

Public Document Pack

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Civic Centre
Southend-on-Sea

5 June 2024



I hereby summon you to attend the Special meeting of the Southend-on-Sea City Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Southend-on-Sea on, **Thursday, 13th June, 2024** commencing **6.30 p.m.** for the transaction of the following business.

C Ansell
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Election Cycle Change Results (Pages 3 - 48)**
Report of Executive Director (Strategy and Change)

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting: Full Council
Date: 13th June 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: Yes
Title of Report: Election Cycle change consultation results

Executive Director: Claire Shuter, Executive Director of Strategy & Change
Report Author: Sarah Brown, Service Manager, Policy & Performance, Corporate Strategy Group
Executive Councillor: Cllr Daniel Cowan, Leader of the Council

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council made a commitment to explore a change in electoral cycle when it accepted the findings and recommendations of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge.
- 1.2. The Council invited residents, local businesses, partners and staff to share their views as part of a formal consultation. In addition, this paper presents financial, productivity, equality and environmental opportunities. It presents the view of Government, including its commissioners, and the Electoral Commission, and further details the growing trend in local government, especially unitary authorities, to operate with whole council elections.
- 1.3. The evidence, as presented, weighs towards a case for change. This coincides with a timing opportunity when the Council will be required to hold a whole council election in May 2026 following the ongoing ward boundary review.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- 2.1. Consider the case for election by thirds and whole council 'all out' elections.
- 2.2. Decide whether to continue with whole council elections after the whole council election in 2026 following the Ward Boundary Review.

3. Background

- 3.1. At present the Council is elected by thirds, with one third of the councillors elected at a time. Under the four-yearly election option, all the seats on the Council would be elected at the same time and the City Council elections would be held once every four years. This is often referred to as 'all-out' or whole council elections.
- 3.2. In October 2022, the Local Government Association (LGA) and peers conducted a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). Peer challenges are not inspections but are improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual Councils' needs.
- 3.3. Peers found that the Council was self-aware and had huge potential with many positive attributes and assets both within the Council and city, including the strong community ethos and sound financial management. However, they also found that approaches to leadership, governance and decision making were impacting the council's capacity to progress. The LGA's findings were published, and nine recommendations were made.
- 3.4. One of nine recommendations asked the Council to consider moving to a four yearly "all out" electoral cycle as an alternative to the current system. Peers determined this view having heard from a number of officers and councillors who described how the current system can impact on strategic decision making and direction.
- 3.5. Peers recognised the opportunity to consider the election cycle alongside Southend's ward boundary review, which will require an 'all out' or whole council election in the first year after implementation (to take place in May 2026). The timetable for the ward boundary requires a decision on the preferred election cycle by 9th July 2024.
- 3.6. At the Council meeting on 19 October 2023, Council gave approval to consult and ask residents and partners for their views on the election cycle. A nine-week public consultation was conducted with cross-party collaboration and support on the survey design and engagement plan. The full results are available in the appendices.

4. Evidence

- 4.1. The results of public consultation are advisory only, and form just one element of wider considerations and context for Council to make an informed and considered decision. A summary of the evidence is presented below.

	Whole-Council election support	Elections by thirds support
4.2. Local Government Association	The Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) recommended that Council consider moving to a four yearly whole council electoral cycle. Peers determined this view having heard from officers, councillors and partners who described how the current system can impact on strategic decision making and direction.	
4.3. Ward Boundary Review	The upcoming Ward Boundary Review will require a whole council election in the first year after implementation (May 2026). Most councils that decide to change their election cycle do so at this opportunity as it reduces duplication of resources and capacity in adapting to first whole council elections twice.	
4.4. Electoral Commission	A 2004 Electoral Commission report concluded whole-council elections provide a clear, equitable and easy to understand electoral process which would best serve the interests of local government electors. The Commission recommended that each local authority in England hold whole-council elections.	
4.5. Best Value Guidance	On 8 th May 2024, government published new Best Value Guidance. It states: 'All-out as opposed to multiple elections within the four-year cycle can enhance political stability and reduce ongoing campaigning that can hinder improvement.' (these opportunities were also raised by some residents in the Southend consultation).	

<p>4.6. Neighbouring Councils</p>	<p>At a Special Council meeting on Wednesday 31st January 2024, Castle Point Borough Council (District) voted in favour of a change to whole council elections every 4 years from 2nd May 2024, following their ward boundary review.</p> <p>The Commissioner’s Best Value Inspection Report at Thurrock Council (Unitary) have recommended a whole Council election. Government have now ordered the Council to change its cycle. Thurrock will move to whole Council elections from 2025. More details are provided below.</p> <p>Medway Council (Unitary) holds whole council elections.</p>	<p>Rochford, Basildon and Brentwood District Councils elect in thirds.</p>
<p>4.7. English Unitary Councils</p>	<p>Over the past 20 years, local government has seen a growing shift from election in thirds (where 58% of unitary councils elected in thirds) towards whole council elections (where 77% of unitary councils are now electing all their members once every four years).</p>	<p>23% of unitary councils hold elections in thirds.</p>
<p>4.8. Best Value Inspectors</p>	<p>The Commissioners report¹ into the failings in Thurrock noted an environment in which Thirds and No Overall Control (political control) led to challenges: <i>This short-termism is driven, in large part, by a combination of Thurrock’s fine political balance, exacerbated by holding elections ‘by thirds’ which results in an election taking place in three out of every four years... We have heard consistently that work to bring members’ attention to the big strategic issues is only possible for a few months each year, as they quickly go back into</i></p>	

¹ [Thurrock Council Best Value Inspection Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

	<i>'election mode' for the following year.</i>	
4.9. Southend partners and businesses	<p>Partners were unanimous in their support for changing to a whole council election cycle. Seven partners cited benefits of a more strategic and longer-term approach to policy and project implementation, for financial prudence and the positive opportunity of not losing momentum during the pre- and post-election period.</p> <p>All partner comments can be read in full in Appendix B</p>	No partners supported a thirds system.
4.10. Southend-on-Sea City Council employees	<p>Council employees were asked to consider the change in the context of efficient ways of working.</p> <p>Staff identified the opportunity to increase productivity during the period from pre-election to administration forming and aligning to new portfolio structures.</p> <p>Council staff identified more potential opportunities for more capacity and efficient ways of working through a whole council election cycle including more time to implement the Council's Corporate Plan, more opportunity to agree key long-term strategies such as the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan, the ability to maintain budget discussions over a longer period of time and financial savings in running elections as well as the time taken by staff to facilitate them.</p>	Staff noted the potential for the thirds cycle to increase collaborative to smooth transition from one year to the next as well as the larger Cllr induction programme.
4.11. Resident consultation	<p>49.4% of residents were in favour of whole council elections.</p> <p>Residents who support whole council elections see the benefits of additional councillor time and</p>	<p>50.6% of residents are in favour of 'thirds'</p> <p>Residents who support thirds are concerned about councillor</p>

	<p>energy better placed in implementing change for the city, rather than canvassing.</p> <p>Residents have articulated through the consultation comments a preference for money spent on elections could be better allocated, such as on essential services.</p>	<p>accountability and responsiveness. Concerns about poor quality councillors and/or decisions being left for too long without an annual public vote (in some cases there appears a misunderstanding that councillors can be voted out after one year).</p>
	All resident comments can be read in full in Appendix C	
4.12. Financial and resource implications	<p>If the Council decided that elections should be held every four years, then a saving of circa £450k across that same period could be realised for the Council's budget (this takes account of possible by-elections).</p> <p>During the May 2024 local elections, around 600 staff members were involved. From helping to process postal votes, working in or visiting polling station to working at the count and inducting councillors. Capacity levels are impacted as a result.</p>	<p>Whole council elections may increase the number of by-elections with associated costs. However, this minimal cost has been considered in the saving identified.</p>
4.13. Carbon	<p>Reducing the election cycle from three into one, would allow opportunities to minimise the carbon impact of producing materials, as well as running, and taking part in elections.</p>	<p>By-elections would generate a carbon impact in the ward in which the election is taking place. Whole council may increase the likelihood of by-elections.</p>
4.14. Equalities	<p>The Electoral Commission's 2003 research found that "the apparent disparities and contradictions of the current pattern of electoral cycles are not, in themselves, of particular concern to us. However, our research has found significant evidence of confusion and misunderstanding which suggests that many electors</p>	

	<p>simply do not know when or why local elections are held in their area.”</p> <p>The Commission concluded that a pattern of whole-council elections for all authorities in England would provide a clear, equitable and easy to understand electoral process which would best serve the interests of local government electors.</p>	
--	--	--

5. Reason for recommendation

- 5.1. The Council agreed to accept the findings of the LGA’s Corporate Peer Challenge, considering the evidence and opportunities presented in this paper will fulfil that commitment.
- 5.2. It is recommended that, if Council decide to change the election cycle, that this is implemented in line with the ward boundary review which will already see a whole council election in May 2026, thereby reducing any duplication in the recourses and capacity required to implement another in the future.

6. Other Options

- 6.1. The decision as to whether to change the election cycle is a political one, the results of the consultation are advisory only.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. The Council’s annual revenue budget to fund the costs of local elections in a financial year is currently £132.8k. The Council receives Government grants to support the cost of General elections but not specifically for local elections. The Council does however receive Government grant funding for elections held at the same time/different times as local elections for elections such as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election.
- 7.2. The annual budget of £132.8k is used to part fund the net cost of elections (after the deduction of any applicable in-year Government grants from the gross cost) with the balance of funding coming from the Council’s electoral reserve. In one of the four years, there may be some ancillary or preparation costs but not the full costs of a local election and therefore there is a contribution from the revenue budget of £132.8k back to the electoral reserve to help support the cost of elections in the other three years.
- 7.3. The gross cost of the elections in 2022/23 and 2023/24 were respectively £280.4k and £271.1k. These were funded by the base budget of £132.8k, government grants and the electoral reserve. The average net annual cost of elections to the council’s budget across those two years was circa £225k.

- 7.4. The electoral reserve is currently being reviewed given the increasing costs associated with holding annual elections.
- 7.5. In addition, the significant decrease in productivity and staffing capacity during the election period cannot be underestimated and has not been financially costed.
- 7.6. It should be noted that by-elections are more likely to occur under a system of whole-Council elections. Under the Council's current arrangements, if a councillor resigns or dies within 6 months of their seat coming up for election, the election can be held at the same time as the annual cycle of elections in May, rather than separately as a by-election. Therefore, elections held 3 out of 4 years minimises the number of by-elections whereas elections every 4 years could increase the number of by-elections. Funding (£10,000) would need to be set aside each year to fund a possible by-election.
- 7.7. The savings achieved by the proposed changes to the electoral cycle arrangements would contribute towards meeting the Council's financial challenges both in terms of a direct financial contribution but also with increased staff productivity and capacity to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. The Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act 2007 ("The Act"), as amended by the Localism Act 2011, sets out a number of provisions in relation to elections including one enabling a council to vary the cycle of elections. The Act allows councils that elect by thirds to move to whole-Council elections. However, the law does not permit councils to move from elections by thirds to elections by halves.
- 8.2. For Council to consider the question of moving towards holding four-yearly elections, a public consultation exercise must be undertaken before any final decision was made. The results are advisory only.
- 8.3. This matter is now coming back to Council for a decision on whether to change the electoral pattern of the Council. In order for a change to be agreed, two thirds of councillors must vote in favour. In Southend-on-Sea City Council this equates to 34 councillors agreeing to a change.

9. Carbon Impact

- 9.1. See 4.12 above.

10. Equalities

- 10.1. An equalities impact assessment ensured that the consultation was carried out with due regard to facilitating participation by those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. In response, various groups

were identified and contacted with promotional material, including an Easy Read guide.

10.2. See 4.13 above.

11. Consultation

- 11.1. Residents, council employees and partners were asked to participate in a 9-week consultation. 1,190 responses were submitted. Whilst the consultation was not a referendum and the outcome is advisory only, time should be taken to carefully consider residents views. There was no strong preference from residents with 50.6% in favour of 'thirds' and 49.4% in favour of whole council elections, this equates to just 13 responses difference. Given the close outcome, the comments section provides useful insight and can be read in full at Appendix C. Council employees identified more opportunities for improved working in moving to a whole-council election cycle and 100% of partners supported whole-council elections. The details of this feedback can be read in Appendix B.
- 11.2. In addition to the information provided in Appendix A & C, we draw your attention to the design of the consultation, where group leaders took the decision to make the consultation as open and accessible as possible. This meant that registration was not required to participate and demographic or personal details about the participant were not collected. The risk of which is open to multiple responses balanced with fewer restrictions to participation.
- 11.3. However, date, time location and preference data points were analysed in order to identify any abuse of the system. Analysis does not suggest that large batches of entries were made in close succession.

