

Gateshead

Personal Details:

Name: Mrs Judith Turner

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Gateshead Council (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Proposals to reduce the number of councillors

I believe we should with the current number of councillors per ward. I work full time and spend an average of 15-20 hours per week on Council duties. I am a member of the Planning Committee, Corporate Resources OSC, Personnel Appeals, governor for Birtley East Primary School, Trustee of Birtley Hub which supports residents in hardship, and the Eighton Banks Village Hall which was asset transferred from the Council and wholly reliant on raising funds to keep it open for residents to socialise. We will also be part of the NE Combined Authority if it's agreed which I can see will bring more need for scrutiny.

You'll be aware as well as attending the meetings, Councillors have to read and digest the papers in connection with the meetings to be able to scrutinise decisions and take part in debate.

There is a lot of casework for constituents - more so since the reduction in staff numbers. I have a number of residents in real need in my ward and work with agencies to offer as much support as possible.

I take my school governor role seriously and this involves 4 meetings of curriculum and standards, 4 resources committee and 4 Full School Governing Body meetings plus a fair amount of training to keep up to date with relevant legislation. There are also monitoring afternoons to meet with the children at the school to be able to satisfy ourselves that processes

The community groups now rely on Councillors even more than ever - we help them with funding opportunities, assist in the events they put on by

building audiences and promoting the event. Help to set up and close down the event and act as a link between the groups and the Council.

I do not agree with the proposal to reduce the number of councillors or increase the ward size. This would discourage me from standing again as a councillor because the workload would be too much and I believe councillors would attract criticism for not being able to offer the support that's needed. It would also be less attractive for candidates with caring responsibilities.

I would very hard as a councillor and get tired of the negative press we get from some members of the public who believe councillors do nothing, and if we are further stretched then I believe democracy would suffer. We need more councillors not less.

Attached Documents:

None attached