elections or continue with the current system of 'elections by thirds'.

The council currently uses a 'by thirds' electoral system. This means that over four years, elections are held in years one, two and three for one of the three councillors in each ward. In the fourth year there are no elections. The change to 'whole council' elections would mean the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years.

The proposal to move to whole elections came out of a recent independent report into the council's governance arrangements, commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

This consultation relates only to Wirral Council local elections. No other elections will be affected by any future change in Wirral Council's electoral cycle. Parliamentary elections and police and crime commissioner elections will continue their normal electoral cycle.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement Health Act 2007, amended by the Localism Act 2011, the council has the power to change its electoral arrangements to whole council elections. This allows the council itself to decide whether to move to whole council elections, or back to elections by thirds. The council cannot move to a 50/50 electoral cycle as it has not elected this way in the past.

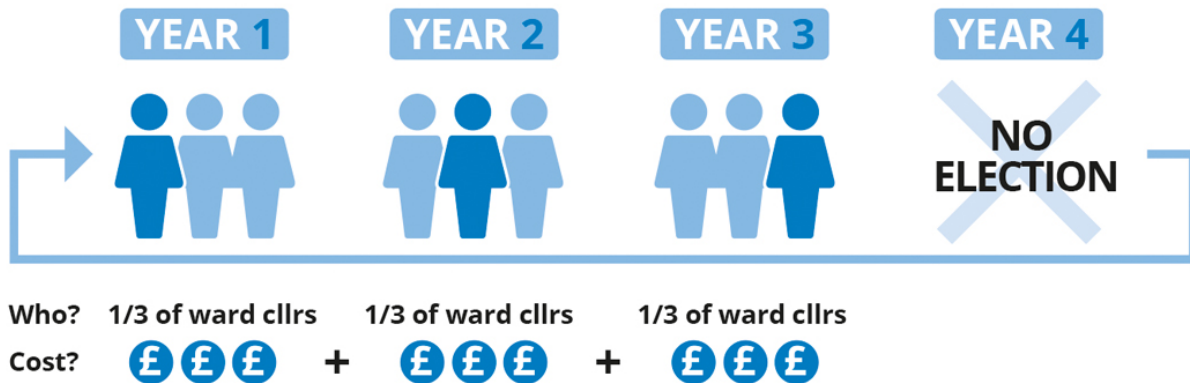
Through this consultation people were asked to provide their view on if the Council should move to an all-out election system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years.

The findings of the consultation were:

Do you think that Wirral Council should move to an all-out electoral system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years?

- 60.9% said 'Yes'
- 38.0% said 'No'
- 1.1% had no preference.

HOW WE VOTE NOW: ELECTION BY THIRDS



ANOTHER WAY: WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

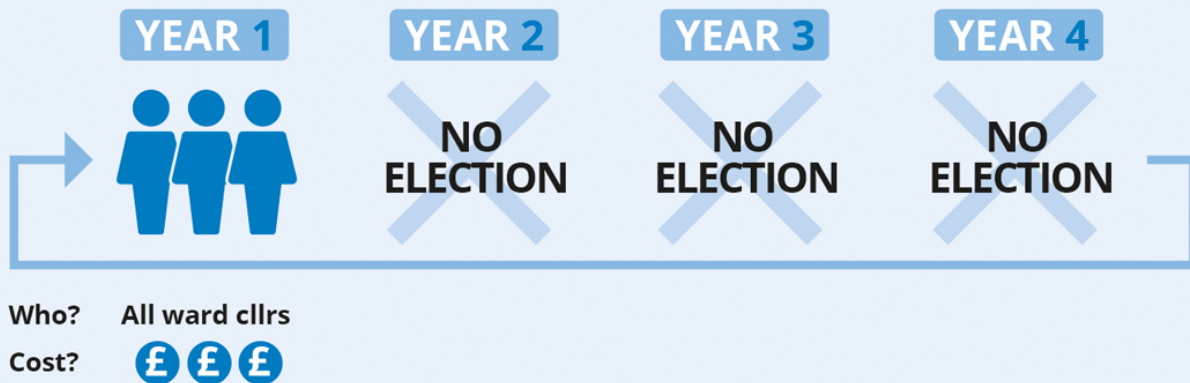


Figure 1: Illustration of Council election systems

2.0 Methodology

Through the elections consultation people were asked to tell us their view on a possible move to an all-out electoral system. A set of background information was provided to enable residents to be informed to answer the question.