12. Appendices

- Appendix A - Engagement plan
- Appendix B – Partner and Staff Consultation Results
- Appendix C – Public Consultation Results

Background paper: 19 October 2023 Full Council paper, Election Cycle change consultation

13. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	03/06/24
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	23/04/24
Executive Director(s)	Claire Shuter	23/04/24
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Cowan	31/05/24

Appendix A – Election Cycle Consultation 2024/25, Promotion and Engagement Plan

At the Council meeting on 19 October 2023, Council gave approval to consult. A nine-week public consultation was conducted with cross-party collaboration and support on the survey design and engagement plan.

Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides a specific power for local authorities to hold local “advisory polls”. The result of a Section 116 poll is not binding on the Council or any other entity. It is purely advisory. It does however provide evidence of the public’s views.

Section 116 provides the Council with function to determine who to engage/consult and how the engagement/consultation is to be conducted.

Group leaders collaborated in the design of both the survey and engagement plan. An agreed design principle was to create an accessible format to encourage understanding and engagement.

To ensure that the Council remained compliant with its equality duty as well as gaining the views of all groups within our communities, specific groups across the Equality Act’s protected characteristics received promotional material.

Social Media

Social media posts were scheduled across X/Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn through our social media management platform. In total 21 posts were made from November 14th to January 15th and they generated:

- Reach of 9,982 (this is the number of individuals who saw the posts: please note, Twitter doesn’t provide this figure on the native platform, so the reach here isn’t included)
- 175 direct clicks through to the survey page
- 58 shares, 51 likes
- 1.6 engagement rate (likes, shares, or comments by divided by the number of impressions - this is above the average of 1.2)

There were 4 posts on Nextdoor, which had 2,754 impressions combined, however the platform doesn’t share stats on linked clicks.

In addition to the above, staff members created and shared personal posts on LinkedIn promoting the consultation.

A short video was created and received 3,570 views on X/Twitter and Facebook.

Press

Media releases promoted the consultation with mention within the Leaders Blog and a piece in the Oracle magazine. The story featured in local papers including the Echo.

The consultation was also promoted via the digital bus signed across the city for the duration of the consultation.

Newsletters

The consultation was promoted in several newsletters which Council officer's coordinate and reaches various individuals and groups across Southend. Messages were sent in:

Cems and crems Community Safety Partnership Elective Home Education Family Centres Food safety Fraud alerts General news (14k subscribers)	Internal comms Southend Council Employee Networks Livewell Southend Schools Southend Business Partnership Southend SEND Southend museums also displayed posters
--	---

External organisations

Several external organisations were also asked to promote the consultation within their networks and resident employees:

Arriva BID C2C Citizens Advice DWP Essex Chamber of Commerce Faith Network Fire Fusion Genting Greater Anglia HARP SEE Health Alliance IndiRock	Ipeco Ironworks Leigh Town Council Marlborough Highways Metal Olympus Osbournes Park Inn Police Pride Project Southchurch Rossi SAVS Southend Business Partnership	South Essex College South Essex Homes Southend Airport Southend Carers Southend District Pensioners Association Southend United Football Club Stockvalue Group Surgical Holdings The Roslin Trust Links University of Essex YMCA
---	--	---

Interactive engagement

Interactive engagement activity included:

- An online presentation with the Economic Crisis and Recovery Group.
- In person facilitated discussion with Southend Youth Council.
- In person facilitated discussion with SAVS hosted Over 55's event.
- Online presentation and discussion with SAVS hosted for VCFSE members.
- In addition, a lesson plan pack was designed for schools who wished to discuss the topic with their older students.

Appendix B – Election Cycle Consultation 2024/25, Partners & Staff Feedback

The election cycle consultation asked residents for their views on how often they would like to vote for their local councillors. During the same period partners to Southend-on-Sea City Council and staff at the Council were provided with the opportunity to participation from the perspective of their day to day working with the Council.

Partners were asked:

We would like to know, as a key stakeholder to the Council, whether the election cycle has a positive or negative bearing on your interaction and business with us, and as a result what your preferred approach would be.

Seven partners responded including representatives from prominent local private business and the voluntary and community sector.

All partners were in favour of a whole council election process.

A universal reason provided was the belief that a whole council election system would provide more stable leadership and the ability for longer-term planning and implementation of policy and projects.

Additional reasons included the need for financial prudence and the positive opportunity of not losing momentum during the pre-election period.

Each of the responses are provided in full below:

1	<p>Our organisation, and those within the sector who interact with the Council, would benefit from a more politically stable setting in Southend. A whole council election once every four years would provide the opportunity to better plan and collaborate on a longer-term basis. The administration and Councillors would benefit from greater confidence as elected members. A 4 year cycle provides more accountability, as the Council has a greater opportunity to implement its commitments. This in turn would enable a more financially resilient SCC with better planning, no longer vulnerable to volatile administration changes and varying impacts on sectors in which it supports.</p> <p>There is a strong argument that a clear financial benefit is to be had running a four yearly election across the city compared to three in every four years, with less disruption and the removal of pre-election period each year where we have experienced instances of momentum loss across many work streams.</p> <p>However, moving to a new four year cycle would require significant local messaging and communications campaign to ensure understanding and provide clarity on the process at the ballot box.</p>
2	<p>Whole council elections would bring us more in line with Government General Elections, which brings consistency with General and Local. It also gives each party the opportunity to develop and implement any policies within that time frame. This hopefully would bring people to come forward to vote for what party they believe will be better for the development of their City.</p>

3	Stability and clarity are key for us.
4	Whole council elections allow for progress and more stability, in what seems like an environment of conflict between local politicians. The downside of course being, if someone does a poor job!
5	Our business outlook is one which is based on establishing and working on stakeholder relationships that are long term, so if we had a preference and I'm not entirely sure that we do, it would be for council elections to be as far apart as possible.
6	The option of moving to a four yearly, all up, election cycle would be our preferred option. Not only would this hold the potential for a more strategic and longer-term approach to the planning of investment decisions by elected Members but, on a practical note, it might also enable some more certainty and consistency in terms of the Council's partner representatives. At present, this means that our Board, can often experience annual changes of personnel and this does not assist long term political consistency and contribution into the Board.
7	Our organisation is strongly in favour of changing to a four-yearly election cycle. We believe this avoids the potential scenario where the authority is almost permanently in either pre-election or post-election mode (soon to be followed by another pre-election period). A four-yearly cycle should mean more stability and focus, affording the council time to develop and implement its plans without constant distractions or changes of course.

Southend-on-Sea City Council staff were asked to take part in a focus group session on 9th January 2024. At the session officers were asked to discuss the operational impact of both options, what strengths they felt existed and whether they identified any weaknesses to ways of working.

Thirteen officers took part and represented various departments across the Council including highways, planning, procurement, adult and children’s social care, and corporate functions such as finance, HR and ICT.

A summary of the key points identified is presented below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Thirds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cross party working takes part to enable smoother transition from one year to the next and this is considered to be a collaborative and positive way of working. • More regular election campaigning provides councillors opportunity to engage with the public and understand their needs and preferences which can feed into policy and service design (however, it was recognised that whole election cycle itself doesn’t prevent Cllrs from regularly engaging with the public). 	<p>Thirds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning and adjusting to new portfolio structures each year takes time and officer capacity. • During Adult and children’s services inspections a graded judgement will be provided on leadership. Officers are required to provide assurance evidence of how stability is maintained within the context of frequent changes in political leadership.
<p>Whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Corporate Plan that is published for a longer period of tenure than the timetable currently allows for. Which means less ambiguity during the shorter time no Corporate Plan is published. • More opportunity to agree longer term documents such as the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan which have a longer development period. • Budget conversations can happen on a rolling basis throughout the year. • Financial saving. Staff are finding efficiency savings in their ways of working. This feels like an opportunity for Councillors, and staff connected to running elections, to do the same. • Less pressure on staffing capacity to facilitate regular elections and formations of each new municipal year. • Better engagement on induction programme. 	<p>Whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger induction programme to manage. However, it was considered that greater engagement would be a benefit which would outweigh the logistical organisation.

In summary, staff identified more potential opportunities for efficient ways of working through a whole council election cycle than is currently experienced with ‘thirds’.

This page is intentionally left blank

Election Cycle Consultation Analysis

Report prepared by D Skinner

Summary

The consultation consisted of three optional questions; 1) to provide a preference between the two election cycles, 2) to provide a Southend postcode, and 3) a free text comments box. The online system did not require registration and no personal details were collected, whilst this means that individuals taking part can not be verified, it did create an open and accessible survey resulting in large levels of engagement.

A total of 2,600 people accessed the campaign which ran from 13 November 2023 to 15 January 2024 of that 1,131 responded online, the rest were aware, informed but chose not to comment. Residents who participated by email, telephone or post were notified that their contribution was added to the consultation, this was done by creating an online record, and this forms part of the 1,131 responses. At the peak of the consultation, over 320 visits were made per day. In addition, 59 paper format (hardcopy) responses were collected from the libraries.

Of the 1,131 completed responses 24 individuals responded from a postcode either outside the city or with an entry that could not be identified as a postcode being part of the city. These 24 responses have not been included in the numbers, however where a comment has been added, this has been included for information within the Appendix. One response, which did have a valid postcode did not provide a preference between the two options and also left the comments box blank.

The combined totals of all responses was 1,190, of which 24 have been removed and 1 was blank. 1,165 responses have been included in the charts below.

The consultation was promoted across social media and was available on the Councils interactive consultation portal <https://yoursay.southend.gov.uk/> it was also made available in a hardcopy format if requested. We also provided hardcopy questionnaires in all libraries across the city. The consultation also included a video explaining the process, posters and an Easy Read element was produced.

Date, time, location, and preference data points were analysed in order to identify any abuse of the system given traditional methods of preventing duplication were not instated for this consultation. Analysis does not suggest that the system was abused.

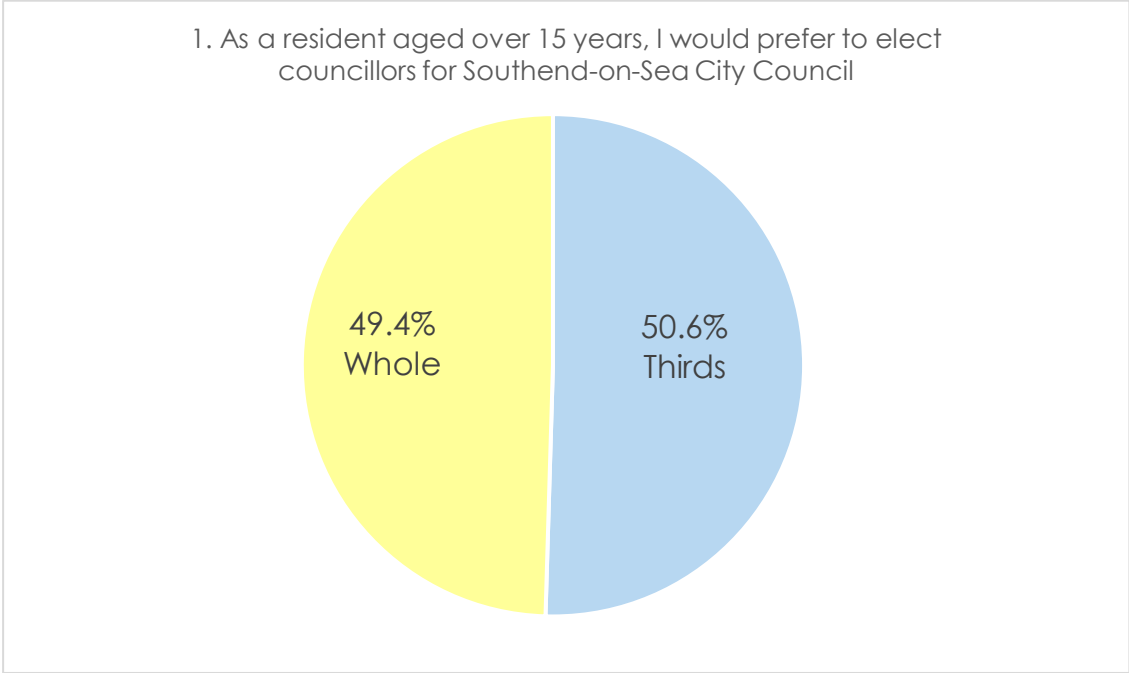
Conclusion

There was no overall consensus from all those responding on the voting system with both choices of 'in thirds' and 'once every four years' very close throughout the consultation process.

