

Thurrock Council

Have your say on how often we hold elections

In November 2017 Thurrock Council will decide whether to change the way councillors are elected in Thurrock. The decision affects everyone who lives or works in the borough, so we would like you to have your say.

How it currently works

Thurrock has 49 councillors and 20 wards, with 2 or 3 councillors representing each ward. Councillors are elected to serve for 4 years, after which a new election must be held. These arrangements will not change.

Currently we hold elections in 3 out of every 4 years, with a third of all councillors being elected or re-elected during an election year. There are no elections during the fourth year. This means that during 3 out of every 4 years the political balance of the council may change.

How it could change

We could continue to hold elections for a third of all councillors in 3 out of every 4 years, or we could change so that all councillors are elected at the same time, once every 4 years.

If this change was made, the election of all 49 councillors would first take place in 2018, and then every fourth year after that.

The timing of other elections – like the general election for members of parliament, and elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner – will not be affected as they are decided nationally.

What it means

No one can predict the outcome of elections and who will be elected. But based on the experience of other councils, keeping the current system or changing could mean the following:

Current process for electing a third of all councillors every 3 years out of 4

- only one third of councillors would change at any one time
- the political make-up of the council is more likely to change over a period of time
- it's easier for independent candidates to stand as fewer seats are contested

Changing to an election for all councillors at the same time, once every four years

- voters can change the political make-up of the council in a single election
- there is more likely to be political stability which enables longer-term planning
- the cost to the council of holding elections is reduced
- the number of people who cast their vote may increase

Have your say

Do you think Thurrock Council should:

- a) elect one third of councillors at a time, 3 years out of 4
- b) elect all councillors at the same time, once every 4 years

What are the reasons for your preference?

About you

You do not need to complete this section, but answering the questions below will help us to see whether there are differences in views between different areas.

Please tick all that apply – are you responding as:

- a) a resident
- b) on behalf of a business
- c) on behalf of a community group or organisation
- d) on behalf of one of our partners
- e) other – please state below:

What is your postcode?

Thank you

You can have your say over a 12 week period from **Monday 9 January to Friday 31 March 2017**.

No decisions will be made without taking into account a wide range of views. These arrangements are fundamental to our local democracy, so it is important that local people, businesses and our partners can make their opinions known.

The final decision will be taken by Council in November 2017. If new arrangements are agreed, they would be introduced in May 2018.

If you have any questions, please email direct-democracy@thurrock.gov.uk.