

Responses to the Member Survey on the 2027/28 Schedule of Meetings

Background

All members of West Surrey Council were invited complete a survey seeking their thoughts and availabilities to attend meetings of the new authority. The survey was open for a two-week period and a total of 68 responses were received, representing a 75.5% response rate.

Day By Day Availability

Members were asked to select from a list of four proposed meeting start times, all the times on each weekday that they could make themselves available to attend a meeting. The table below summarises how many members said that they could be available for the times and days listed:

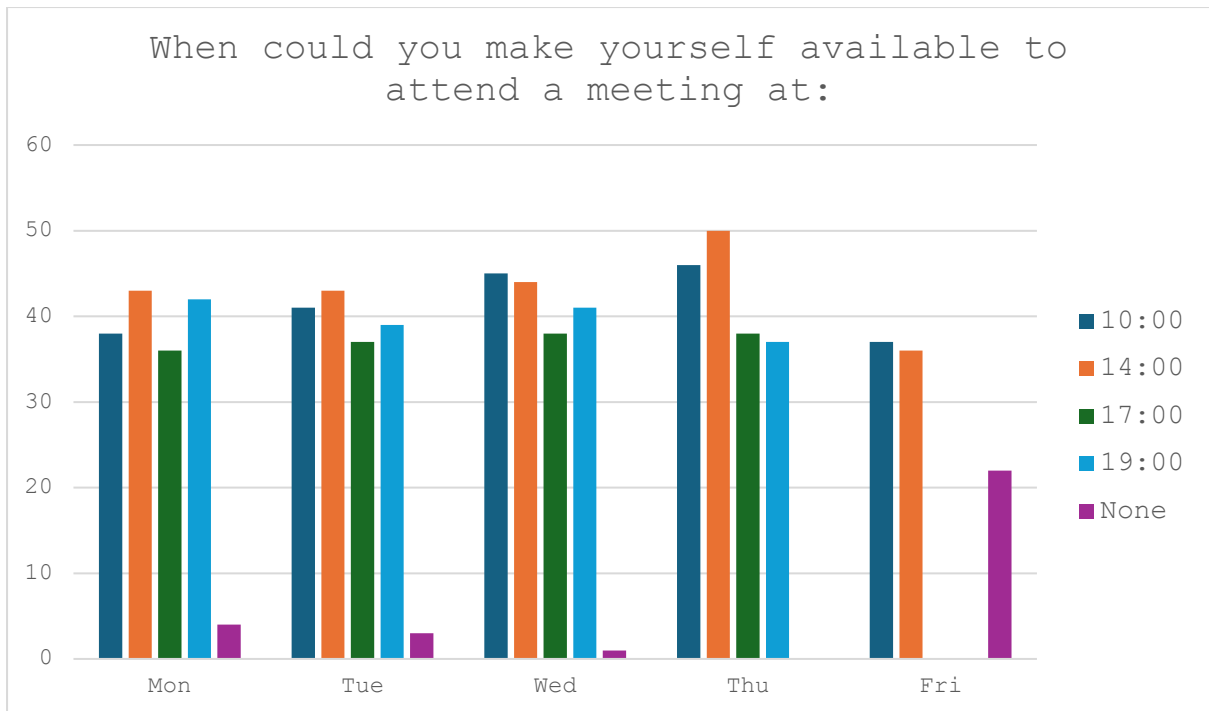
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total
10:00	38	41	45	46	37	207
14:00	43	43	44	50	36	216
17:00	36	37	38	38	-	149
19:00	42	39	41	37	-	159
Total	159	160	168	171	73	
None of the above	4	3	1	0	22	

* 17:00 and 19:00 on a Friday were not presented to members as an option to select.