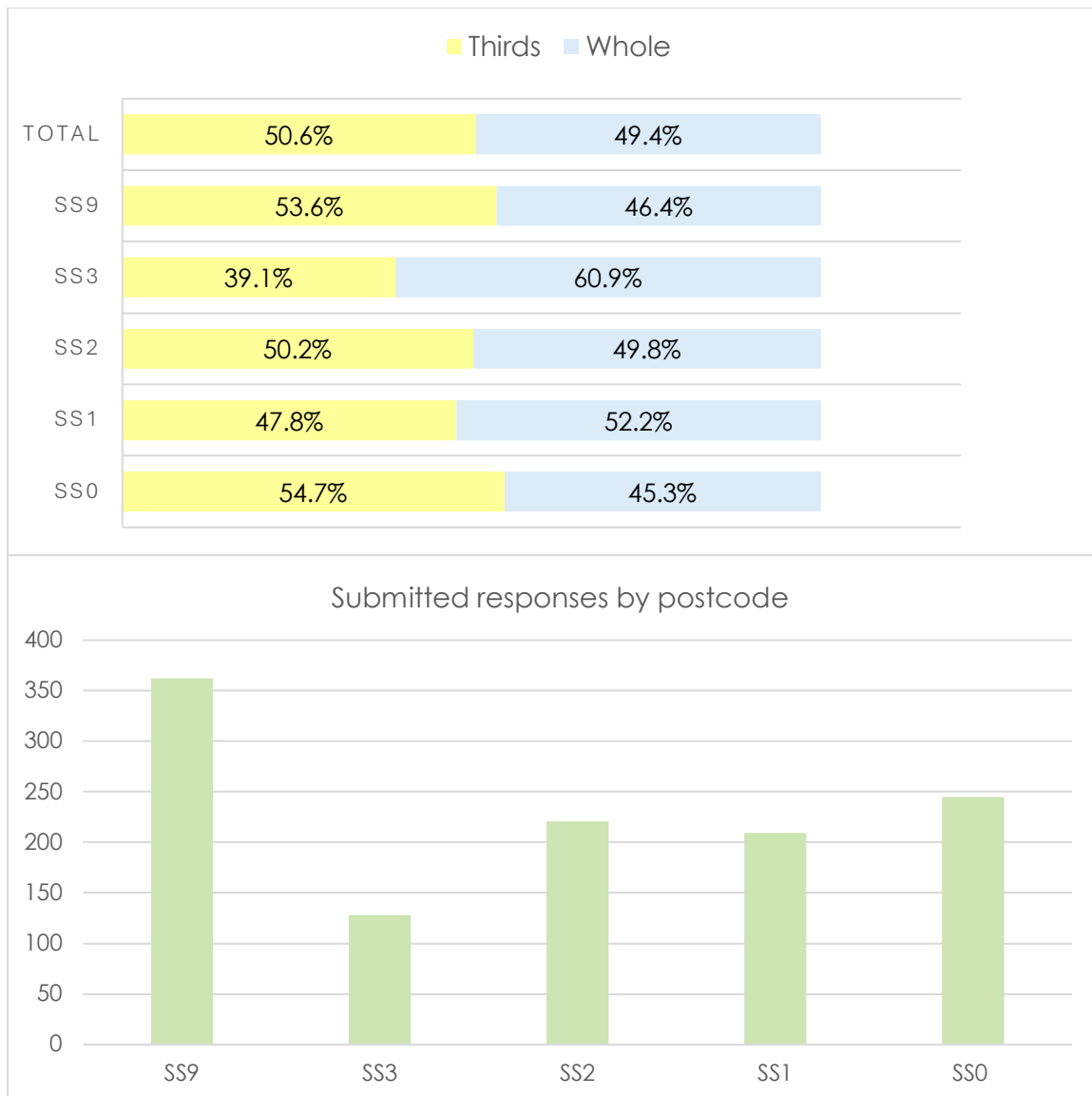
Full Breakdown of questions

- 1. As a resident aged over 15 years, I would prefer to elect councillors for Southend-on-Sea City Council

1,165 online and library valid responses have been counted. Of which 50.6% support 'thirds' and 49.4% support 'once every four years'. This equates to **just 13 responses difference** between the two options.



A breakdown of preferred option by postcode area is presented below with the overall numbers of entries per postcode.



2. If you have any further comments you would like to make about your response, please tell us using the space below*

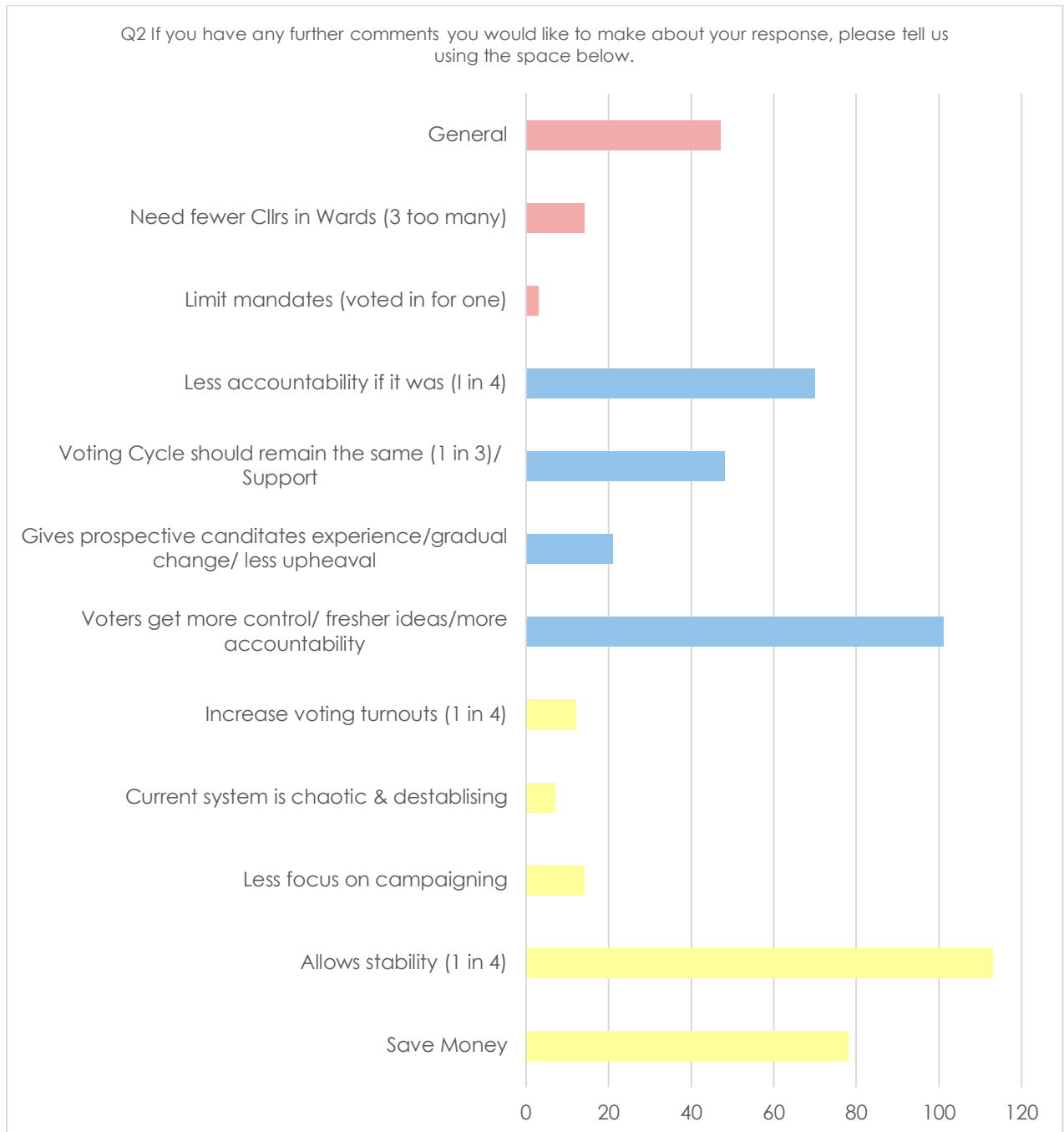
This was a free text question with 432 individuals commenting, these have been grouped together by theme, and split into whether the comments were relating to 'one thirds' (blue in chart) or one in four years' (yellow in chart). 21% of those responding indicated that choosing 1 in 4 allows stability and a chance to get projects completed, with 15% saying it will save money.

However, 19% believed that thirds allows for fresher ideas, more accountability with voters having more control over those that are perceived to be 'not delivering' on what they were elected and 13% stating they felt there would be less accountability if Councillors were in for the four years.

The comments shown in pink on the graph were not linked to either of the options of 'One in four (whole)' or 'in thirds', of the general comments received (which also linked to neither specific option) individuals would like to see 'a development of standards for councillors'

and some suggestions included ‘it should be compulsory to attend at least 75% of meetings they are invited to attend’, ‘a report provided at the end of their term documenting their personal improvements to the ward they represent’. Three comments have not been published or included as they were not appropriate.

*The full comments received from the online element of the consultation can be found in Appendix C1, the responses from those responding in paper format (hardcopy) can be found in Appendix C2.



Appendix C1

We had 411 comments from individuals online these have been grouped together in themes, below is the full submission of comments. There was 21 who stated no or n/a and three comments not published as they were not appropriate.

Full comment		
1.	Moving to thirds would enable cabinets to spend more time on seeing through manifesto pledges, rather than concentrate on ensuring they are re-elected.	In thirds
2.	It would save money to have elections once every 4 years.	Whole
3.	Once every 4 years to save money on the election process but also for Councillors to focus on the long term rather than short term thinking just for votes.	Whole
4.	Elections should be less frequent to allow the elected party time to implement their ideas and strategy's to the City of Southend instead of political campaign to get peoples votes. For example the Labour and Lib Dem coalition proposed a fortnightly bin collection which would save the Council money and the Conservatives were very much against this and promises were made that this would not go ahead however now in power fortnightly collections are back on the table.	Whole
5.	Electing in thirds gives voters more direct control of the council, and forces councillors to remain in active contact with the electorate. Those parties and groups which fail to deliver on promises made can be more quickly removed from power.	In thirds
6.	Four years is too long for local Councillors and they may become uninterested in certain policies and not act in the Cities best interest out of a lack of interest. A quicker turnover allows for fresh ideas instead of the same old same old	In thirds
7.	Changing to once every 4 years is far more stable and economical with political consistency on offer to almost all groups and individuals.	Whole
8.	What consideration will be given to proportional representation to select 3 councillors for a particular ward?	General
9.	Keep the voting system as it currently is	In thirds
10.	The current system frustrates longer term plans and thinking. Many of the problems facing Southend require strategic changes that take time to implement. Councillors need more time to make a difference rather than worrying about regular elections. Change is needed	Whole
11.	I believe we need political stability. The current system contributes to toxicity and does not allow for longer term planning or accountability for seeing commitments through. The constant risk of a new administration overturning the decisions of the last risks poor use of public funds.	Whole
12.	I think counsellors should be elected for only one mandate not renewable.	General
13.	More time for elected members to actually plan things out and deliver rather than use all their energy on campaigning to be elected/stay in power most of a given year.	Whole
14.	Four year voting pattern would reduce election costs and provide for a more stable council which is clearly not the case under the current system	Whole
15.	I strongly support a 3 year cycle	In thirds
16.	Having the option to change those elected regularly, makes sure they stick to their promises and the needs of the people without being complacent. Southend High Street is a mess and needs someone to take the bull by the horns and sort it once and for all. Provide better shops, more things for kids to do, they are the future, and lower rents to make the high street a must place to be.	In thirds