The poll question was “Do you think that Wirral Council should move to an all-out electoral system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years?” The options were to say Yes, No, or No preference.

Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered at a meeting of the Council on 21 March 2022.

The consultation was carried out between 13 December 2021 20 February 2022. The approach used was an online public consultation through the ‘Have your say’ consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Elections Consultation

One online poll tool was provided for residents to engage with. Respondents were also able to request paper copies of the survey, including an easy read version, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the ‘Have your say’ website alongside the online tool.

2.1 The Poll

Following closure of the consultation, the online, paper copy and Easy Read responses were collated and reported as one result.

2.2 Analysis of Respondents

Respondents to the online tools were provided with the option to provide demographic information about themselves. It must be noted that this is an option and that not all respondents included this information. This data allows the demographic results to be included in this report to enable analysis of the scope of responses and representation from different demographic groups.

2.3 Interpretation of Results

In terms of the results, it is important to note that the public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information on the opinion of those residents who engaged.

3.0 Results

Do you think that Wirral Council should move to an all-out electoral system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years?

527 people contributed to the consultation, 504 took the online poll, 16 people responded using a paper copy and 7 people responded using easy read versions of the poll.

Most people (60.9%) thought that the council should move to an all-out electoral system. 38.0% did not think the council should move to this system, and 1.1% had no preference.

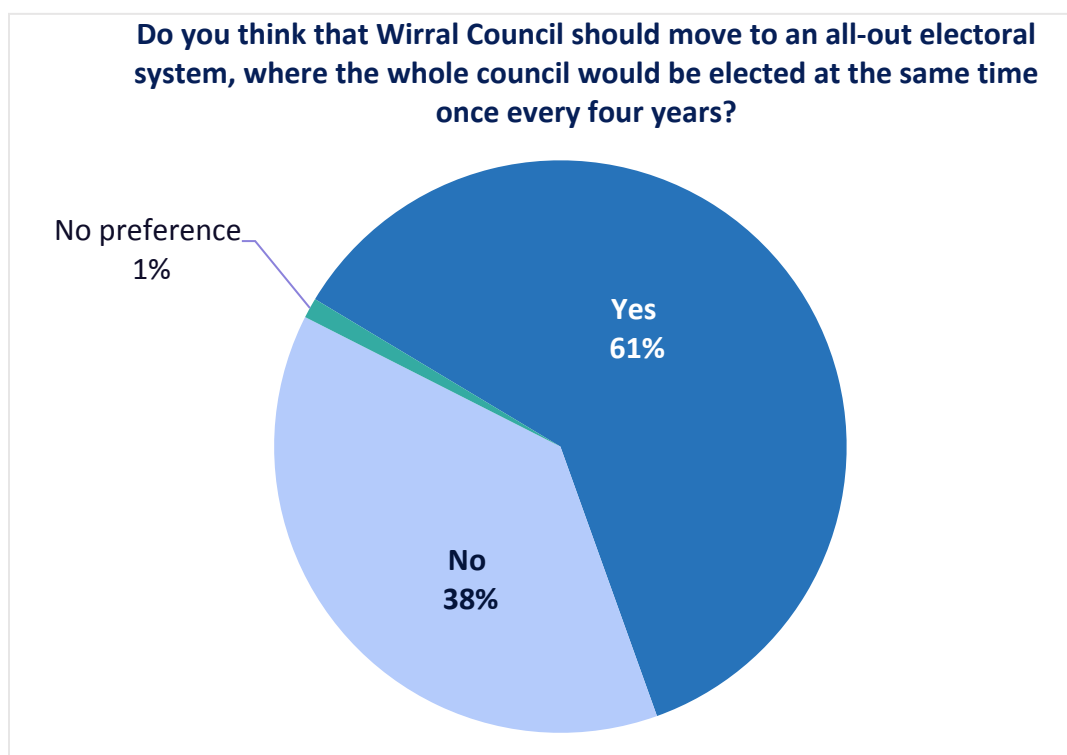


Figure 2: Do you think that Wirral Council should move to an all-out electoral system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years?

