

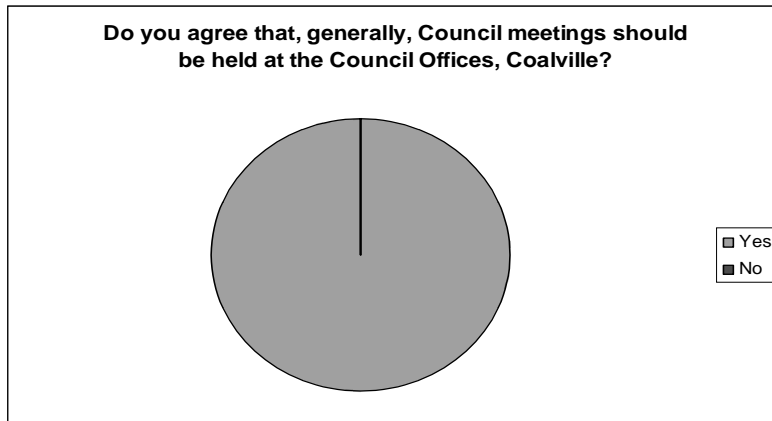
Improving Members' Services Councillor Questionnaire Response Analysis

A questionnaire was sent to Councillors in June 2009 seeking their opinions on the support services that they currently received and any suggestions for improvements that they may wish to see.

A total of 15 out of 38 questionnaires were returned. The responses have been collated and an analysis of the results is presented below.

Question 1

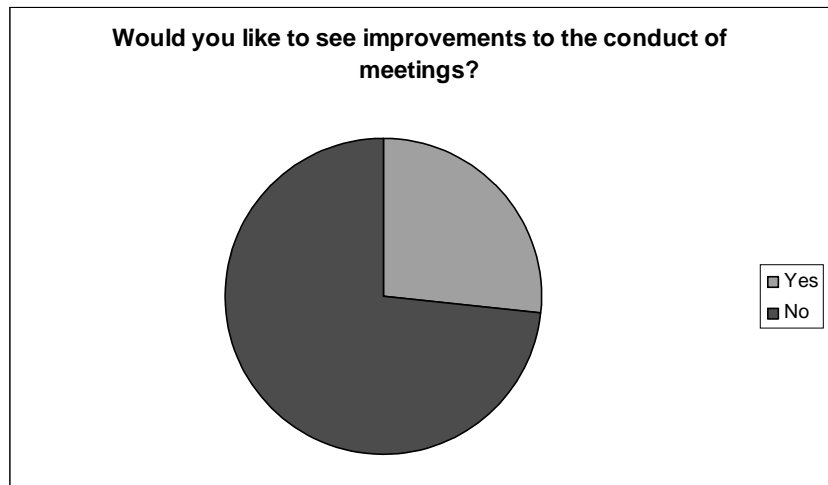
All respondents agreed that Council meetings should generally be held at the Council Offices, Coalville.



Question 2

The majority of respondents felt that there was no need for improvements to the way in which meetings are conducted however, the following comments were received:

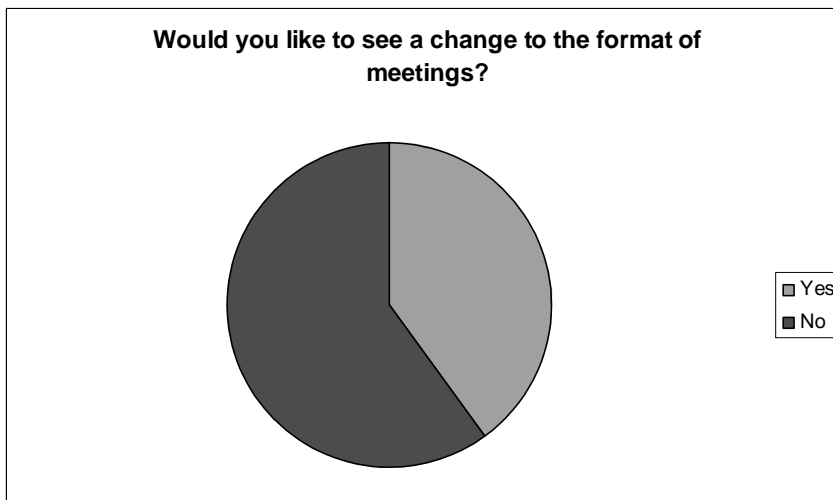
- The procedure rules are currently too complex and need to be re-written to make it easier to stimulate debate. Points of order shouldn't get in the way of discussion.
- I think the chair needs much clearer briefings - and far more encouragement to speak
- On personal & prejudicial interests
- Less pedantic but ok otherwise