17.	I believe a once every four year election will provide stability in decision making as councillors/controlling parties will not play safe or even not back more controversial decisions as they are forever in fear of losing control etc the next year. We desperately need this 4 year cycle to bring this town back to the once great place it was.	Whole
18.	I believe that electing councillors every four years will allow better and more considered/strategic decision making which will be of benefit to the council, residents, and the city.	Whole
19.	Councillors need to know that they will be held accountable and that residents have a strong voice	General
20.	In addition to the information for having council elections of one third of the councillors every year it allows new prospective councillor candidates a chance to gain experience canvassing every year rather than every four years, and allows such candidates more opportunity to stand for election, as many candidates are unsuccessful on their first election attempt.	In thirds
21.	A lot of time and money is spent on elections. One election every four years makes more sense to me than elections every year.	Whole
22.	Electing in all ups produces lazy representatives, who only talk to their residents during election years. It is also a huge shift away from our current level of Democracy, as four-yearly elections produce 'flash in the pan' Administrations that are only truly representative of Southend's political opinion during their first year of term.	General
23.	Which method is the cheapest?	General
24.	My decision is based on what I THINK would be the most cost effective by reducing admin and potentially the 'greenest' option. It is also a clearer defined and understandable cycle of voting.	Whole
25.	This has all been very hush hush. More volume on these important potential procedural changes please.	General
26.	The current system seems chaotic and destabilising. Far better to secure new governance as a whole unit than in a rolling manner.	Whole
27.	Allows for longer term planning	Whole
28.	As it is the standards committee has no teeth. Voting is the only way to hold our councillors to account	General
29.	I think going to all out elections would lead to less accountability and more uncertainty for residents. Elections three out of fours mean a 17 year old only has to wait a maximum of two years to vote whereas with all out elections they may not be able to vote until 21 which leads to lack of engagement.	General
30.	I think elections in thirds encourages more local accountability	In thirds
31.	By thirds encourages councillors to engage more with constituents	
32.	The current system appears to me to create too much opportunity for political wrangling with little opportunity for "doing". An every four years system may allow incumbent councillors to effect their energies in solving local challenges. And using the arising impact over time, councillors and their opposition can more constructively argue for re-election.	Whole
33.	why change what is working perfectly well	In thirds
34.	WE NEED TO MAKE SAVINGS AND THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO ACHIEVE THAT. ALSO HAVING COUNCILLORS FOR 4 YEARS WILL BE BETTER FOR THE CITY	Whole
35.	Undemocratic to change to all every 4 years - penalises anyone who may miss out on being elected who has to wait 4 years to retry! Also, 16 and 17 year olds,	General

	so just below voting age, have to wait years to vote rather than when they reach 18.	
36.	Southend City Council has 51 councillors. This is the same number as New York City!! So, why is there 3 councillors per ward? If we assumed that each councillor is drawing £20,000 per year in allowances and expenses, we could save the city's council tax payers well over half a million pounds per year by just having one councillor per ward. As the city council is almost bankrupt, this would seem a to be very quick and easy saving, which would have no impact whatsoever on public services.	General
37.	This would certainly save money	General
38.	Believe that by holding whole council election every 4 years more people will be fully engaged and aware of the elections	Whole
39.	Whilst I do see plenty of positives in having all out elections, having elections done in thirds means more ability to hold parties to account on a more regular basis.	In thirds
40.	fully support 4 years for Long term planning and opportunity to deliver on that plan. too many changes are bought about with the currents thirds and change in political parties	Whole
41.	It will save costs and provide stability	Whole
42.	The current debacle at Leigh Town Council provides ample evidence that the electorate is not well served when a group takes overall control of a council without the understanding, competence or integrity to listen to voters, act in their interests or carry out basic tasks – how can voters redress this situation without waiting 4 years?	General
43.	Changing the whole council causes disruption, lack of continuity and places more workload on council officers....	In thirds
44.	Wards do not require 3 councillors if the Council officers are not supportive of communicating with councillors. Our councillors tell me that communication with council officers is far reduced that it used to be.... My vote, therefore is to reduce the amount of councillors in each ward to one person. Save the Council money as well.	In thirds
45.	It makes more sense and is cheaper and less disruptive,	Whole
46.	Elections once every four years would reduce political parties / candidates / Councillors engagement with voters. A large number of the public have the view that they only hear from Councillors or candidates at election time. With a major swing in political opinions over four years a large number of Councillors would be new, possibly inexperienced with a lack of mentors to guide them leaving them to be Officer led and controlled. If you end up with a bad or incompetent bunch what means are there to remove them before their four years are up? With so much Councillor training to be undertaken early on in a term too much control would be left to the Officers to do what they want, rather than implementing Councillors policies. In a multi Councillor Ward a four yearly cycle would be an opportunity to scrap FPTP and introduce proportional representation for a more balanced and representative Council.	Whole
47.	Frequent elections give the public more control	In thirds
48.	Regular elections keep councillors accountable, and keep the chamber refreshed therefore driving progress each year in a stable manner – no sudden big change of the whole council every 4 years to destabilise	In thirds
49.	I feel that the status quo is reasonable	In thirds

50.	The longer cycle will allow for continuity and time to progress policies. Voting all at once might give stability and avoid the problem of control changing with more frequent and partial elections of half the council that we currently have. The real problem, of course, is having decent people who know what they are doing elected. Changing the frequency of elections won't change this.	Whole
51.	keeps councillors on their toes though some still get in but do nothing for their community. They should all be monitored	In thirds
52.	The change would be positive as it would provide more time for the administration to work on major challenges rather than be in campaign mode from year to year, the staff and financial savings will also help with making a difference to Southend residents.	Whole
53.	Once every 4 years makes them complacent	In thirds
54.	I feel that I would have a closer connection with the council and its members if I was to vote in thirds..	In thirds
55.	Thirds allow for experienced councillors to remain, while all up elections risk having brand new officials every cycle. Thirds also mean that the current council administration cannot become complacent as they could lose power at any point.	In thirds
56.	I believe it would encourage more people to vote. Encourage longer term planning. Elections are expensive and disruptive.	Whole
57.	I believe this approach leads to more stability, as any changes amongst elected members are gradual and smoothed out, whereas a whole council change every four years can lead to sudden changes of direction, which leads to more erratic government.	Whole
58.	Lazy councillors would get away with doing nothing if every 4 years	In thirds
59.	Staggering the elections provides better continuity I believe	In thirds
60.	It is , I believe essential that we may continue to elect our Ward Councillors in thirds. This is because it provides the electors with the opportunity to change their vote annually. This is often necessary as a week is a long time in politics, and over a year Councillor's personal circumstances can change in terms of their physical and mental health and even their political views may alter. Also, voting each year for three years in a row helps to encourage a higher turnout as Councillor's are motivated to keep in touch with their local residents more often.	In thirds
61.	Elections need to stay as they are. I know costs need to be cut but this is not where that should happen.	In thirds
62.	I believe that electing Councillors in thirds allows electors to more rapidly show their views regarding councillors policies and activities than if they can only vote once every four years. Furthermore, I believe that National politics should play no part in Local Government, and I believe that electing councillors in thirds will provide greater stability and resistance to the influences of National party politics.	In thirds
63.	This will save a considerable amount of money as elections are costly (especially as turnout is woefully low) and give the councillors more time for some long term planning and action rather than short term ideas to gain favour at the next election.	Whole
64.	I feel that all up elections tun the risk of having a lot of inexperienced councillors elected at once, which could damage the way the city is rub. Thirds means that new councillors can be shown the ropes and mentored by their more experienced colleagues. Also, thirds means that the public can show their confidence/displeasure at the leadership of the council every year, meaning those in charge will work harder to run the city for the benefit of everyone	In thirds

65.	There should be exams that prospective councillors have to pass before they are allowed to stand. They are responsible for spending vast sums of money, some of it mine, and any Tom, Dick or Harriet can make a mess of things under the current rules.	General
66.	Allowing an elected council 4 years to have a good run at projects to improve the city is better than chopping and changing regularly which I feel leads to frequent directional changes and lack of accountability.	Whole
67.	The recent poor behaviour in the chamber, which in my view clearly follows the terrible lead given by national government and certain local councillors mimicking this behaviour, should not detract from the best way for local democracy to move forwards. Notwithstanding the vagaries of coalitions, a 4 year cycle builds in some medium term certainty but also an adverse sense of medium term entitlement in a city with no completely dominant political party. I prefer the regular thirds where people might actually seek to work cross party in the short, medium of long term interests of our city. This arrangement also keeps the public in touch with local democracy and our politicians accountable.	General
68.	I think this is a much better option for Southend and its residents in terms of providing more stability and structure and saving associated election costs.	Whole
69.	I believe that voting in thirds is more likely to produce consensus Govt	In thirds
70.	Electing in thirds provides continuity and gradual change. Electing once every 4 years has the risk of a complete upheaval.	In thirds
71.	The in thirds ensures accountability	In thirds
72.	It is a shame that Council business is always reported and quoted in the Echo when staff are not always told and some things should be private. For example the data breach and also the Chief Exec leaving suddenly.	General
73.	This approach (every 4 years) is in line with county approaches and allows elected members the chance to embed policies rather than feeling forced to produce short term initiatives. It will also reduce the burden on the council and residents to host and respond to elections every third.	Whole
74.	Once every 4 years means there will be more swings according to national events. Thirds gives more stability.	Whole
75.	1/3 at a time is a Much fairer way,	In thirds
76.	I prefer thirds as this means I have a "voice" when moving into an area, rather than waiting 4 years before I can influence choices.	In thirds
77.	Constant change doesn't help a governing body to implement policies, or allow the voters long enough to evaluate their success or failure. Four years is a long time and certainly long enough to prove if the group are achieving what they promised to do. Our government uses a five years maximum and that works ok (but proportional representation would be fairer).	Whole
78.	I find the current system is totally disruptive to the way the Council does its business and more settled periods between elections would allow the Councillors and the Executive to develop strategies rather than the current chop and change with our largely militant Council Officers eventually holding sway. I would also urge more respect from Councillors but also allow Council employees to be scrutinised for their work ethic and effectiveness and face the same tests as in private industry	Whole
79.	To have the political balance of the Town change, potentially yearly, is a disaster.	General
80.	I'd like to be able to remove a whole council if they are not fit to serve, not just a 3rd of the incumbent.	General
81.	It makes sense to do the same as most councils	General

82.	Pros and Cons to both but feel this cycle falls in line with general elections - would also streamline wards abc councillors per ward as too many	General
83.	I do not want to have to wait four years before being able to affect change if a council is not being effective. Perhaps holding elections for the whole council every two or three years instead of four would be better.	In thirds
84.	I think that electing councillors in thirds is democratic and allows voters to hold their elected representatives to account robustly. I feel that it enables greater representation and voter interest in local democracy.	In thirds
85.	Having 4 year cycles means keeping ineffective councillors in place without the opportunity to remove them.	In thirds
86.	stability, cost efficiency. current sysytem too much change to administration.	Whole
87.	we need less councillors, 51, 3 in each ward, ridiculous. too many councillors equals too much expense.	General
88.	Every year the majority changes and so do all the plans. By having a fixed council for 4 years, might mean that the council can make changes that WILL benefit the people.	Whole
89.	By changing to 4 year elections, will give the elected member a better chance to change Southend, currently we are seeing a big turnover of power and nothing gets changed due to this, The changing power struggle within Southend is having a detrimental effect to the City and something needs to change.	Whole
90.	Voting in thirds is in my mind the only way the voting public have any say in how the council is actually performing. Once every four years is to long to change things.	In thirds
91.	I believe thirds would give better and more democratic representation. With residents able to show their views based on regular performance rather being effectively locked out of involvement and decision making for 4 years.	In thirds
92.	your creating more spots to charge people. you must be stopped	General
93.	Every four years allows longer term thinking for the city, focussing more time on getting things done rather than preparing for, holding and then adjusting to outcomes of elections.	Whole
94.	I feel doing thirds make councillors more accountable	In thirds
95.	Local issues/ views are very often overtaken by national ones - my only concern is that holding a local election near to a national general one could risk being counter productive to meeting local needs. Given that 2024 looks set for a national election personally would not hold the first of a four year local election cycle in same year as political messaging at a national level will likely drown out local issues -suggest year after in 2025 - that said still perfectly appropriate to have a "thirds" local election in 2024 (if it isn't a fallow year).	General
96.	I would like to see proportional representation in this country	General
97.	Too many councillors per ward	General
98.	The 4 year cycle will allow more focussed decisions and remove the constant change of direction	Whole
99.	Elections are not the only way to hold politicians into account. The Council's constitution should include provisions for calling back Cllrs and trigger a by election if a set limit of signatures is achieved. It should also include provisions to allow citizens to trigger discussions at Council or even referenda. Ancient Athenians believed that sortition and not elections was the bedrock of democracy. The Council could introduce a citizens' assembly which will be made entirely of citizens picked at random and to begin with could have an advisory role to the Council or even given part of the decision making for the Council.	General

