

Table 4

16. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how the Local Committees could be improved?

(Based on the 108 responses received by 16 March 2001. Over half of all respondents gave extra comments. The numbers of respondents making each point are shown, many respondents made more than one point.)

REPLIES:

- 5 *too many meetings already / no need for local committees / better to consult local organisations on specific relevant subjects / just a talking shop / the more committees, the less is achieved*
- 1 *need more time to settle before changing anything*
- 1 *good opportunity to meet department heads county and district councillors*
- 1 *useful to see what County and government are up to*
- 1 *'vibrant democracy at its best'*
- 1 *congratulations on effort made so far*
- 1 *useful questionnaire*
- 1 *no funds should be allocated / asking parishes to decide on spending has appearance of being motivated by political objectives*
- 1 *delegate spending detail back to officers – make more time for changes in County/national policy/Local Transport Plan*
- 1 *parishes not authorised to represent other parishes or make decisions on expenditure*
- 1 *LCs should understand constraints on money and priority setting*
- 1 *finance should be allocated to town/parish councils to progress with local projects*
- 1 *money allocated to larger PCs - smaller ones must have a chance as well*
- 1 *large backlog of highways dept work means only high priority items can be tackled*
- 1 *BCC councillors don't understand their role on the local committee*
- 1 *our County Councillor should attend*
- 1 *role of District Councillors not clear*
- 1 *AVLC meeting too complicated / less complex locally focussed arrangement for AVLC needed*
- 1 *Chairs and Vice Chairs should be elected by the BCC members of the committee*
- 2 *include non-voting pair in meeting and allow them to sit with partner / objection to sitting with public*
- 1 *PC members represent larger urban parishes, some of the voting members should represent smaller rural parishes*
- 1 *County and District council over-represented*
- 1 *local committees should not break into sub groups - will just create new tiers*
- 1 *if every organisation entitled to attend doubt the efficiency of committee would be maintained*
- 1 *people should use meeting to forum own issues*
- 1 *LCs have little authority, are dominated by CC. Delegate authority to LC without CC veto, give LCs role similar to parliamentary standing committees*
- 1 *former Traffic and RS Panel played an important consultation role*

- 1 taking on role of the former Traffic and RS Panel
- 2 voting a waste of time, follows predictable patterns
- 6 accommodation not adequate for the numbers attending
- 3 microphones for speakers / make sure all can hear at meetings / Wycombe Chairman is difficult to hear
- 1 papers needed in good time prior to meeting / seldom adequate time to consider documents / complex schedules presented at meeting
- 1 presentation of new structure for council came too late
- 1 parish councillors are volunteers who work during day – meetings after 7.30
- 1 AV should be split north south – too large as it is
- 1 simple templates to complete for the ‘bonus ball’ submissions etc
- 2 less jargon / detailed papers difficult to understand
- 2 meeting is structured around the way BCC works / division of road works into categories has no significance for parish councillors
- 6 meeting dominated by a few people not allowing others to speak
- 2 loudest and those complaining longest get priority
- 1 those who know each other at meetings tend to create a ‘them and us’ atmosphere
- 1 formality discourages more reticent to participate
- 1 size of committee very daunting, discourages input from new members, should not assume new members know all about the local committees
- 4 officers tend to repeat information already given, slowing proceedings / too many long presentations / strategic briefing needed / members should read papers prior to meeting
- 1 Chairman sometimes allows discussion of matters not CC responsibility
- 1 time wasted on domestic issues eg: seating, venues, start times
- 1 meeting only just long enough for current topics – change needed for more council services
- 1 too much time spent on individual council’s issues
- 1 better networking time
- 1 information requested on the finances of running the LCs
- 1 better communication between area offices and parish councils about all work being carried out needed – suggest annual seminars on progress/problems and aspirations
- 1 meetings help better understanding between 3 tiers but a long way from promoting them as joint bodies