Question 3

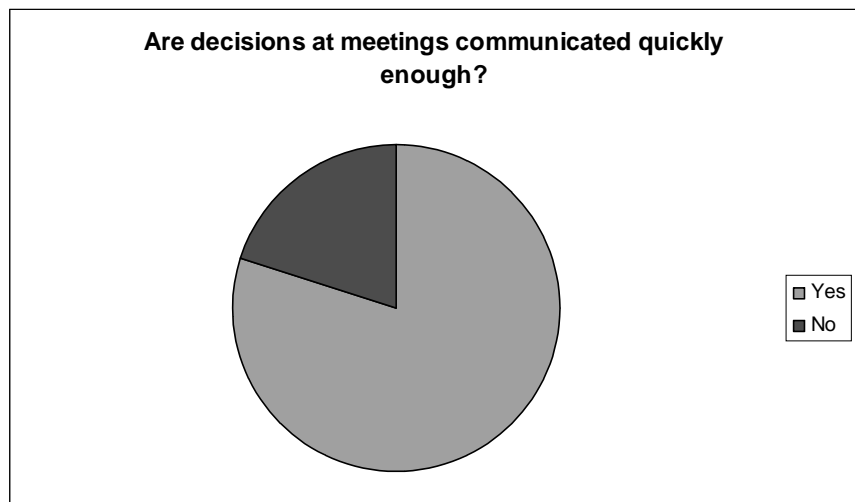
The majority of respondents felt that there were no changes to the format of meetings that they would like to see introduced. However, the following comments were received:

- As in your question, more reporting back would be beneficial.
- Would like presentation from Councillors who have been on a training session that not everyone could attend due to expense which would be beneficial to other councillors.
- Training Reports
- Other opportunities for Members to speak
- We do need Portfolio holder reports - but they need to be available in writing 3 days before the meeting.
- Chair of Scrutiny needs to make regular reports - in writing
- I would welcome periodic reports on East Midlands regional matters. They may well result in some worthwhile debates in the council.
- It would be useful to promote Member training to other councillors.



Question 4

The majority of respondents felt that decisions were communicated quickly enough following meetings although there was a comment that one member had not "seen a decisions digest for over a year."



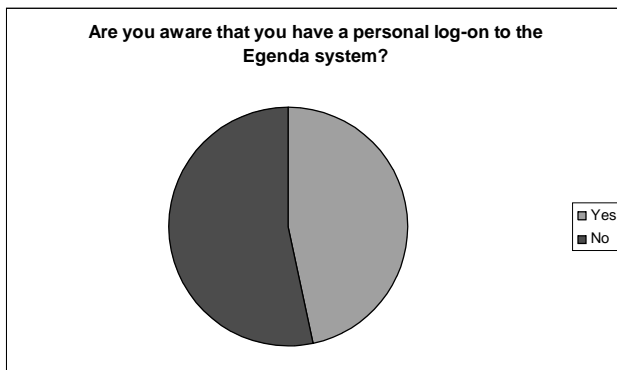
Question 5

The majority of respondents were aware that agendas and minutes could be accessed online through the Council's website.



Question 6

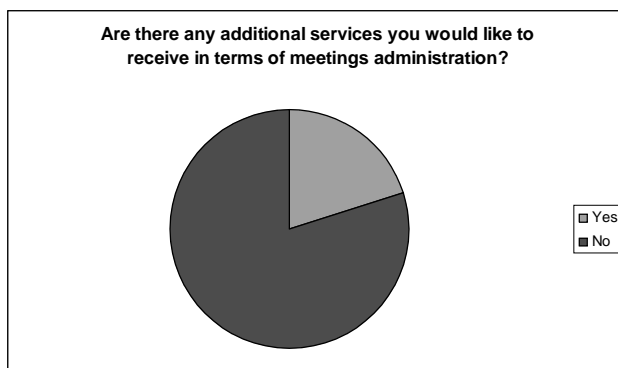
The majority of respondents were **not** aware that they had their own personal log on for the Egenda system.



Question 7

The majority of respondents felt happy with the service they received in terms of meetings administration. Of those that said they would like additional services, the comments provided were as follows:

- If I knew that they were available
- A phone call asap if a meeting is cancelled or the time changed
- Email reminder