100.	Regardless of colour, I believe for the city to thrive we need to stop the constant deadlock that the current system encourages.	General
101.	This allows for more stability within the control of the administration to help get work agreed quicker and will be a cost benefit to the council to not have to run 3 out of 4 years to elect 1/3rd of the councillors each time. If it can be brought in line with general elections this would be even more beneficial.	Whole
102.	it would be great if we not waste limited council money on election's every year	Whole
103.	should keep it all as it is, no problems present system and council will save money by not changing things.	In thirds
104.	Electing in thirds stops large swings from one party to another	In thirds
105.	We rarely see two of our three councillors now, unless an election is due or they are picking up a bit of litter. One the other hand, one councillor is very visible and active Why do we need 3 councillors in Belfair's and other wards. Reduce the numbers and have elections every two years rather than 3 out of 4. This will reduce councillor costs and election costs.	General
106.	Elections every four years would make elected officials lazy and make it harder for local parties to find candidates	In thirds
107.	People need to be in post for a good fixed term in order to make a difference	Whole
108.	I think it will provide better continuity	Whole
109.	We need continuity in the council leadership. All out wouldn't give that	In thirds
110.	Cost saving at this time has to be a primary concern.	Whole
111.	Having seen the shameful shambles at Leigh Town Council I would fear having to put up with this level of absurdity for 4 years with no recourse to change anything at SCC	General
112.	It is more cost affective , we should spend this money on more important issues like children's welfare	Whole
113.	A limit on the number of mandates councillors can be elected for needs to be introduced	General
114.	Thirds allows for regular democratic representation and less shock adjustment than replacing councillors en-bloc	In thirds
115.	I am a Councillor for Leigh Town Council and have considered whether the four year cycle is beneficial in that regard. LTC has become a political body for the first time due to an influx of party members who have formed a group pre-empting decisions at meetings of that group outside of and prior to formal Council meetings. There has been much publicity regarding the effect of this, not least in the Echo newspaper today (16th November). I therefore cannot agree that four yearly full Councillor elections are a good idea since the intolerable situation at LTC will now continue for another three and a half years before the very angry voters have any chance to change things. I would in fact now prefer that one third of our number be obliged to stand for election for three years with a fallow fourth year as is the case with City now. I cannot support change at City for these reasons, the benefit of frequent partial elections is clear.	In thirds
116.	I support electing councillors in thirds every year instead of all at once every four years for more effective governance and better representation. Electing councillors in thirds ensures a consistent turnover of officials and a mix of experienced councillors and fresh perspectives, promoting greater accountability by allowing more opportunities for voters to evaluate performance, leading to a more balanced representation of diverse community needs. This system allows for a more focused and efficient election process, leading to more informed voter choices and higher engagement.	In thirds

117.	3rds makes it more democratic and responsive to the community's genuine views and prevents complacency and entitlement among Councillors while disrupting the likelihood of apathy developing in voters.	In thirds
118.	I think this would lead to more stability at the Council	Whole
119.	Elections by thirds makes the Council more accountable. It prevents one party dominating the system. The quality of councillors is likely to be better with thirds (hard to believe, I know, but things could get worse as parties will struggle to find enough suitable candidates, unless the no. of Cllrs is significantly reduced).	In thirds
120.	By doing it in 1/3rds you have some continuity. Experience is needed as well as some younger fresher ideas.	In thirds
121.	Agree on 'all out' elections to provide stability within the council.	Whole
122.	More consistency needed.	Whole
123.	If all councillors retired at the same time, there would be the risk of losing all experienced councillors together	General
124.	I think it makes the council more aware of the wishes of constituents so that they don't get complacent.	In thirds
125.	I hope that this means that there will be more joined up thinking and clear message from voters on how the city council works for the Community.	Whole
126.	Makes political parties more accountable	In thirds
127.	It really makes sense electing the Council in thirds - inevitably the views of residents change regarding their support for political parties and electing in thirds will reflect this ever changing outlook in who represents us on the Council.	In thirds
128.	It would cut tax payers cost and improve consistency and stability	Whole
129.	3 out of 4 year voting is expensive. Once in 4 years would save thousands.	Whole
130.	Imagine being stuck for four years with a useless council group as in the coalition just gone by.	In thirds
131.	If the system works why change it!	In thirds
132.	every time there is a vote for the council all work seems to stop and no decisions are made so that it is not deemed that a decision has been made to sway the electorate, the council grinds to a halt. this happens every year on a vote a third in each year but if we went to every 4 years then this would only happen every 4 years and those in power would have the ability to choose a plan, stick to it and follow it through for the whole 4 years.	Whole
133.	I prefer to vote in thirds as I feel this gives the voter more say in the makeup of the council	In thirds
134.	Would be good if they all stood at the same time	Whole
135.	Every four years would save election costs and perhaps increase the pathetic turnout. I would like to make all elections compulsory with a "None of the above" on every ballot paper. Every four years would bring stability to council	Whole
136.	With a lack of money available for all council services, it makes sense to save money by changing to every four years rather than the current system of incurring costs three times in a four year period.	Whole
137.	More democratic	In thirds
138.	Renewing the council in thirds makes sense and provides for some semblance of continuity, To renew the whole council en-bloc every four years could lead to chaos if the political situation was volatile enough.	In thirds
139.	Political opinions, especially on which party to support at various times, change all the time. Electing a third of councillors every year gives residents the opportunity to quickly change the political colour and policies of our council every year rather than having to wait four years for an all-out election to bring about change.	In thirds

140.	The present system allows for regular democratic opinion to be given in a way that means our views are heard across the years. Restricting this to once every four years would effectively limit our ability to express our democratic will and hold the council to account.	In thirds
141.	For continuity	Whole
142.	One year isn't enough time for a candidate to make change.	Whole
143.	Every 4 years gives too much control to any one political party for too long a period. Elections every year for a proportion of councillors helps to ensure the needs of the constituency voters are given higher priority than those of the councillor's political party. It helps to ensure councillors represent their voters wishes rather than their political affiliation.	Whole
144.	<p>Having lived in Southend-on-Sea for 17 years, it seems to me that the development and progress of the town is held back by the current electoral cycle. Having annual elections for one-third of councillors and the administrative changes that often result reduces the available time for delivery of work programmes that benefit the town and its residents. In a rapidly evolving world, local government needs stability and time to plan and implement its work. A four-year term of office gives the political leaders of Southend-on-Sea the best possible opportunity to achieve set goals.</p> <p>Retaining the current cycle will deliver more of the same: promised developments that drag on for years and then never happen because the macro-landscape has changed, abrupt policy changes when the balance of power shifts in May, kicking the can down the road in governance matters rather than making decisions, because the power may shift in less than a year.</p> <p>Ultimately remaining with the status quo threatens any meaningful accountability for local politicians' effectiveness either in administration or opposition. As citizens, we should be able to do this in a considered way when we go to the polls, but I believe it's hard for many residents to stay engaged with an electoral cycle which feels somewhat like playing the hokey cokey and necessitates a visit to the polling station every year.</p> <p>The argument that I've seen put forward by some councillors for retaining the current system is that it 'keeps them on their toes'. This feels bogus since the individual lengths of office remain the same and the impact is on the collective administration which is key to delivering governance. Disrupting governance (either in an administrative change stemming from the election results or from the months taken from the calendar to run elections) annually is unhelpful for Southend-on-Sea and hinders any real sustained progress.</p>	Whole
145.	There are benefits to both sides but the stability of a council leadership secured for a longer term is the strongest reason. Whatever your politics, stability is most important	Whole
146.	Good luck with your campaign	General
147.	The system with thirds used to provide a more efficient council, some years ago	In thirds
148.	The residents of the city do not want it changed. Elections three out of four mean a 17 year old only has to wait a maximum of two years to vote whereas with all out elections they may not be able to vote until 21 which leads to lack of engagement.	General
149.	I feel that by having elections in thirds provides for continuity and stability while still enabling changes to the political make up of the council.	In thirds
150.	I believe a 'once every four years' vote will bring stability and the opportunity for long-term planning, incorporating 'checks and balances' along the way with regard to election promises.	Whole

151.	I think this system would make councillors more accountable	Whole
152.	It would be a more sensible and a cost effective solution to have elections every four years. The 1/3 elections lead to coalitions which area often are poor electoral compromises. Turnouts are consistent low, probably from voter apathy, so it is time to change to something different.	Whole
153.	I. want maximum participation and accountability from my reps	General
154.	Likely to drive better public engagement with election.	Whole
155.	consistent decision making. cost effective.	Whole
156.	Southend has a vibrant democracy because we connect with our electorate every year. The last few years have been turbulent because we're going through a period of change, which will soon settle.	General
157.	All Cllrs should be elected in one election, all seats should be up at the next possible election.	General
158.	In thirds is not a proper way to elect.	Whole
159.	Insane to elect incompetent Cllrs. For 4 years. If approved, revolution will follow. No threat, just a promise.	General
160.	Reduce mandates allowance	General
161.	I believe a council needs 4 years to allow time for any new ideas to be tested as their effect with the general public, who may like or not like new policies.	Whole
162.	I have read the pros and cons and do not believe a change to once every four years would be an improvement on the current system.	Whole
163.	Electing every 4 years provides the opportunity to save money and the argument for gaining a regular influx of new Councillors using the current system does not really hold up to scrutiny.	Whole
164.	Our Council needs this change to bring stability to the Council's decision-making and encourage the development of more strategic long-term solutions - particularly around financial management. Current decision making focusses too much on short term, political point scoring initiatives and ward-based issues and not enough on the deep, complex issues which are really facing the whole city and the Council. There is also a lack of voter equality when elections run in 'thirds,' the level of misunderstanding amongst electors regarding who they are voting for, or how often they are expected to vote and how, is a challenge many young people and particularly black and ethnic minority groups experience.	Whole
165.	I think you should consider also aligning the cycle with the national elections, to 1) make further savings with the process and 2) potentially increase engagement of residents.	General
166.	Less hassle. Less cost.	Whole
167.	I would like to see a more settled approach to the council and giving the councillors time to prove themselves.	Whole
168.	Electing in thirds means that we can remove poorly performing administrations.	In thirds
169.	I think a change to elections once every 4 years is crucial to ensuring stability and the ability for long term planning for the city otherwise whichever party is in administration will always be thinking about the next election in under 12 months time. Moving to 4 yearly elections would also reduce the cost of running elections allowing this money to be better spent on improving services for residents.	Whole
170.	Hopefully a full election less often would save money on polling booths, counting etc.	Whole
171.	Just look at national government as an example of allowing parties that amount of time. Keep parties on their toes, making an effort at least once a year to speak to residents. Stability is the main argument, but does anyone think national	General

	government is stable? All-ups will potentially see a hugely inexperienced set of councillors elected, which could cause real problems. Election turnout isn't much different in general election. Who are the LGA to know what Southend needs? How did they reach their conclusions to recommend this? What studies in Southend were undertaken? What makes them qualifies to make this recommendation?	
172.	A longer-term cycle gives councillors more time to implement policies and initiatives they would like, before they start focusing on political positioning pre-election.	Whole
173.	People can do a lot of damage if left unchecked for 4 years.	In thirds
174.	This is a very sensible proposal on many fronts. I strongly believe that this will lead to greater stability in local government and underpin its ability to better progress actions on behalf of its local residents, which are sometimes thwarted by the staccato nature of current electoral cycles, with too many pre-election pauses getting in the way of key projects and programmes, even where there are no changes to the local political leadership. I also believe that costs associated with running elections would be reduced, and given the dire state of local government finances thanks to the serial erosion of these by the conservative government, this would also be welcomed.	Whole
175.	I don't feel Councillors have enough time to focus on the work at hand with the current election cycle as even if they are not up for election they are campaigning for the ones who are. I feel that a four yearly election cycle would give Councillors more time to focus on residents rather than campaigning.	Whole
176.	Too many elections means it's difficult to find stability. It would be much more effective to give Councillors time to implement election pledges and should increase turn out and subsequently become more representative	Whole
177.	I believe that electing once every four years would provide a much more stable local government in Southend.	Whole
178.	This will give more stability and also save money	Whole
179.	i prefer to keep the current electoral system as it is. 4 years is too long with the same people/political parties (as relevant) in charge of important decisions affecting us all in southend and maybe the day tourists as well.	In thirds
180.	Four years is too long for the balance of power to be held by one administration locally / residents struggle to resonate with politics at the best of times & holding elections only once every 4 years will only serve to make that worse as well as encouraging a lack of democracy from those in power.	In thirds
181.	The Third System prevents large swing in policy every 4 years and provides continuity	Whole
182.	It has worked perfectly well for years it isn't broke don't fix it. Imagine being stuck with useless councillors as we were until recently for four whole years!	In thirds
183.	I believe that electing councillors in thirds allows us to replace a councillor if we feel they are not representing us how we wish to be represented. If it was 4 yearly, we would have to keep a councillor who we would rather not have for the full 4 year term.	In thirds
184.	Whole council election every 4 years provides consistency, stability and removes some of the complexity around the current splintered approach to democracy under the current thirds approach. It reduces costs by reducing the current burden of multiple elections currently to just one in 4 year cycles and it allows political stability and better approaches in council forward planning and decision	Whole