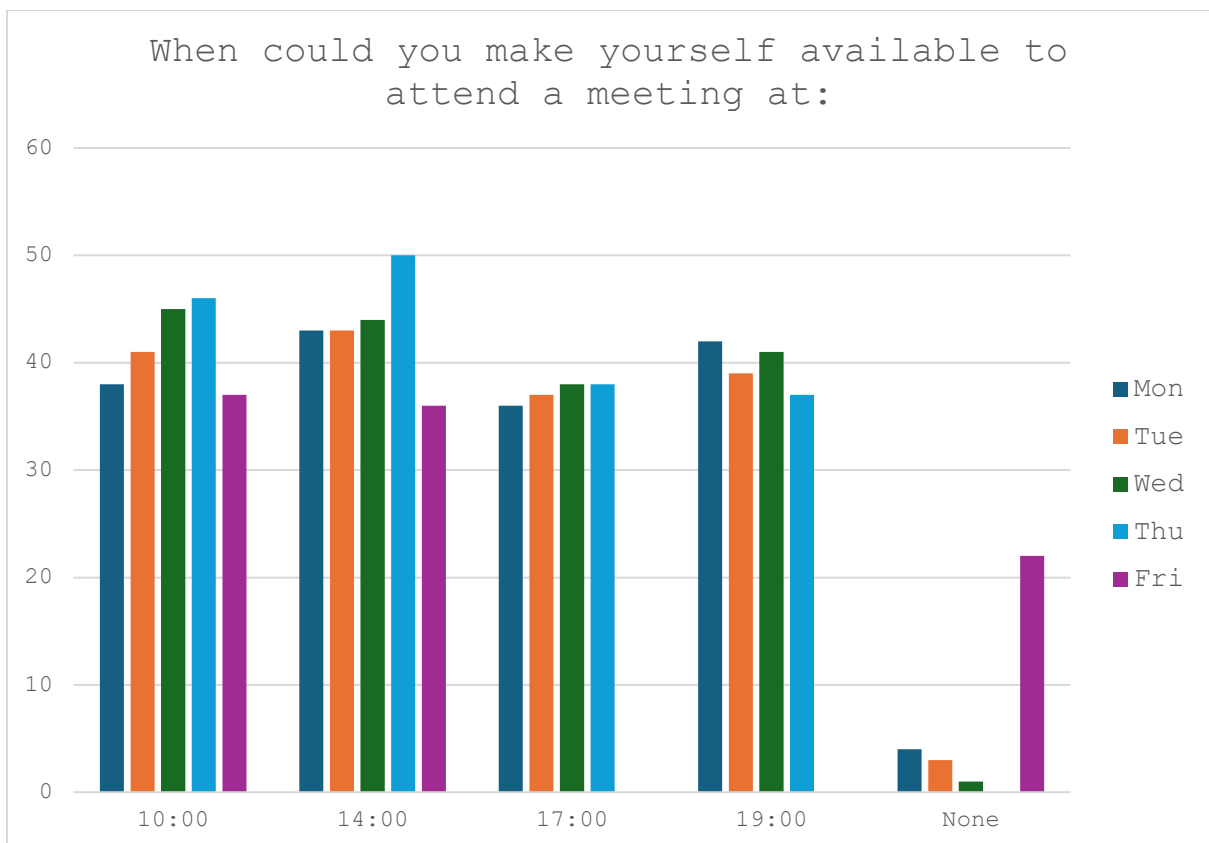
The date and time selected by the most members was 14:00 on a Thursday. The least selected were 17:00 on a Monday and 14:00 on a Friday. The day which most members indicated that they could be available at some point was Thursday closely followed by Wednesday.

The time that the most members indicated that they could be available at any day of the week was 14:00. It is worth noting that later time slots on a Friday were not provided as options for members to vote for. If only responses on the first four weekdays are considered, 14:00 remained the most popular time (180 responses) then 10:00 (170 responses).

The graph below presents the information in the table, grouping the number of responses received for each time, by each day. This illustrates that across three weekdays 14:00 was the preferred meeting time, except for Monday and Friday where 10:00 was the most preferred. The greatest margin between two selected times was between 10:00 and 17:00 on Thursday (8 responses), showing a stronger preference for daytime meetings on a Thursday compared to other times on a Thursday, and other days of the week.



The graph below presents the information in the table, grouping the number of responses received for each day, by the start times presented. Thursday was the most selected day for the earliest three meeting times provided, except for 19:00 where Monday was the most selected day. A slight preference for 10:00 and 14:00 meeting start times can also be observed.