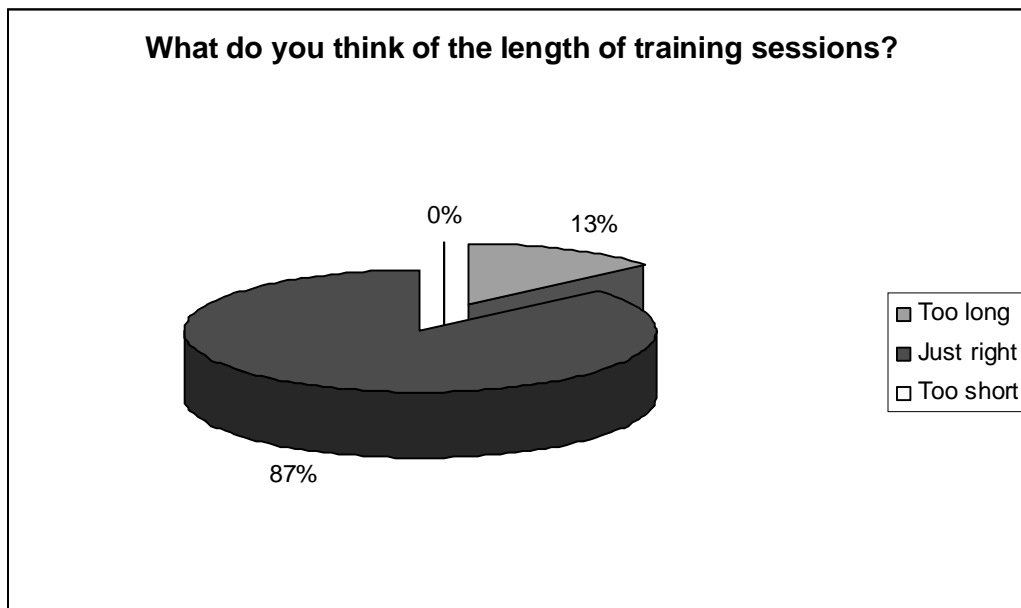
Question 8

All but one respondent was happy with the training and development available. However, had that respondent been aware that their preference for officer shadowing opportunities was available it would likely have been an achievement of total satisfaction.



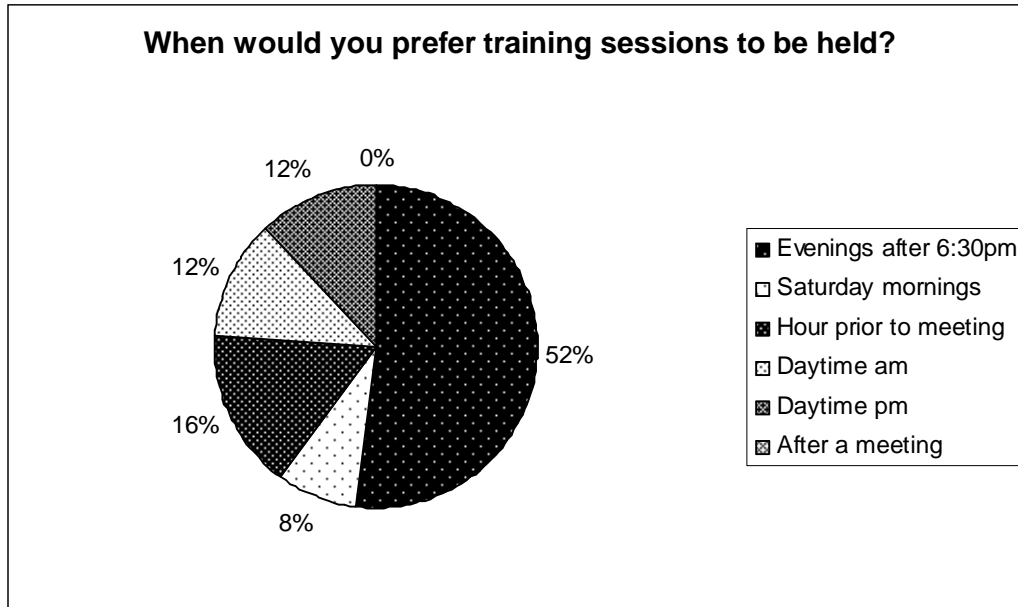
Question 9

When questioned about the length of training sessions generally, the majority of respondents felt that session lengths were "Just right".



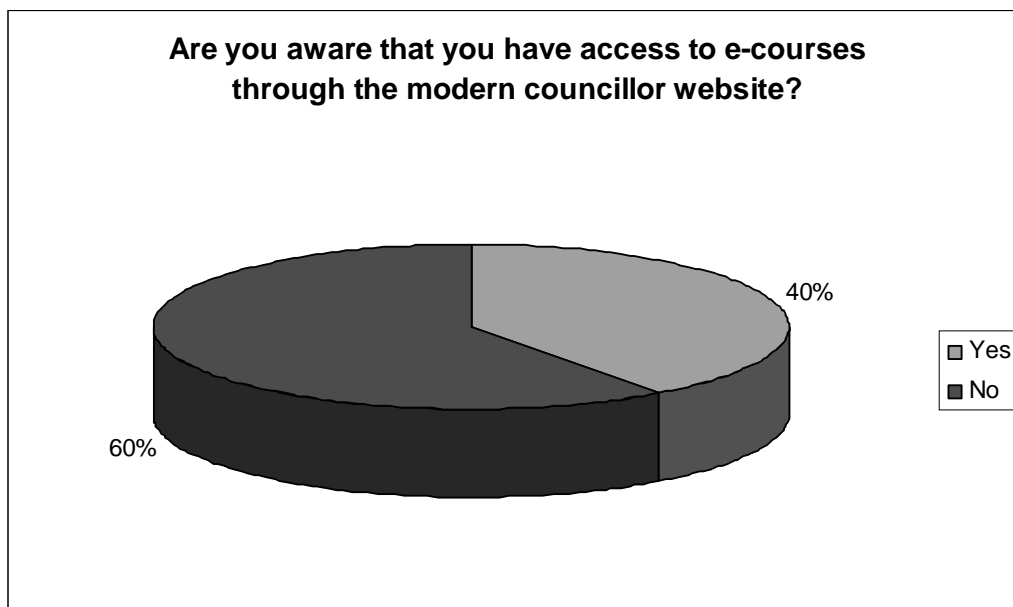
Question 10

The majority of respondents still preferred the scheduling of training sessions at 6:30pm however, the other options seemed to be of interest as well. No-one wanted to hold training sessions after a meeting.



