

# Consultation: How should Councillors for North Hertfordshire District Council be elected?

## Introduction

The way you elect councillors to North Hertfordshire District Council is being reviewed. We want to hear from you before a decision is made. Please read this information and complete the survey via the following link [insert Survey Monkey link], alternatively please complete the form below to tell us your views and return to:

North Hertfordshire District Council  
Council Offices  
Gernon Road  
Letchworth Garden City  
Hertfordshire  
SG6 3JF

Or email to:[insert email address]

Ensuring that responses are returned by: **1 November 2021**

## Background

Like all district councils, North Hertfordshire District Council is divided into electoral wards. These are geographical areas within the council area. The local people who live in a ward are the people who can vote to decide who will represent them on the council. The ward you live in does not affect the amount of council tax you pay or the local services you are provided with by the council.

The warding arrangements for this area are currently being reviewed by the independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). As part of the review the council have been invited to consider how councillors are elected in future.

At the moment, councillors are elected 'by thirds'. This means that one-third of all the councillors are elected each year for three years, with no elections to this council in the fourth year (on the fourth year we hold County Council elections). Each councillor is usually elected for four years. If we continue to elect councillors in this way, there will be some changes. These are outlined below.

There is another way that councillors can be elected. This is known as 'whole council' or 'all out' elections. This means that every councillor is elected at the same time in one year, usually elected for four years, and no scheduled elections would be in any of the other three years. If we change to this system, there will be some changes. These are outlined below.

## What might happen

If we continue to elect councillors by thirds

All the current wards will be changed. They will be replaced by new wards, which the LGBCE will develop over the coming year (there will be consultations on the proposals, hosted by the LGBCE). Every new ward will have three councillors. It is likely that most, if not all, existing ward boundaries will be changed. The elections in 2022 and 2023 will continue as normal. In May 2024 the elections would be to the new ward boundaries. All seats would be up for election, with the candidate in each ward securing the highest number of votes elected for 4 years; second highest for 3 years; and third highest for 2 years. In 2025 the scheduled County Council elections will take place, and elections to this council will take place by thirds from May 2026.

If we change and elect councillors once every four years

If the council chooses to move to whole council elections, all existing wards will be changed. They will be replaced by new wards, which the LGBCE will develop over the coming year (there will be consultations on the proposals, hosted by the LGBCE). New wards would be for a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 Member wards. Many ward boundaries may be changed. The elections in 2022 and 2023 will continue as normal. In May 2024 the elections would be to the new ward boundaries. All seats would be up for election, with the winning candidates elected for 4 years and scheduled elections to this council every four years. Moving to whole council elections every 4 years reduces the number of scheduled elections and could save around £40,000 per year. The precise saving would depend upon whether the district elections were combined with any another election as sometimes costs are shared by central Government.

**Consultation**

We want to hear from you, to find out which option you prefer and why. This will help the council make a final decision later this year.

1. Having read the information above, do you think we should: *Select one only*

- elect one third of our Councillors every year ('by thirds')
- elect all of our Councillors every four years ('whole council'/'all out')

2. We would like to understand why people have chosen a particular option, so please tell us why you feel that way?

3. We want to hear from local people within the district, so please tell us the following information:

- Your name
- Your postcode
- Your house name or number

	<b>If the council is elected by thirds</b>	<b>If the council is elected once every four years</b>
May 2022	Election for one-third of councillors, on current ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post until May 2024 elections.	Election for one-third of councillors, on current ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post until May 2024 elections.

May 2023	Election for one-third of councillors, on current ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post until May 2024 elections.	Election for one-third of councillors, on current ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post until May 2024 elections.
May 2024	New wards take effect, each will have three councillors. Election for all councillors. The candidate in each ward with the highest vote is elected for four years, second highest for 3 years, third highest for 2 years.	New wards take effect, each will have one, two or three councillors. Election for all councillors. All councillors are elected for 4 years.
May 2025	Election to County Council	Election to County Council
May 2026	Election for one-third of councillors, on new ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post for four years.	No election
May 2027	Election for one-third of councillors, on new ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post for four years.	No election
May 2028	Election for one-third of councillors, on new ward boundaries. Councillors remain in post for four years.	Election for all councillors. All councillors are elected for 4 years.

The consultation responses received will be published on the Council's website as part of a report to Council. Your name and address will not be published. This information is collected to identify the areas that consultation responses have been received.