	making knowing each cycle covers the whole 4 years without risk of fragmentation and splintering due to disruptive election cycles	
185.	Stop wasting time	General
186.	Ensures constant accountability on near annual basis.	Whole
187.	I feel that electing by thirds is a simpler system that makes it easier for voters to know candidates personally on the ballot paper each year. It also helps keep our Councillors active	In thirds
188.	Voting once every 4 years would save money on election administration and provide more stability for the council and residents with the administration being able to implement their policies over a longer period.	Whole
189.	We need stability and a system where councillors are more accountable for their personal behaviour	Whole
190.	I think it would be more contusive to have elections once every 4 years-less expensive to council, and would hopefully mean the elections would be more meaningful to electorate and be able to vote on subjects which matter.	Whole
191.	Electing in thirds is much more beneficial than every 4 years	In thirds
192.	Why change now	General
193.	Democracy and Consensus Government is better served	General
194.	Being able to refresh councillors on a more regular basis is advantageous. If the councillors are failing in their duty to their constituents they can be replaced before too much damage is done. Leigh Town Council post 2023 election is a case in point where a large number of local residents wished that they voted as the current councillors who got in unopposed are failing in their responsibilities and are now stuck with them for the full term.	In thirds
195.	Better accountability. If the councillor is failing they can get voted out. Equally, if they are doing their job properly we can vote to keep them in place.	In thirds
196.	Failure should not be rewarded with a guaranteed term.	In thirds
197.	This option is to be encouraged as costs will surely be less when the system only operates once every four years	Whole
198.	Too disruptive to have constant changes	Whole
199.	It is confusing to have elections in thirds, it doesn't appear to provide any advantages and there is a cost associated with doing this that could be avoided	Whole
200.	I also believe switching to every 4 years allows an opportunity to review the number of councillors. Personally I feel there are too many and would welcome a reduction to 2 per ward	Whole
201.	Longer election cycle would allow people to hold their councillors accountable as they are in post for longer, rather than frequent change which supports constant changes in direction and past promises being 'swept under the rug'	Whole
202.	Electing by thirds keeps elected representatives more accountable, and minimises officer influence over Councillors - which is what happens when there are longer stretches between events of accountability.	In thirds
203.	Stop wasting money on things bloody things like the rustling pole down London Road on the bloody flower	General
204.	I feel that it is a good idea to be able to vote every year People would have the opportunity to vote every year. Things (such as personal circumstances and, local issues such as building, housing etc) change frequently. It is important to be able to have a voice on these, and similar, matters. That is just my opinion though.	In thirds
205.	Electing all 3 councillors at ones may cause instability within the ward. Also, 4 years is way too long to wait for change of administration if anything it not quite working in any particular area.	In thirds

206.	I feel that the one third basis allows voters to express discontent with the ruling party much sooner thereby possibly getting policy changes more quickly.	In thirds
207.	It is more democratic to elect once per four years as you are then actually voting in the party you want in power. In thirds, parties can cling onto power and the public don't get a proper opportunity to vote an administration out	Whole
208.	It will provide greater stability for the City, however I also consider that 2 Cllr's per ward is more than sufficient and would like to see a Cllr in Cabinet for City Centre, the Seafront and business.	General
209.	I support election in thirds for all the reasons given in your statement. I don't think this destabilises the Council. A change of administration is unusual in Southend, and it is the lack of overall control that has brought about change, rather than voting in thirds. Lack of overall control could arise from voting in block, and changes of administration could occur during the following four years as different factions choose to work together or not, or if councillors change colours (as they do).	In thirds
210.	I feel that voting in thirds provides a better measure of shifting public opinion. Also, in the absence of the old aldermanic system, it sustains greater experience among Councillors.	In thirds
211.	I believe the 'thirds' system offers more consistency and fewer shocks.	In thirds
212.	I do not think local councils should be beholden to national party politics and I feel the current system gives more opportunity for a balance of views.	In thirds
213.	Thirds avoids "Cliques" being formed with a group being elected all at the same time	In thirds
214.	The procedures residents require to be able to recall their Councillors should be made far easier and clearer, especially if the Councillor no longer represents the views they expressed that got them elected in the first place. Whilst they are in office to represent ALL of their residents but it will have been the MAJORITY voter's views that got them elected, NOT their own often poorly disguised political ambitions which tend to surface once they have the proverbial foot in the door. IF local election practices change to an all-in once every four years, such recall powers become even more urgent. There is after all a fairly good reason that politicians of all stripes suffer from a pretty poor reputation. Respect is earned, not a given. As such, it is rightly hard to earn and oh so easy to lose.	General
215.	Thank you for consulting with the residents.	General
216.	Parking for residents	General
217.	Publish members expenses and how often they work from home. Also if they take public money for their home heating bills. Also how much they are paid.	General
218.	I prefer elections once every 4 years for the stability this provides, so council leaders can promote policies that may be necessary but possibly less popular.	Whole
219.	consistent decision making.	Whole
220.	This is a LGA Recommendation and will also save the Council money - why is this NOT being put in place automatically? Especially when such stringent financial measures are taking place and this would save thousands	Whole
221.	Tough choice, there's no clear advantage. However my sense is this is a choice between a slower, more stable, vs more dynamic, flexible, receptive political system, able to more closely reflect the views of the electorate. Having some councillors give a bit more continuity of skills and experience over time. If you have a sea change in one go, there is a risk of loss of knowledge. New councillors would have to 're learn'/start from scratch. Assuming everyone is new, of course.	General

	The downside to the flexible system is a risk of muddled, constantly changing priorities. But that then means you just need to get more consensus on the overall priorities/direction. So it doesn't matter who is in charge, the overall direction is the same. So keep it as it is, but this means you have to be good at your job.	
222.	Whole of council change would be too disruptive	In thirds
223.	Simple. Central govt over rules local govt particularly with building development. Folk switch off from local politics hence poor voter turn out.	Whole
224.	I believe it is crucial to local democracy that people can vote every year and it makes the Council and councillors more accountable. I believe having one administration in for four years with no way of changing the council if you believe it is not acting in the local interest is very dangerous and can lead the council to become complacent in the intervening years.	In thirds
225.	4 years is too long if residents are unhappy with their Councillors	In thirds
226.	Need to end the practice of Leigh Town Council where candidates automatically get seats because they run unopposed. This is how we've ended up with ***** *****, who was turned down for a councillor role a few years back because it was felt he was highly unsuitable. And look where we are now. As one councillor said to me: he's failed at everything else in life, he's continuing his streak!	General
227.	4 yearly elections make much more sense.	Whole
228.	Stay as it is with yearly Elections, as we don't want a repeat of the Leigh Town Council fiasco, where nothing is happening as we have there number of councillors who are incompetent and are there four a 4 year term!	In thirds
229.	I believe this will lead to more stable and accountable local governance	Whole
230.	This simplifies the process doing in thirds.	In thirds
231.	The four year period allows for progress and outcomes that hopefully support strategic development and change where required. The four year period holds Councillor accountable for a term of office that provides them with a timeline that is more realistic, underpinning opportunity to build and embed on what is working well, as well as addressing and what isn't working for their local population.	Whole
232.	I strongly disagree with any change to our election cycle for electing councillors. It would be a further decay of our democracy, if we are not able to have three yearly local elections to vote to remove inept councillors. Bad enough that we cannot remove our MPs because of fixed term Parliament. Bad idea!	In thirds
233.	less costs less canvassing time more time for local parties to work	Whole
234.	I may have submitted this twice, sorry, but I didn't see the comment box the first time. The comment I want to add is that I would support having elections every 4 years if the vote was done by proportional representation. Otherwise it just reinforces the dominance of the major parties and deters fresh thinking.	Whole
235.	Suggestion Vote for Councillors	General
236.	Councillors and Parties need proper time to make their mark	Whole
237.	We must continue to keep the system as it is, with annual elections in thirds. This is paramount to maintaining political diversity on councils and crucially reflects the changing views of the electorate as each year passes. If, however, it changes to every 4 years, then I would like to see the council adopt the proportional representation system for its elections.	In thirds
238.	+ electing councillors in thirds has the benefit of better maintaining continuity of experience among councillors, being less subject to major swings in public opinion, when a party and its representatives could lose many seats at once under the alternative system	In thirds

	+ Electing in thirds also means that voters can make their feelings heard on a more regular basis and so feel more engaged with the political process + As I understand the additional costs of electing in thirds are not so great as to justify this change, with the disadvantages that it would have.	
239.	Would add stability to the administration and help deliver complex projects	Whole
240.	Will help deliver things	Whole
241.	A longer council cabinet tenure (4 years) provides continuity of policy and increases better outcomes for Southend residents	Whole
242.	I can economic benefits - lower costs but don't want to be tied down to no good strategists for	Whole
243.	It will cut out unnecessary expenses and make it easier for us voters.	Whole
244.	The amount of councillors we have is absurd, let alone voting for them in thirds.	General
245.	I believe a all out approach will ensure a sense of urgency and greater collaboration and accountability amongst the political parties/councillors. I also would recommend this once every four years so as to give a clear timeframe of what has to/will be achieved for the voters	Whole
246.	Once every 4 years provides stability and we don't get bothered every year. The real issue is getting the council to listen to Councillors. Let's pray the council changes and listens to what the elected representatives have to say	Whole
247.	I think this gives the public plenty of time to se if the council is working well for the constituents or not!	General
248.	This would enable better clarity and accountability from Councillors and ensure that everything is being addressed	Whole
249.	Voting once every few years will mean there is little succession planning. Councillors lack accountability for their actions as it is, and letting them leave en-masse will make it impossible for any organisational memory to serve.	General
250.	Better because hope it will mean less changes, right now things seem to change every year no continuity. Hopefully continuity will be better, providing the council has best interests of us at heart of decision making!	Whole
251.	Voting for councillors every four years is the best way. It allows for forward planning and accountability.	Whole
252.	it is my view that when only one third of seats are contested it does bring an element of stability to the council, whereas all up elections could result in untested in individuals forming an administration.	In thirds
253.	Concern that an all out would provide too many new Cllrs at once and there would not be enough existing Cllrs to induct the new ones	In thirds
254.	Two thoughts. 1. Changing them all at once will cause total confusion for residents and councillors. 2. We only need 1 councillor per ward.	General
255.	I think voting every 4 years would save the council money and provide for more stability and speed up processes for decision making.	Whole
256.	moving to once every 4 years allows stability and time to embed the ambitions of the elected member as well as saving money by avoiding changing the goal posts	Whole
257.	Every 4 years would give the councillors a chance to implement changes, save money, administrative costs, community disruption (e.g. to schools) and is more in line with the General Election cycle. Makes absolute sense.	Whole
258.	I would like to move out where I live. Need to speak to someone	General
259.	Four years sounds good for everyone	
260.	Looking at the current debacle at Leigh Town Council people do need to be held to account more regularly than once every 4 years	In thirds

261.	The current example of Leigh on Sea Town Council has shown how voting a council in every four years can work against residents	In thirds
262.	Less disruption to system, more continuity of plans, and less expenses on running elections please	Whole
263.	Would prefer to see more cross party collaborations with efforts focussed on local issues rather than destructive party politics so the 'all out' system will allow teams to gel and focus on actual issues for long term community benefits rather than for their party.	General
264.	with thirds so-called independents or whatever they want to call themselves hold too much sway as a result of negotiations with them to provide a working majority	Whole
265.	I am an employee of the council	General
266.	Thirds means councillors are more regularly accountable. Turnout won't improve much by doing it every 4 years but fewer votes will be cast in total over the lifecycle of the council.	In thirds
267.	Councillors should be held accountable on a regular basis so voting only once every four years is a ridiculous suggestion. I strongly disagree.	In thirds
268.	I would prefer the "big bang" approach because I believe it will stop the annual campaigning to councillors can get on with generating a coherent long term plan.	Whole
269.	Continuity and frequent accountability are most important to me. We don't want the same situation that Leigh finds itself in with a break away group taking over the council for 4 year and bringing discredit and disgrace the Tory party name.	In thirds
270.	Moving to a 4 year election cycle will reduce unnecessary Council expenditure and enable a more collaborative approach across Parties and groups which in turn will reduce unnecessary Council expenditure due to the overturning of decisions and plans, calling multiple items into scrutiny etc	Whole
271.	Given the financial constraints, it no longer makes sense to have yearly elections as it is too costly.	Whole
272.	I feel once every 4 years allows better progress to be made in council matters.	Whole
273.	The current cycle is a waste of money. Once every 4 years the same way as most other Councils should be undertaken	Whole
274.	I think the thirds system is better.	In thirds
275.	Why not quarters, every year.	General
276.	Leave it as it is, do not change to once every 4 years	In thirds
277.	Annual elections are far more democratic as they give the electors a say in most years. This means that the council should be more responsive to public opinion and hear from councillors more often.	In thirds
278.	I think it would be less expensive to do one election very four years. Given the state of the council finances this might be the way to go.	Whole
279.	Elections every 4 years will save the Council money if aligned to the PFCC election, plus it'll enable the Council to plan better with more stability over who will form the administration. I would also recommend a reduction in the number of Councillors, saving money on allowances, expenses, mobile phones and any other associated cost to the public purse that a Councillor generates.	Whole
280.	I think a complete new administration every 4 years would result in lack of continuity	In thirds
281.	Election in thirds maintains continuity.	
282.	While not part of this consultation and not within your powers to do so, I would support once every four years if the council were elected by a form of PR	Whole
283.	As a resident who always votes, having one set of Councillors in post for four years (from whatever political group or coalition) strikes me as a recipe for	In thirds

	<p>potential stagnation, and doesn't allow local residents to regularly change that situation.</p> <p>Personally, as someone who:</p> <p>a) delivers poll cards for the Council, having a local election every four years would reduce my income;</p> <p>b) is a Presiding Officer, ditto; and</p> <p>c) is a Leader of a church that is used as a Polling Station, having an election every four years would reduce our income.</p>	
284.	elections in thirds are waste of money and constant change of councillors means nothing ever gets done	Whole
285.	As stated the thirds system maintains consistency, and therefore keeps the business of the council rolling over.	In thirds
286.	If we elect them for four years they could reek havoc with no accountability until 4 years is up by which time it could be too late....	In thirds
287.	I believe councillors should be required to actually live in the ward they wish to represent. In my ward, Milton, none of our 3 councillors live in the ward, one lives as far away as Leigh-on-Sea! Such people do not know what is going on locally and their so called once a month surgery (on a Saturday of all days) is a joke. Compare the situation with nearby Thorpe Ward where all 3 councillors live in the ward and get out and about on a regular basis meeting their constituents. Perhaps I should move to Thorpe Ward.	General
288.	By an election of only a third at a time it secures a more even flow of councillors and means more stability of the council as a whole. Elections every 4 years could, in theory, result in a whole new council of councillors with no previous experience and a total change of direction. Making forward plans impossible.	In thirds
289.	Every 4 years will provide a more strategic long term planning process which should enable better service delivery.	Whole
290.	It is a more efficient way of holding councillors to account for their performance, which we desperately need when one looks at their decisions or the lack of them over the last decade.	In thirds
291.	The idea of 1 group having 4 years without any electoral accountability is concerning to me.	In thirds
292.	Electing every 4 years provides stability of an administration and allows continuity of decision making, funding allocation and progression of the councils vision	Whole
293.	Greener and more organised	
294.	Having seen what is currently happening in Leigh Town Council where it is a 4 year cycle the current city system is preferable	In thirds
295.	For democracy to work properly, you need elections every year so that the parties concerned are held to account for their acts / decisions	In thirds
296.	An all out election every four years will give greater stability in the period between elections and a greater opportunity for meaningful change at the ballot box every 4th year.	Whole
297.	More accountable this way.	In thirds
298.	To apply to Leigh and Southend city council.	
299.	I think this makes individuals more mindful of what local people want, because if they veer off in a direction that was not clear during their campaign, they can be voted out.	In thirds
300.	Surely we have a right to elect these people regularly.	In thirds
301.	I believe electing councillors in thirds makes them more accountable to the public for their decisions, and makes it easier for them to be voted out if the public	In thirds

	doesn't approve of their decisions. Extending the elections to once every 4 years means a council can make unpopular decisions for that length of time without fear of repercussions.	
302.	Disruptive to have constant change in elected members, so stability would be nice	Whole
303.	I feel that democracy will not be best served by moving to elections only once every (years & want to stay with the current system of 1 in 3	In thirds
304.	Having annual council elections every year is preferable as the constituents then have an opportunity to respond to the performance of the council and individual councillors.	In thirds
305.	4 yearly elections would allow the Council and its partners to work strategically rather than being in constant election mode.	Whole
306.	it is wrong that, when the UK voting age is 18, the survey is open to those 15 years and above? This will provide fundamentally flawed data and prove the survey to be inadmissible as tangible evidence in this process, as it was open to those ineligible to vote and it will not be possible to distinguish the age of those who took part in the survey to isolate that data. This important point will be made through our elected Cllr's at the appropriate stages!	General
307.	It would add much stability to the City and save money!	Whole
308.	I believe voting in Thirds will recruit or retain enthusiastic elected members and promoting good attendance at meetings which may not be the case if the move goes to every 4 years. However turnout by the public is incredibly low and needs a big rethink especially with engaging with younger people.	In thirds
309.	Less disruptive to have all out	In thirds
310.	We should be in line with other LAs and the national cycle.	General
311.	Due to restructure cut backs on council staff to reduce budget costs. It makes sense to cut back on the number of councillors elected and provide bigger boundaries for the areas for each councillor remaining. This would cut down more cost and electing every four years instead of thirds would also be a cheaper method in the long term due to less staff needed each elections. Less elections equals less work/admin and less staff charges.	Whole
312.	Less elections would mean more people would be likely to vote as too many elections puts people off and as they see no changes within the little time frame and therefore don't have faith in the councillors.	Whole
313.	Voting every four years is the better and cheapest option available to the council at this time. Alot of taxpayers money is wasted on councillors' campaigning and not exactly working on their policies. The money could be used on improving the borough instead of wasting time voting.	Whole
314.	Running elections every four years would mean 1) more certainty and for longer for councils, council workers and residents; and 2) cost savings for not having to run elections 3 out of 4 years.	Whole
315.	More cost effective and a chance for the councillors to actually get the job done	Whole
316.	I think, on balance, voting once every four years would provide more consistency and enable longer term thinking rather than councillors continually having eyes on the next round of election campaigning. It would be, also, more cost effective. Why should council elections be any different to parliamentary elections apart from being every four years as opposed to five?	Whole
317.	Costs a lot to run elections so by doing every four years means reduction in that cost plus five who ever elected in a chance to make change and if that can't demonstrate impact or difference in that time let the democratic process take place again	Whole

318.	I think a councillor should be elected for a maximum term of three years and NOT four.	General
319.	I think that by having local elections every 4 Years we would have a much stronger council that could plan for the long term.	Whole
320.	Gives a better degree of choice, brings more contact from elected representatives and I think contributes to a better quality of public service.	In thirds
321.	this is an opportunity to save money and time. elections take a lot of time to organise. should allow for savings in admin.	Whole
322.	4 years is too long without the opportunity to reselect a Cllr... if things aren't going well then to have all out elections are not desirable .	In thirds
323.	Given the cost implications the council finds itself in, it makes financial sense and will overall save the taxpayers money. Hopefully the savings will be passed onto us poor tax payers.	Whole
324.	A single election once every four years is too long a gap for local elections. It would be difficult to attract candidates. If unsuccessful, they would be unlikely to wait four years and try again.	In thirds
325.	My big concern is that switching to all-out elections once every four years in Southend would make it very hard to retain and nurture talented people who aspire to serve as local councillors. The majority of local council candidates are not successful on their first attempt, but thanks to the current electoral system in Southend, whereby there are local Council elections three years out of four, aspiring candidates do not have to wait long before having another go. In fact, over two thirds of councillors currently serving on Southend Council had two or more attempts before being elected for the first time. If they had had to wait four years before it was possible to have a second attempt, many of the existing councillors may well have decided not to pursue it any further and not support the people f Southend.	In thirds
326.	Ensure our local politicians are held to regular account and that extremist policies cannot be introduce because of a one off voting fluke.	In thirds
327.	Please could you put more effort and focus into working FOR the residents of Southend instead of yourselves? Implementing unnecessary pay rises and additional posts shouldn't be the first job of a council against a backdrop of a failing Conservative government. Is it too much to ask for you to do your jobs, and do what's right for the residents...	General
328.	It makes the current councils more accountable for their work and gives the local residents a chance to change the governing landscape more frequently - especially if a particular party is not delivering for the whole year after elections - at least one of the elected Cllr's could he swapped out to initiate change. Yes all out elections may be more cost-effective but are way more rigid and not change-friendly.	In thirds
329.	I support electing by thirds because: - as a voter, I hear from candidates every year. This leads to a good, ongoing relationship with councillors - there are no sudden changes to council makeup, which means a lower risk of a loss of institutional knowledge. - voters are able to react quickly if needed I think the closest region with all-up elections is probably Maldon. As a volunteer with whocanivotefor.co.uk, I notice that a larger proportion of Maldon candidates had no online presence or visible track record compared with Southend candidates. Other councils, such as Tendring are even worse. It appears that parties will try to stand a full slate of candidates (e.g.: 3 per ward) even if some	In thirds

	<p>candidates have no real interest in becoming a councillor.</p> <p>My preference is for electing by-thirds, but if we do switch to all-up elections, this would be a good opportunity to switch to proportional representation or transferable vote. This would provide much more accurate representation of voter's wishes: eg: in 2023, Labour got 41% of the seats from 29% of the vote. And in Blenheim Park, a candidate was elected with 34% of the vote (which means 2 in 3 people voted against them -- not exactly a strong mandate for government).</p>	
330.	Every year to keep everyone on there toes.	In thirds
331.	I would like to register a distinct preference that the system of election remains as it is, and not to change to an all out, once in 4 years. Whereas we can see benefits in both procedures, the current system ensures retention of two thirds of the current regime at any one time, thus providing a degree of continuity and stability, and preventing the possibility of all being swept away in one fell swoop, and a completely new tack being attempted by a panel of 'new to the job' incumbents.	In thirds
332.	More regular voting allows the public to respond to in year activity	In thirds
333.	To reduce costs to the Council. Money saved should be ringfenced for libraries and Community Centres. However safeguards need to be introduced and resident to Cllr correspondence needs to be answered within 10 working days (which isn't happening at present). Cllrs should be required to produce a report at the end of four years documenting their personal improvements to the Ward they represent.	General
334.	Cutback hard on extra spending i.e. Councillors and Commissioners.	General
335.	I think it would be really negative to move to once every 4 years. It would reduce the level of democratic accountability that the Council has. The risk is that the Councillors become complacent for the first 2 - 3 years before their election. With elections more regularly, the Councillors can be held to account more directly.	In thirds
336.	In theory electing the whole council every 4 years would appear to make sense for the sake of continuity/cost saving. However that's in theory. In practice it is healthier for our City to have a fresh input from new councillors (or re-elected councillors who will have had to canvas resident's views to get re-election, i.e. listen to residents) in thirds. Whilst we have a ridiculous party political local councillor set-up there are too many councillors with political agendas linked to promoting national political parties for an effective management of our City. Whilst we are electing councillors it would be better to elect a mayor too. This post could be for 3 years too and the mayor could be the leader of the council, as a chairperson/facilitator rather than as a political position giving the continuity desired. The current system of appointing a mayor on the longevity of service leads to a crony based system rigged to keep past their sell by date councillors in their seats so they don't miss out on the 'honour' of being mayor!	General
337.	Make Cllrs work.	General
338.	Too confusing for residents to vote.	Whole
339.	Each elected councillor should serve a maximum of 2 terms in office either consecutively or non-consecutively. No elected councillor should be allowed to change constituency in order to by-pass this ruling. Every councillor should be forced to attend at least 75% of all council meetings whether they have a direct involvement or not unless they are deemed to be unwell. Failure to attend the said amount of meetings should automatically revoke their position of councillor resulting in a by-election. The councillor will also automatically be banned from standing at future elections.	General

