



# Full Council Start Time

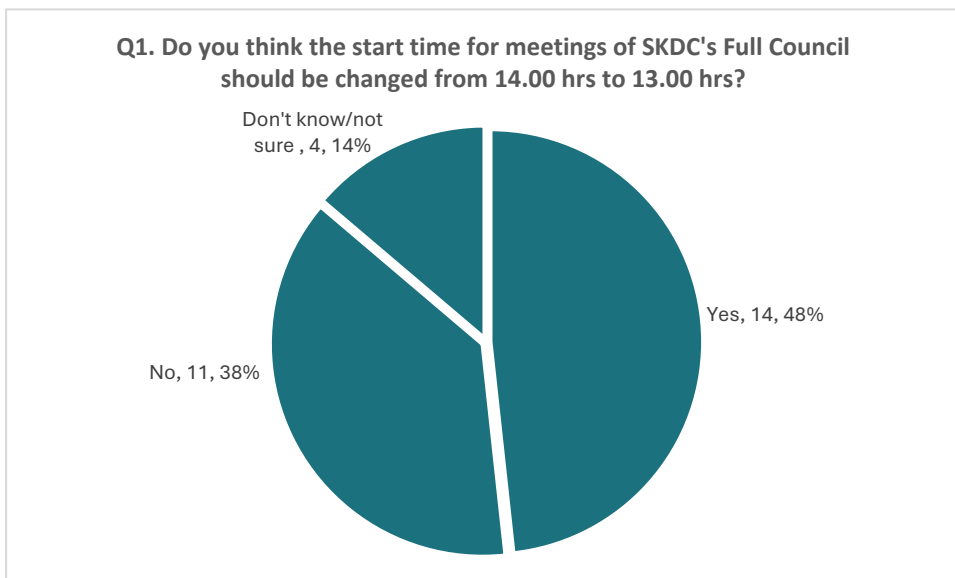
March 2026

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## Executive Summary

1. Members of South Kesteven District Council were asked what they thought of a proposal to change the start time of full council meetings in a two-week consultation which ran during the first two weeks of March 2026.
2. 29 responses were received – a response rate of 51.8%.
3. Following a request from the Conservative Group to change the start time of meetings of full Council from 2pm to 1pm in the afternoon, all members were contacted by email on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026.
4. Members were asked if they thought the start time for meetings should change from 2pm to 1pm in the afternoon and were asked to respond by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March.
5. When asked if they thought the start time for meetings of full Council should be brought forward to 1pm, just under half of those responding (14 or 48.3%) thought that the start time should be changed. Just under two fifths (11 or 37.9%) thought that it shouldn't, and four respondents (13.8%) didn't know or weren't sure. This is illustrated in the pie chart below:



6. When asked why they had chosen to answer in the way that they had, reasons given by those in favour of changing the start time included:
  - **Time constraints**  
"To allow more time between full council conclusion and start of parish council meeting."  
"There is barely time to complete the days business."

- **The size of the agenda**

“We never seem to be able to fit everything in the time allowed at present and I feel that people do not want to stay after 5pm.”

“I feel the meetings often feel rushed as the agenda can be large which means we are rushed through discussions and debate”

- **Childcare responsibilities**

“We are frequently running out of time and members are having to leave because of childcare responsibilities.”

“It would prevent parents of young children having to leave early to collect their children from aftercare.”

7. The reasons given by those not in favour of the change included:

- **Work**

“I take a half day from work for full council. Half days start at 12.30 at my place of work.”

“I work full time, the 2pm allows me to take a half day at the correct and useful time for my employers.”

- **Politics**

“The Conservative Party are doing this to prevent younger working councillors from being able to attend as they are no longer considered the opposition.”

- **Current attendance**

“There was a very good turnout at yesterday’s full council and if you change it, don’t be surprised if the turnout is lower.”

8. Four members answered don’t know/not sure. Perhaps not surprisingly, those who chose this option did not have a strong preference either way. Comments included:

“I don’t have a preference as I can make either time.....”

“I don’t mind. I think 2pm is better for those who work (as they can just take half a day off) whereas a 1pm start benefits those with children and those who find driving difficult in the dark during winter....”

9. The third question on the survey asked members for any other comments they would like to make about meeting start times. The feedback received was linked to this. Observations included:

- **Length of meeting**

**“I'm more concerned about the length of the meeting as we have been unable to finish the agenda for at least the last three meetings”**

- **Items on the agenda**

**“A discussion about business brought forward from previous agendas also needs to take place. Two of the three motions yesterday were ‘out of date’ regarding their content.”**

- **Finish time of meetings**

**“I think its sensible providing the end time is fixed.”**

**“And we should seek to complete the Council meeting at latest 17.30pm. It should stop then”**

- **What happens in other meetings**

**“Planning starts at 1pm and continues until 5pm or 5:30.”**

10. Members are asked to note the results of this consultation, which will now be submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration. This committee may decide to submit a recommendation to the Chief Executive, Karen Bradford, that the time full council meetings start is changed from 2pm to 1pm. If agreed, this change would be proposed at South Kesteven District Council’s AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

Prepared by Deb Wyles

16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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