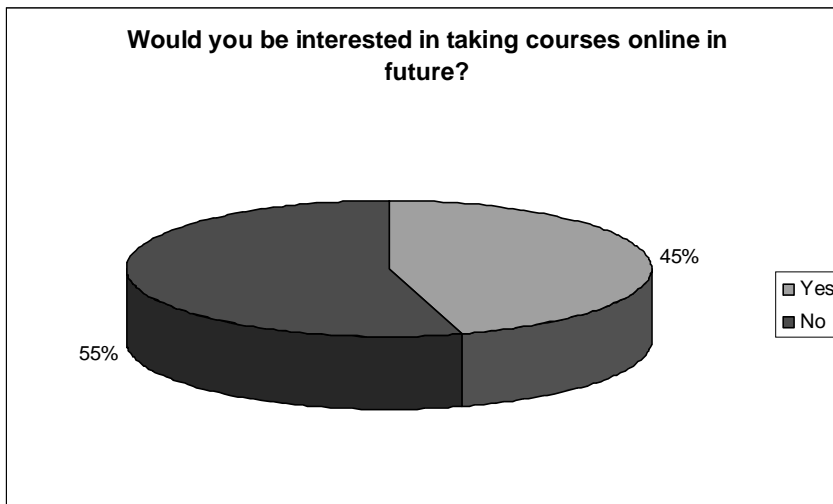
Question 11

Most of the respondents were unaware that they had access to e-courses through the modern councillor website.



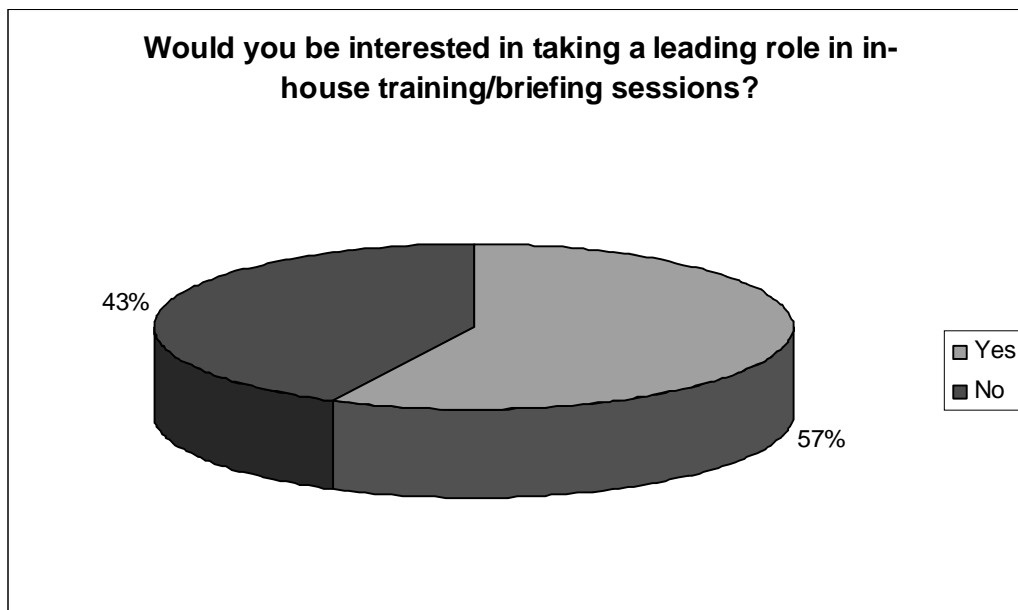
Question 11a

Further, most Councillors would not be interested in taking courses online in future.



Question 12

The majority of respondents indicated that they would like to take a leading role in in-house training or briefing sessions where they have extensive experience of the topic.

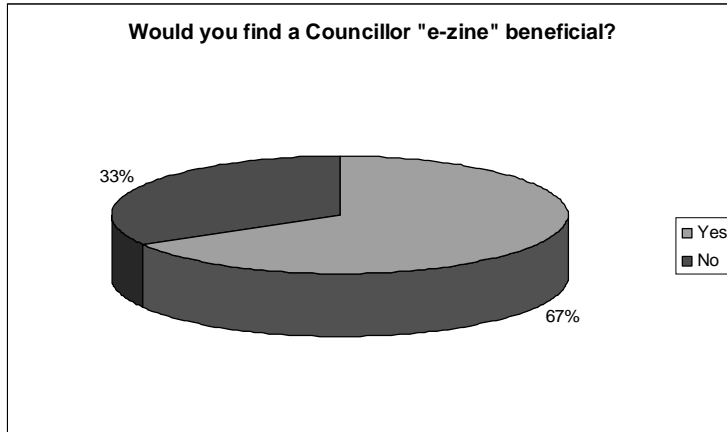


The range of topics those members would be interested in helping with are as follows:

- Business
- Commerce
- Property, Property repairs
- Service Quality
- Licensing Law
- Housing
- Finance
- Domestic Abuse
- Supporting People
- Housing
- Design and Planning
- Highways, LDF, etc

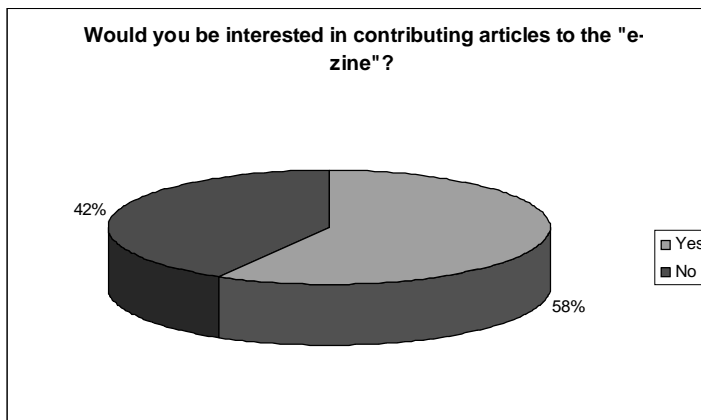
Question 13

The majority of respondents said that they would find a Councillor "e-zine" beneficial in keeping them up to date on issues affecting the district, training courses, legislation updates etc.



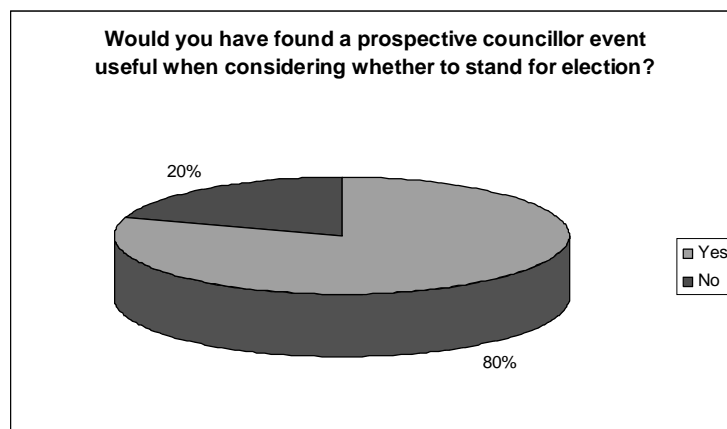
Question 13a

The majority said that they would be interested in contributing articles to the "e-zine".



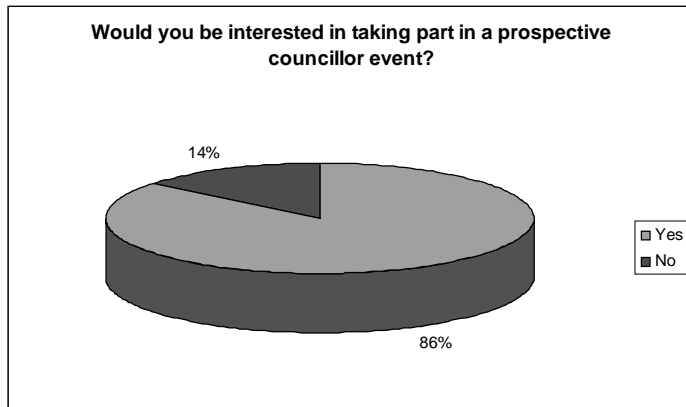
Question 14

80% of the respondents said that they would have found a prospective councillor event useful when deciding whether or not to stand for election.



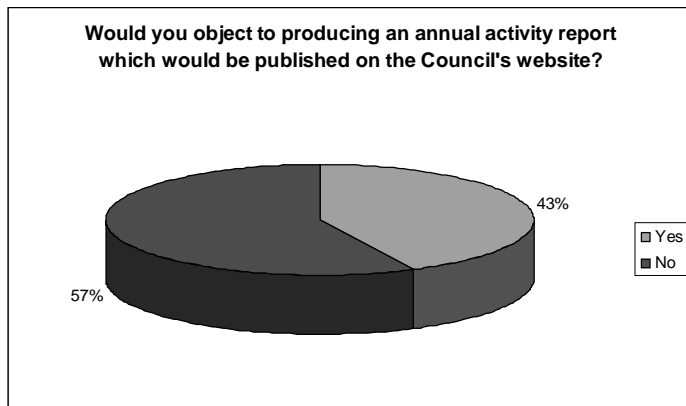
Question 14a

The majority of respondents said that they would be interested in taking part in a prospective councillor event.