Count of Do you think that Wirral Council should move to an all-out electoral system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years?					
Response	Easy read	Online	Paper	Grand Total	% of total
Yes	3	310	8	317	60.9%
No	1	191	8	199	38.0%
No preference	3	3		6	1.1%
Total	7	504	16	527	100.0%

Table 1: Count of Do you think that Wirral Council should move to an all-out electoral system, where the whole council would be elected at the same time once every four years?

4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic

4.1 Demographics

Registration was required to engage in the online Budget Consultation. The registration form included questions regarding demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory and respondents could choose to select 'prefer not to say' or skip the question. The demographics results are summarised below.

Most of the respondents (82.8%) classed themselves as local residents.



Figure 3: Who are you registering as?

The gender of respondents was 53.6% male, 35.8% female, with 9.8% preferring not to say and 0.8% preferring their own term.

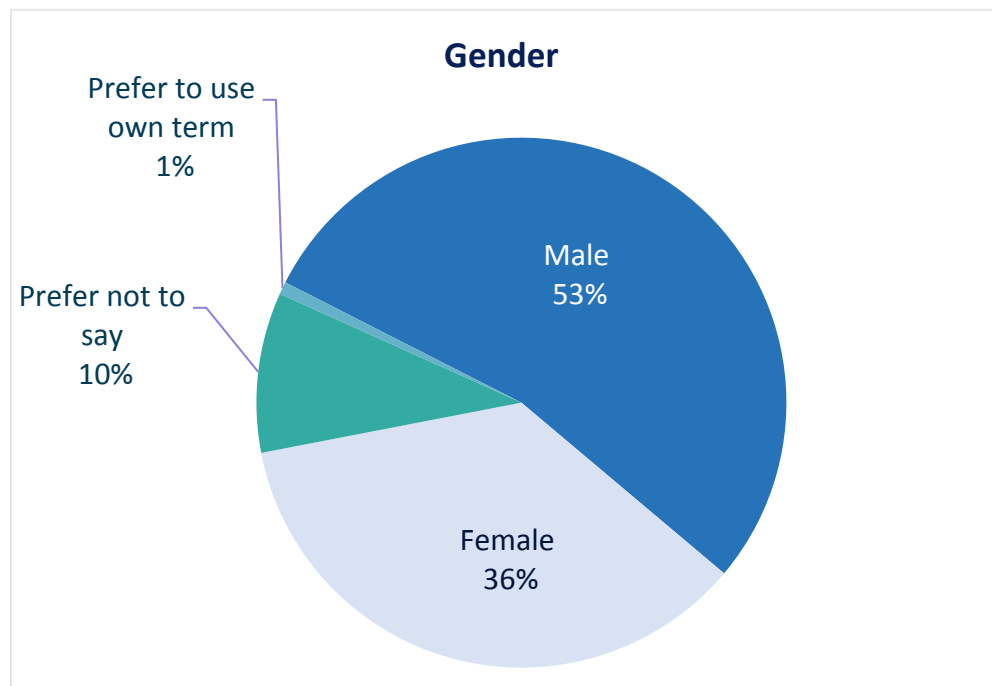


Figure 4: Gender of respondents

The age group profile is illustrated with the most common age groups were 65-74 years (24.7%), followed by 55-64 years (22.7%). The least represented groups were under 16s (0.2%) and 16-24 years (1.1%).

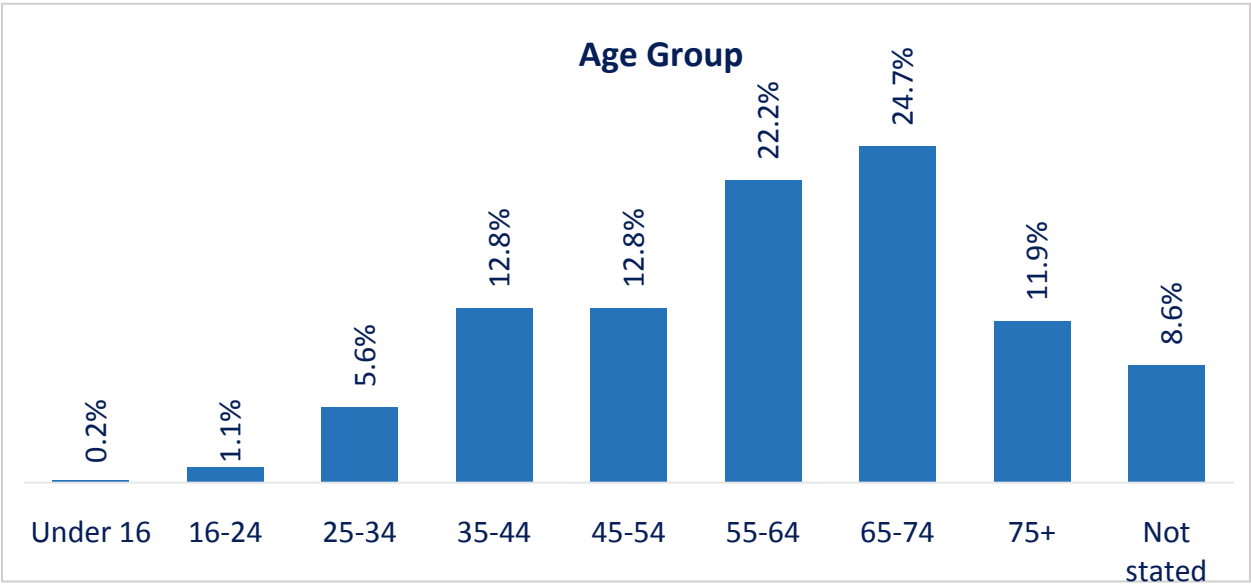


Figure 5: Age group of respondents

84.9% of respondents were white British, with only 1.1% of respondents were of a non-white or other (1.7%) ethnicity.

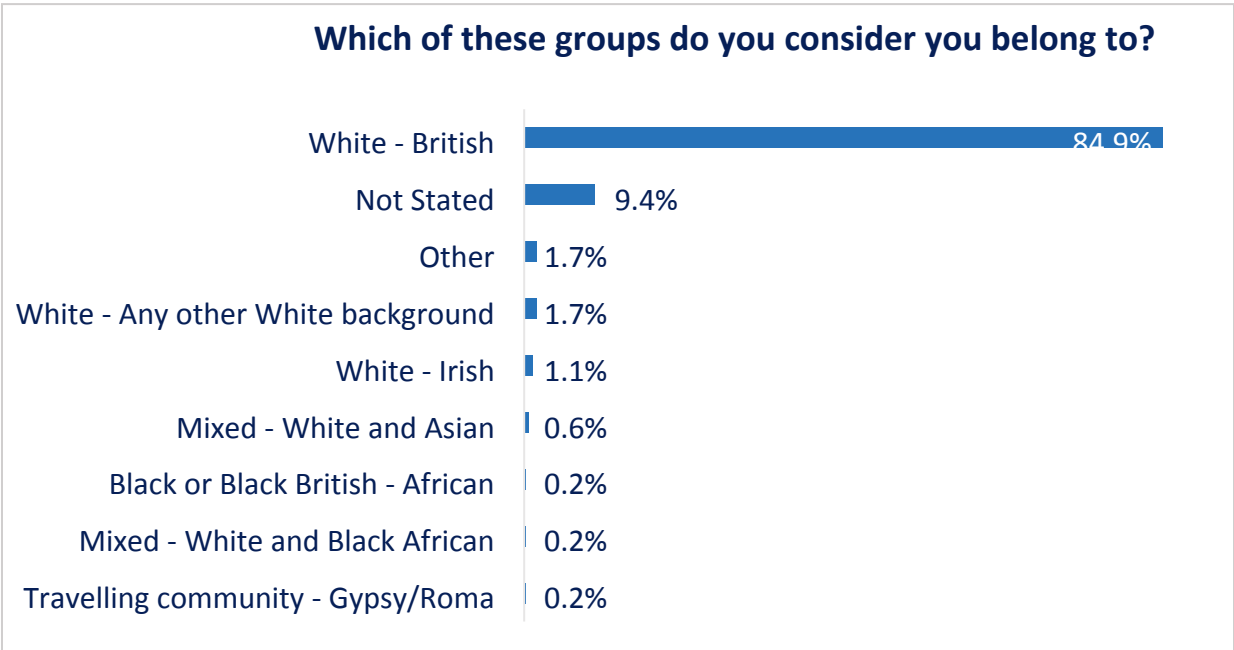


Figure 6: Ethnicity of respondents

72.2% of respondents were heterosexual, 3.8% were gay/ lesbian, 1.5% bisexual and 22.4% preferred not to say.