	The winner of a by-election will be allowed to stand for the maximum of 2 further terms providing the by-election victory is within 1 year or less of a full council election.	
340.	It would always be better to have experienced councillors who still have time left to serve to pass their knowledge onto the new comers. It also makes it more accountable for councillors to be on the ball.	In thirds
341.	<p>Voting every 4 years gives the Council more stability when planning major schemes, capital programme and corporate priorities and implement decisions made more effectively. It also enables newly elected Councillors time to settle in and gain invaluable experience. It may save some finances but there are other elections held in a different cycle e.g. Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Parliamentary.</p> <p>Whilst the political make-up/administration of the Council can change overnight when voting every four years, this has also happens when voting in thirds as can be seen in recent years.</p> <p>Voting every four years also reduces the risk of "protest voting" which is used to highlight dissatisfaction to Central Government Administration and may increase voter turnout.</p> <p>The number of Councillors that allege to represent and work for the residents of this city should be reduced. This can be achieved by reducing the number of Wards, through a review of the Ward boundaries, or the number representing each Ward is reduced to two rather than three. We do not need 51 Councillors for a City of this size.</p>	Whole
342.	I believe that an alternative to what we have done potentially offer more stability and allow the cabinet to see things through while having the opportunity to pivot on decisions where required. In turn, it will make it easier for us to be subjective about that change and impact that local politicians put in place if we allow them a longer period of time to implement the proposals.	Whole
343.	I think elections every four years will provide more stability and therefore allow the council to deliver more and better, without the distraction of having to run annual elections.	Whole
344.	My view is that elections on a 4 year cycle would give stability to the Council. It would allow the Council to make longer term plans and not have to be preparing for elections each year, when the ruling party could find themselves out of office, the 1/3 election does mean that the term of office for any party is potentially one year, this does not give scope for realistic planning and completion of decisions.	Whole
345.	with 4 years your stuck with the council even if your not happy where as with i/3rd changes it reflects current moods	In thirds
346.	In thirds, it means that Councillors are regularly accountable. Four years might allow stability, but it also might mean that you're stuck with them, till the next election.	In thirds
347.	Four years is too long a time in-between electing new councillors who could bring in fresh ideas and keep the Council up to date on changing situations.	In thirds
348.	Elections on a more regular basis will enable the public's changing views to be reflected in their voting	In thirds
349.	I'd prefer to hold my councillors and the administration to more account than once every 4 years. "In thirds" makes for a council more in touch with the electorate and opportunity to work together rather than one party have total control for 4 years solid. I am happy with collaborative working.	In thirds
350.	I would like to see the development of standards for councillors and qualifications/experience required to sit on specific committees.	General

351.	It gives us a quicker, more responsive way to make sure the council represents the community.	In thirds
352.	Keep up the good work	General
353.	If the Council were to be elected with all Councillors up for election once every four years it might give the ruling party a longer run at being in power. When there are no overall majority councils, I can understand frustrations that may arise in getting stuff done! However, the counter argument is, I feel, stronger. There would tend to be block voting along purely party political lines rather than voting for the best candidate, regardless of their political persuasion. This has been a bulwark of local democracy and should be maintained. It also enfranchises civically minded people who would become less inclined to be involved if their activity were constrained to one period every three years. Let us keep the tried and tested system as it is and if that leads to the compromises that alliances need, maybe that really is not such a bad thing!	In thirds
354.	An election once every 4 years would be more cost-effective for residents, and I feel more people are likely to take part and vote.	Whole
355.	Feel this way, different people, elected work with each other. To work, the same team, even government do not, they change cabinet members in office and their jobs, once on four years is NOT a good option. Can have a lazy local councillor, for four years, instead of voting them out, if they do not deliver promises.	In thirds
356.	Stay as is	In thirds
357.	Councillors need to be made accountable, 4 years is too long a period	In thirds
358.	As we have been unhappy about the problems within the Southend council, we would prefer to have the ability to try to make changes more often than once every four years.	In thirds
359.	Councils need time to implement plans and more frequent elections only increases costs	Whole
360.	Electing all at once will result in one sided bias as the General election and the new government affects voters mood and that needs expression in the local elections or there will be alternate more physical actions taken by some	In thirds
361.	4 years is too long for local elections.	In thirds
362.	I think having the same local council in for four years has its pros n cons... if they are succeeding then great can stay for four years if not then you are stuck with them...	In thirds
363.	it should be kept at every 4 years to save money for the council budget.	Whole
364.	It's less confusing keeping the elections as they are at present.	Whole
365.	Some people are not very happy with the present councillors , thus giving everyone a chance to vote in or out unpopular candidates	In thirds
366.	I think it is more desirable to have more frequent opportunities for voters to have direct input (and to exercise this right once a year does not feel onerous) and a more responsive council.	In thirds
367.	If all councillors are elected every four years, it gives less opportunity to vote according to changing political circumstances. I think this even through it is more bother to vote in thirds	In thirds
368.	This is a close call for me and I do like the idea of being able to change councillors in thirds as then we aren't 'stuck' with a set of councillors with whom we disagree over a period of 4 years when we can't do anything to bring about change in councillors or policy. However, the elections once every 4 years would seem to provide a more settled set of councillors who have 4 uninterrupted years to introduce their policies. It seems to me that the once every four year election cycle would provide a stronger council which I suppose	Whole

	just about wins over my predilection for elections for one third of councillors each year except the 4th year.	
369.	I think that with elections most years increases the chances of getting new councillors elected whereas if elected in one batch is that there is no reason for the councillors to perform until election year	In thirds
370.	when are we likely to go to an on line vote if at all, once set up would negate the need are the majority of priced material.	General
371.	More accountability and 4 years is a long time for an administration. Things change but politicians don't	In thirds
372.	Democracy is not only every four years	In thirds
373.	It's more cost effective and I think that the elected councillors will have the opportunity and desire to do their utmost for the people of Southend. Also it aligns better with general elections and I think this would encourage more people to come out to vote.	Whole
374.	If every 4 years, it give the councillors a time to relax.	In thirds
375.	I firmly agree with all the points made under the "Arguments in support of Elections in Thirds" and further, as frequent elections offer more opportunities for people to vote, thus they encourage greater participation in local democracy. In addition they can smooth out the effects of protest voting in response to unpopular central government policies. With regard to the "once every four years" arguments, I see nothing of merit in any of them, with some being tenuous. The well established and regular use of public buildings for local elections is firmly part of their calendar: any disruption ensuing being a (mis)management issue. Everything we do has environmental impacts, the priority should be to address those with larger and deeper impacts where mitigation by, such as, recycling is less appropriate. I suggest that reducing election printed and thus recyclable materials would be just a "quick win" and not a reason to degrade local democracy.	In thirds
376.	With some of the administrations we have 'enjoyed' in Southend recently, 4 years is far too long for them in being in charge of services and finances.	In thirds
377.	More efficient process	Whole
378.	Keep the system as is. It allows us to vote out underperforming councillors quickly.	In thirds
379.	Need to stop the political grandstanding and get on with the job	General
380.	I believe all councils should have at least 3years in office to allow them time to see any new ideas through. But then again if a council should make a really bad plan, such as 15 minuets city, we would like to be able to stop that straight away before any real damage is done. So three years but the right to remove any plan that the public are largely against . We do not want bad or silly policies forced upon us.	General
381.	The arguments for and against are solid; it's a hard choice, but ultimately, I worry about voter confusion with the proposed change. The turnout for elections is already low, which I believe is to do with a lack of understanding of the process, stemming from a lack of political education in schools and mistrust caused by the constant U Turns and law-breaking by central government (and the subsequent lack of repercussions), which isn't going to be solved by this local change. It is likely to further confuse matters and the understanding between local and general elections. I feel there may be a lot of voting for the 4 year cycle as people see voting as an inconvenience, which is a concern in itself; rather than	General

	concentrating on changing the election cycle, I feel there needs to be a consultation on engaging the public to be more politically active/aware.	
382.	I think that elections every 4 years would lead to complacency by councillors - they should be able to be held accountable more regularly	In thirds
383.	I feel the third option will encourage councillors to maintain contact with the needs of residents rather than their own directive.	In thirds
384.	Having three elections every four years seem to me to be wasteful and an extra strain on the council budget. Which will inevitably, in my opinion, cause a rise in council tax, which I find is already a financial on most peoples finances,	Whole
385.	Keeping the current system provides consistency and allows residents more say . If a Councillor is keeping in contact with their community then the additional issues put forward about re-election should be negible in my opinion. I have concerns about changing the process. Yes there are cost benefits I see that but doing a new block of elections could result in inexperienced Councillors being voted in en-mass. At least the rolling year buffers that.	In thirds
386.	It will hopefully enable the faster removal of those not fully supporting the needs of Southend residents and also those Councillors that have conflicting interests, i.e., those who have become Directors of companies already under the control of Southend-on-Sea City Council.	In thirds
387.	Less confusing	Whole

Appendix C2

We had 21 comments from individuals submitting paper copies these have been grouped together in themes, below is the full submission of comments.

Full comment		
1.	The cost would be reduced by only having elections every 4 years. It may also give the Council time to make and sustain improvements made	Whole
2.	Electing all Councillors every four years is a savings	Whole
3.	Three iconic sites in Southend a) Southend Pier, b) Kursaal, c) Saxon King, do not seem to be valued or promoted by Southend Council, record visitors last year 2023 the pier should not be privatised, contractors would be mostly interested in profit note in maintenance for future generations. The second time in recent years the Kursaal has been unoccupied left to deteriorate. The oldest historic site (Saxon King) was promised	General
4.	Current debt run up by existing councillors disgraceful, they should be personally held responsible! No to privatisation of Southend Pier our major asset - record visitors 2023	General
5.	I do not believe we should vote every 4 years and let the current councillors make cuts in the most deprived areas (e.g. libraries, social work). If we leave the Tories in for another 4 years, then they will cut free services that we will never get back. Thirds allows for a much more representative vote and allows people to vote out undesirable policies and people.	In thirds
6.	The state of the Council at present (on the verge of bankruptcy (according to head of Council on BBC TV a few weeks ago) does not need a guarantee of long-term power. It needs regular accountability via the polling booth. Otherwise a Council's failures are unaccountable and unchecked for too long a period.	In thirds
7.	Stay as they are	In thirds
8.	Elections in thirds ensures that someone at Council will have some idea of what they should be doing	In thirds
9.	Top advantage is to provide stability over a longer period	Whole
10.	Most Cllrs don't appear to do much, or indeed are able to answer questions. Such as where is all the extra revenue from the flats along Victoria Avenue going? My MP never answers my emails either. A fallow is a good idea - in the hope those elected may get time to actually do something. Why is the Council wasting money on this consultation? They appear to be experts at consultations!	General
11.	Democracy and accountability should never be subject to cost-cutting	In thirds
12.	The majority of Cllrs spend a lot of time and effort canvassing with manifestos promising so much. However very few actually do or say that which they were voted in for. So if they don't, they wont have another 3 years of effectively doing nothing to benefit the lives of residents.	In thirds
13.	If it isn't broken don't fix it. 4 years is too long a period	In thirds
14.	I would rather have my chance to have my say every year. I don't want to wait 4 years. It is a long time if you don't like something or want it changed. They could do what they want if they know they are there for four years and no-one can vote against them or their party or manifesto . Keep it once a year	In thirds

15.	I am against reviews to the boundary particularly the loss of west leigh residents to amended years as this will disenfranchise fair representation of residents in Western Road, Leigh-on-Sea	General
16.	The saved money should be ringfenced for libraires and community centres	General
17.	Thirds are better change of position, in the case of disappointment or person holding this position	In thirds
18.	Better to have sooner rather than later	Whole
19.	Having elections in thirds has the benefit of keeping the residents aware of their Cllrs and the importance of the work of the local authority and its work to improve the civic environment. Making Cllrs have to face the electorate every year for 3 years encourages them to better respond to their concerns.	In thirds
20.	Turn out in local elections is usually very low - and an election every 4 years is easier to understand particularly if it encourages stability and long term planning	Whole
21.	Strong state in Thirds	In thirds