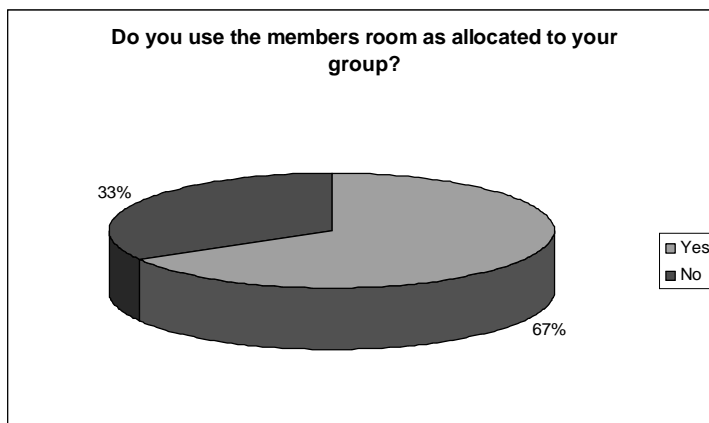
Question 15

The majority of respondents said that they wouldn't object to an annual activity report being published on the Council's website.

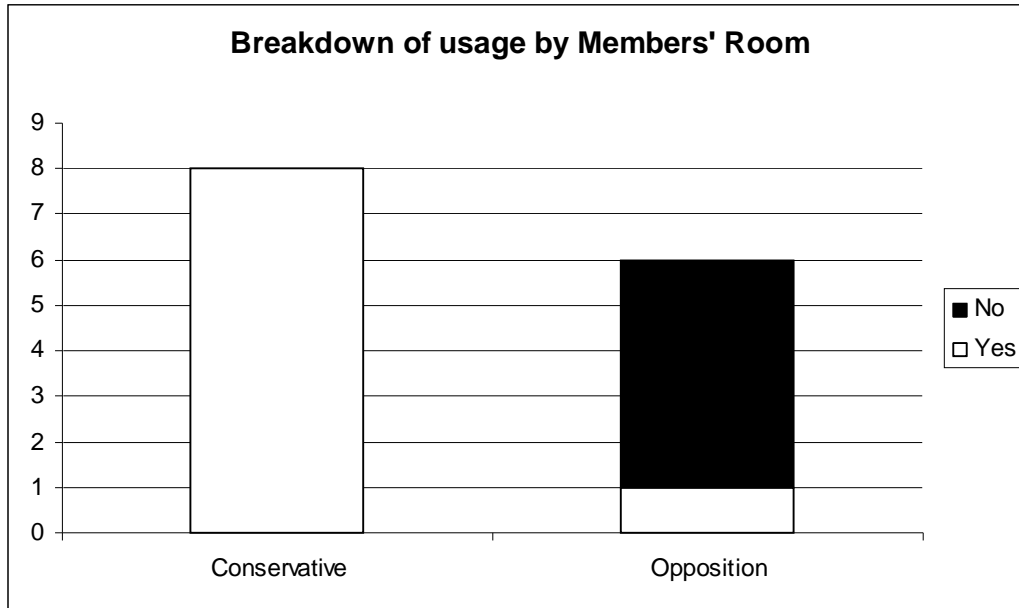


Question 16

The majority of respondents said that they used the members' room which had been allocated to their group.



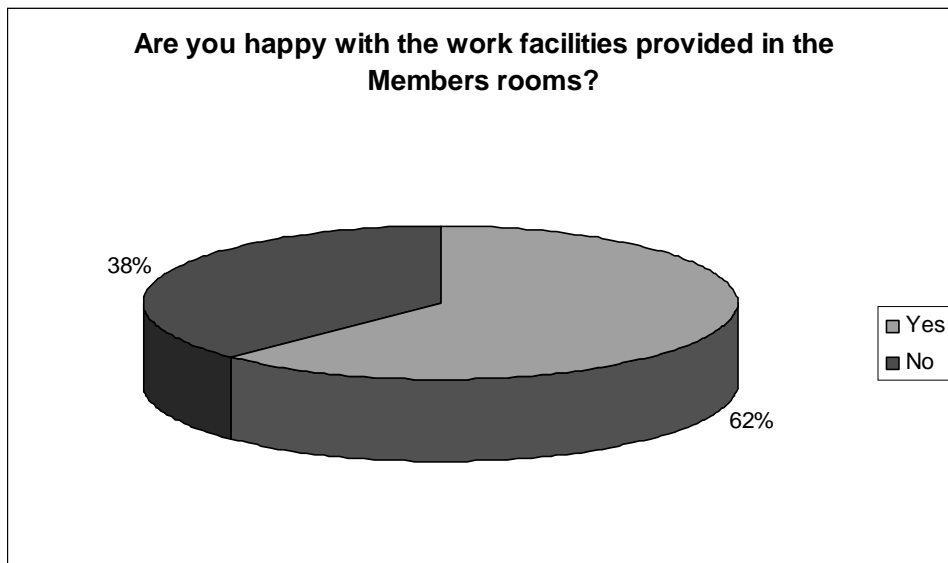
A breakdown of the responses received shows that the Opposition Members' room is not under utilised. Only one respondent said that they used the opposition members' room.