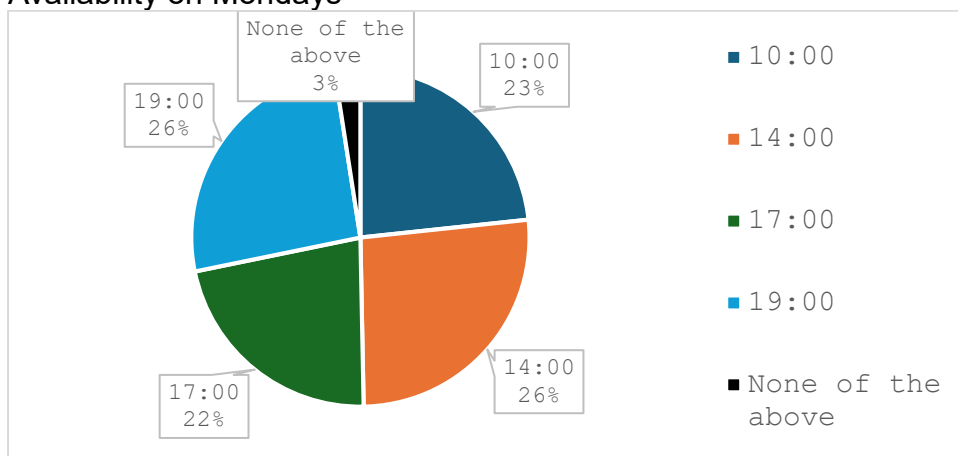
Members were invited to select all of the times that they would attend a meeting on each weekday. Below is a table of the amount of times were a member indicated that they could only attend one time in a particular day.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10:00	1	4	2	1	10 (14.71%)
14:00	0	1	1	1	9 (13.24%)
17:00	0	0	1	0	
19:00	11 (16.12%)	9 (13.24%)	12 (17.65%)	9 (13.24%)	

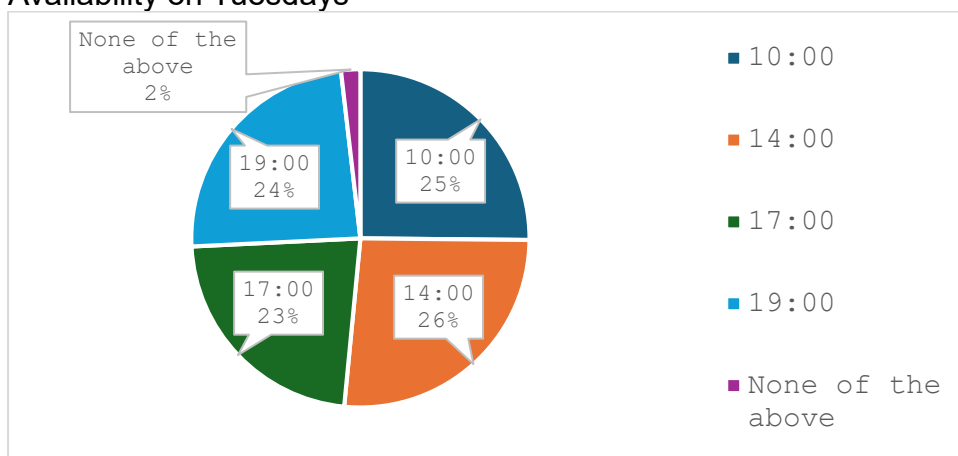
5 members indicated that 19:00 was the only time they could do on each day of the week.

Below is a breakdown of the availability for each day of the week, split by the four meeting times proposed and how many people could attend none of the times presented:

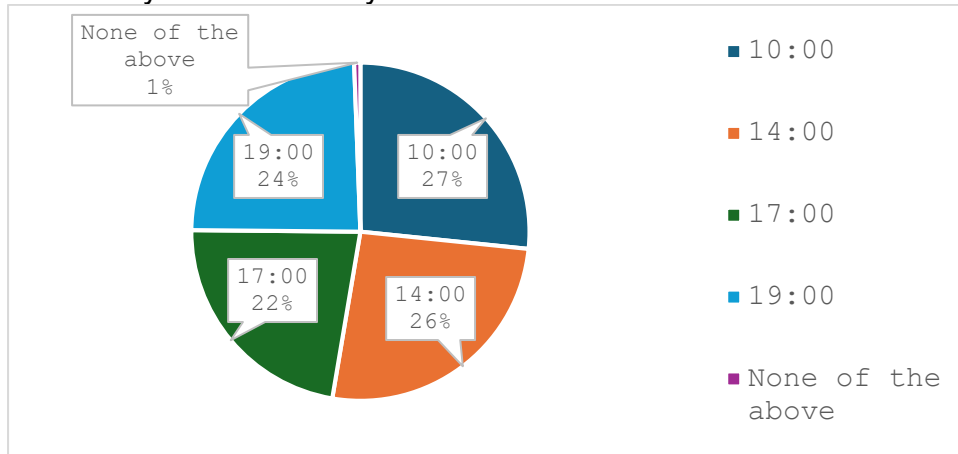
Availability on Mondays



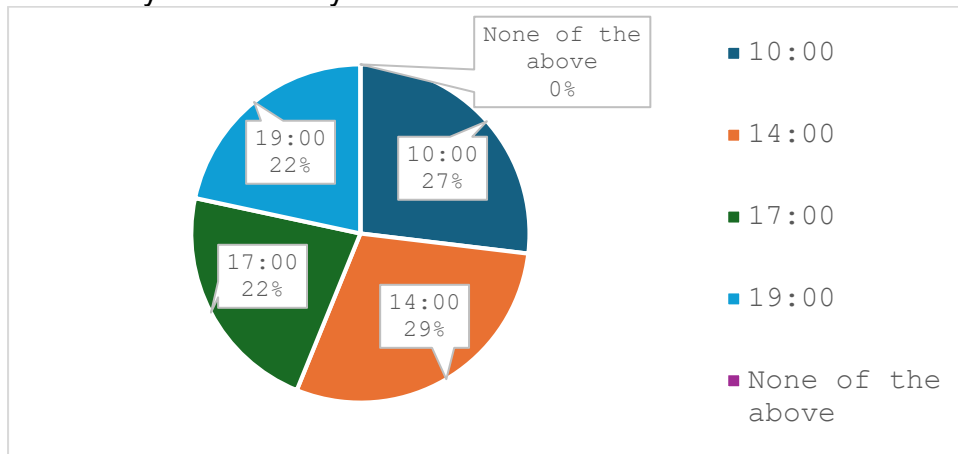
Availability on Tuesdays



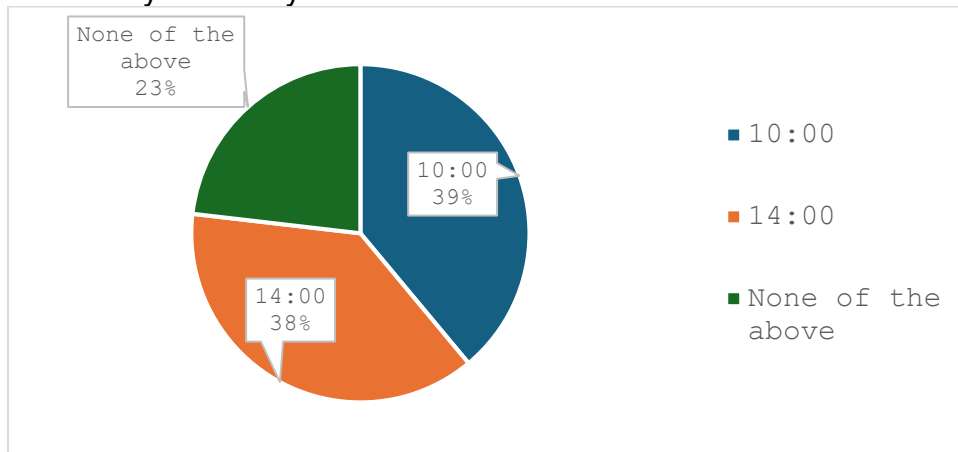
Availability on Wednesdays



Availability on Thursdays



Availability on Fridays



Written Responses

Members were asked the question; “*Thinking about the list of suggested principles, are there any other factors the council should consider when scheduling meetings?*”. Of the responses received to this question:

- 12 members noted the vast geography of the new council, how public transportation would be a limitation for some councillors, or lengthy travel times would affect their ability to stay late into the night for meetings that lasted beyond 10pm;
- 9 members raised a concern about the safety of staff travelling to and from the offices in winter months, or on wet or frosty roads during the night time, and that this should be considered when deciding when to host meetings;
- 6 members questioned the ability of members to make informed decisions at an evening meeting, particularly if after a full day of work.
- 6 members requested that the size of the meetings be considered when booking them, that shorter meetings are held online or during less popular hours, requesting firm end times for evening meetings, or a vote required to continue beyond 10pm, scheduling breaks in between lengthy meetings, and arranging substantive meetings during the day or at a more convenient time for members and officers;
- 5 members supported the use of online or hybrid meetings, particularly for smaller meetings, non-committee meetings, or meetings where it was not a necessity for all members to be present in the same room;
- 5 members requested a variation to meeting times, such as meetings being hosted during the day during winter months, and avoiding a situation where multiple in person meetings are held in the same week in the council offices;
- 5 members noted the need to include officer resource and availability in the setup of meetings, noting the cost incurred for officers to deliver evening meetings and their improved availability during the working day.