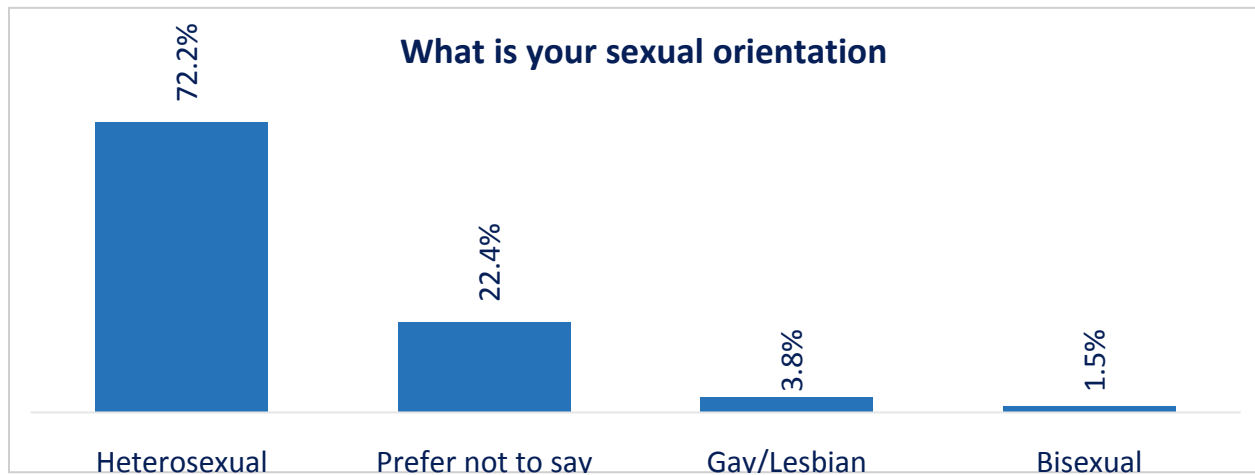


Figure 7: Sexual orientation of respondents

4.2 Have your say - Site Traffic

Reviewing the site activity, visits, and how people visit the site can be useful to evaluate if people are aware of the site, as well as to ensure engagement activities are deployed effectively, and to a wide range of different people – enhancing public engagement in the future.

Site registration allows us to confirm the number of engaged participants through the completion of a quick poll; 504 people completed the Poll online.

2,259 visited the Wirral Council Local Elections Consultation page of the Have Your Say site, of these 50 downloaded a document and 504 people completed the quick poll survey.

These figures cannot be viewed as definitive as they are based on site tracking through 'cookies' and there are a number of factors that can impact on this. These include that cookies may be disabled or deleted, individuals may access the site multiple times through different devices or different browsers. However, the figures can be used to gauge how much interest has been generated in individual projects through the rate of engaged participants.

The route that people access the site is known as the traffic source. The 'Have your say' portal allows analysis to be carried out on traffic source, and if they lead to engagement in the site tools such as the questionnaire. This analysis allows a greater understanding of which communication and promotional tools to use to optimise engagement.

For this project a range of traffic sources have been reviewed and summarised in the table below. Most visits to the site were either visits via social media posts (710 visits) or direct visits (709) where people have either pasted or typed the URL in to their browser. Direct visits generated a rate of engagement of 25%, meaning 25% of these visits resulted in completion of the poll, and social media visits had an engagement rate of 17.7%

TRAFFIC CHANNEL	AWARE VISITS	INFORMED VISITS (%)	ENGAGED VISITS (%)
SOCIAL	710	139 (19.6%)	126 (17.7%)
DIRECT	709	191 (26.9%)	177 (25%)
EMAIL	325	82 (25.2%)	77 (23.7%)
SEARCH ENGINE	107	32 (29.9%)	24 (22.4%)
.GOV SITES	4	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
REFERRALS	404	103 (25.5%)	99 (24.5%)

Table 2: Site traffic sources