Question 17

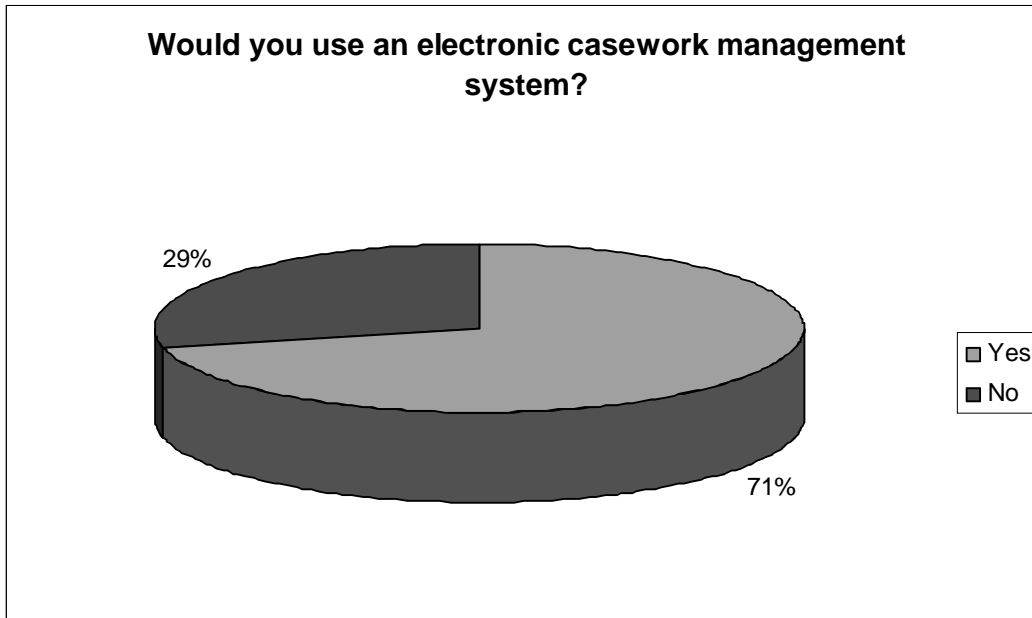
The majority of members said that they were happy with the work facilities provided in the members rooms although the following comments were received:

- Refreshments made available - hot and cold. 70C
- Tea and coffee! These days there never seems to be a copy (plus old copies) of the Coalville Times/Leics Mercury etc
- Tea, coffee etc
- Not encouraged to use Council Offices
- Tea and Coffee, soft drinks should be made available to members.
- Do we need an Opposition Members room?
- Drinks Machine/Fridge as before



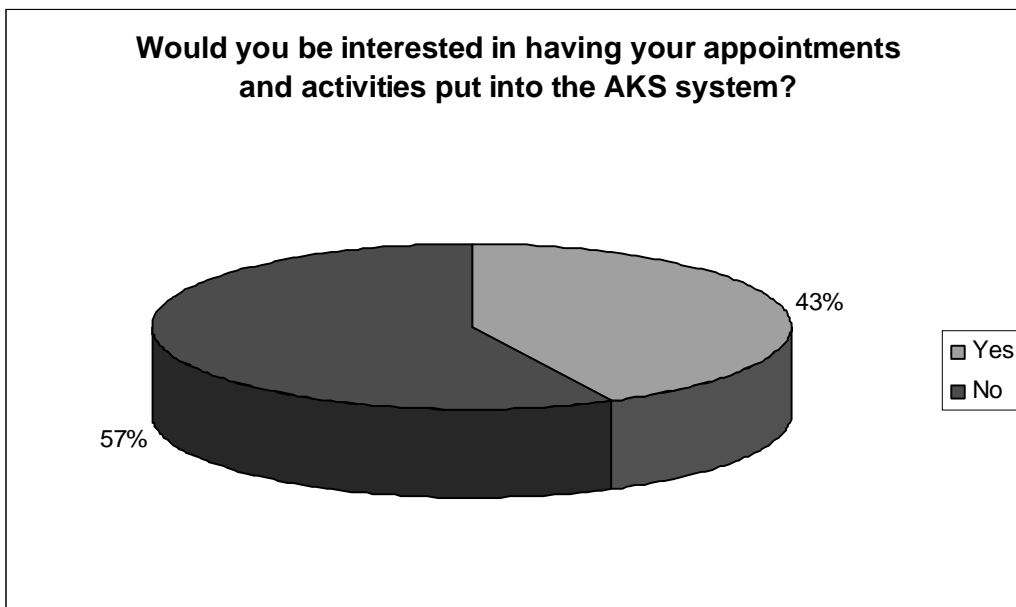
Question 18

The majority of respondents said that they would use an electronic casework management system. One member commented that they already did!



Question 19

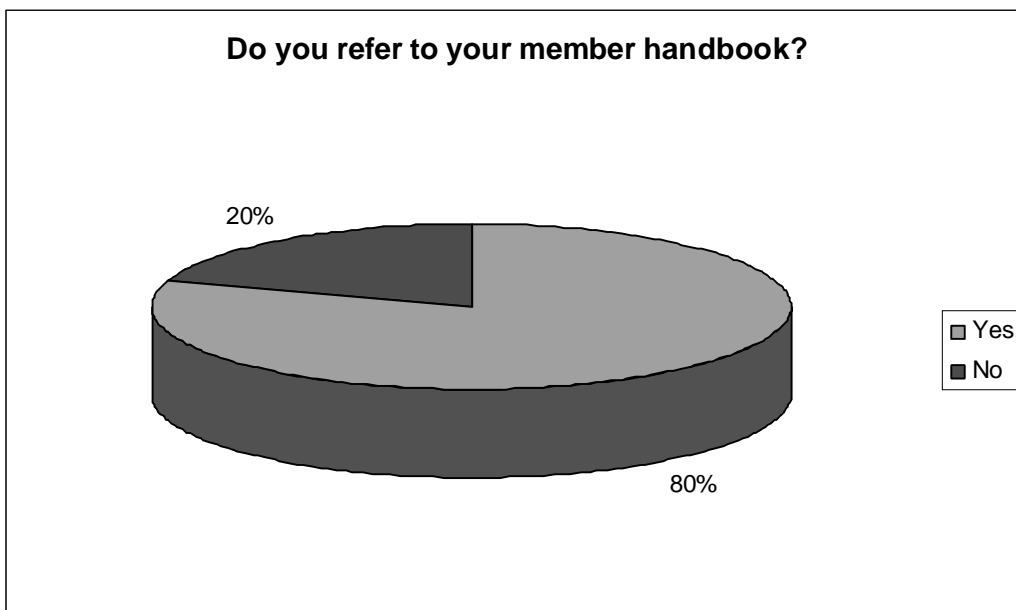
Most members did not want to put their appointments and activities into AKS to enable officers to check their availability before contacting them to arrange a meeting.



Question 20

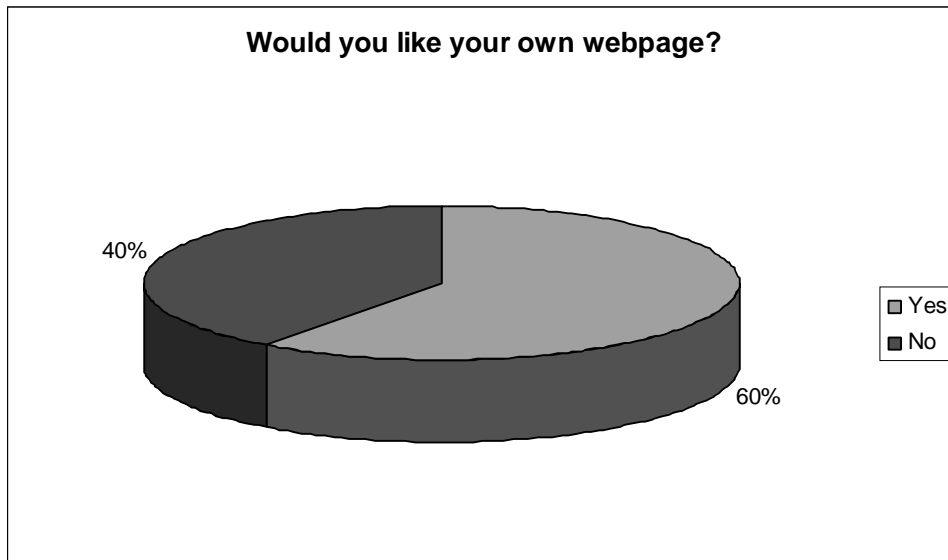
The majority of respondents said that they did refer to the Member Handbook and had the following comments to make:

- It was a good starter for ten.
- Contacts names and numbers could do with updating
- Too big
- Should include internal telephone directory and map of divisions of wards
- Background reference but not used - use website
- It needs updating
- Emergency - out of hours contacts
- Useful
- Need to be updated - particularly a network map of who is who Officer/Dept



Question 21

The majority of respondents said that they would like to have their own webpage.



Question 22

When asked if there were any other comments that they would like to make about the support services that they received from the council, the following comments were made:

- After 2 years things have 'moved on' considerably. Proud to be a part of NWLDC
- Generally excellent.
- Councillor Mentoring?
- You do a good job, mostly!

Conclusion

Generally it would seem that satisfaction levels are high. Members are happy with the support services that are provided to them although there are a couple of enhancements that they would like to see implemented. For example, they would like to have their own web pages, refreshments to be made available in the members' rooms, Councillors reporting back to Council when they have attended external meetings or training sessions and a member "e-zine".

Actions that have been taken to date are:

1. A review of council procedure rules has been undertaken including research into converting the constitution in to 'plain english'.
2. Tea and coffee making facilities have been returned to the members rooms following a scrutiny review on members refreshments.
3. A brief 1 page member information bulletin has been introduced to inform members of forthcoming issues, meetings and training courses.
4. The results of this questionnaire have been cross-referenced to the analysis of support services to members based on the IDeA's Supporting Councillors Framework and further proposals for improvements are listed in that document.