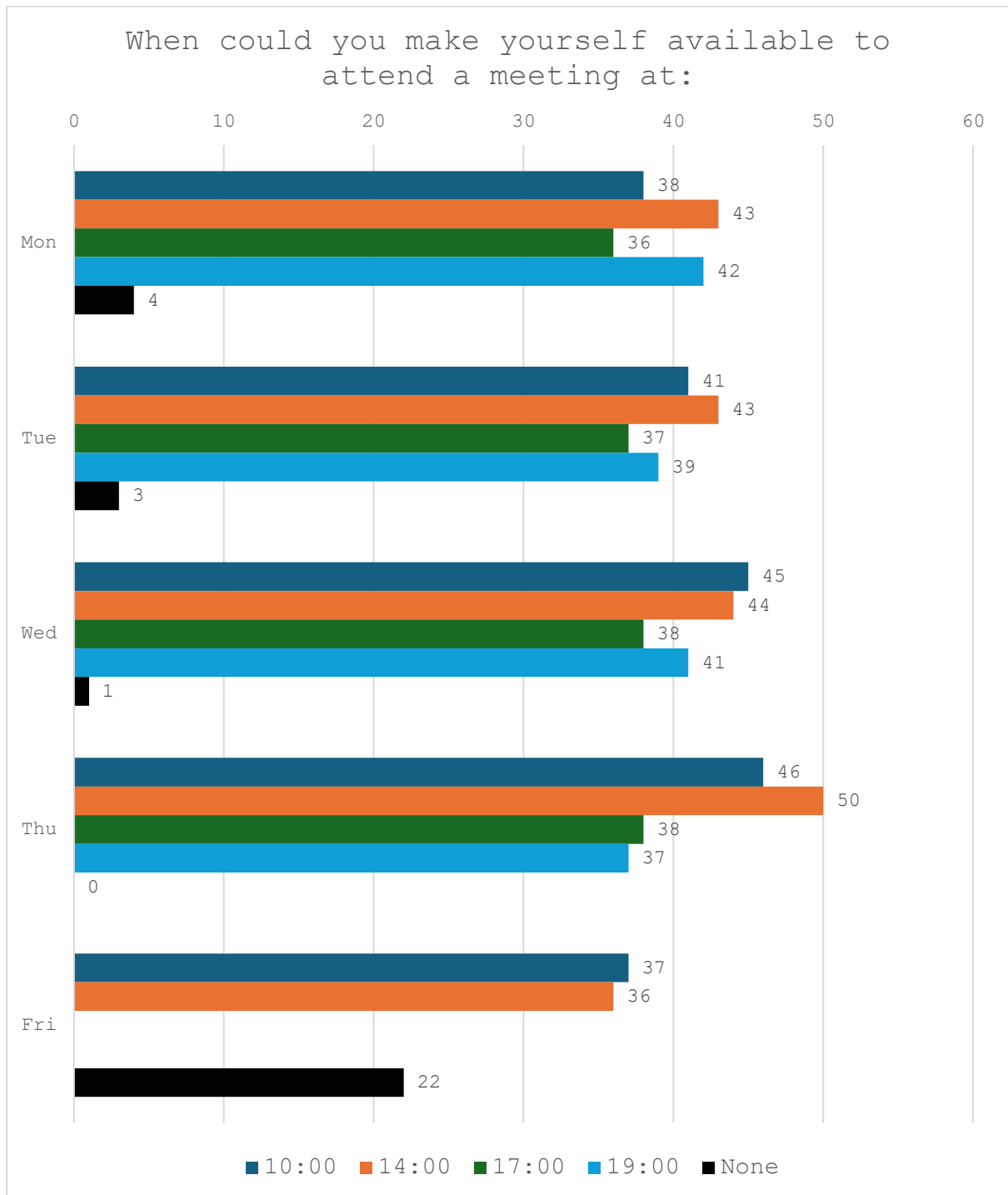
Members were asked the question; *“Please provide any further information on your availability and preference for meeting times that you think would be helpful for us to know.”* Of the responses received to this question:

- 9 members indicated a preference for daytime meetings
- 7 members indicated a preference for evening meetings
- 6 members stressed that their employment would impact their availability to attend meetings
- 4 members stated that their parental or caring duties would impact their availability to attend meetings

Members were asked the question *“Do you have any other comments you would like us to take into account when proposing the times for meetings?”*. Of the responses received to this question:

- 6 members stressed the need for flexibility and for meetings to be hosted at a variety of times and days to accommodate as many members as possible
- 5 members indicated a preference for daytime meetings.
- 4 members requested a time limit on meetings and debates to prevent late night travel, or risk leaving a meeting early to catch public transport;
- 3 members stated that they would struggle to make the times that they could not attend, and that their ability to serve as a councillor would be hindered if their preferred times were not implemented.

Large Print Graphs



When could you make yourself available to attend a meeting at:

