

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	23 NOVEMBER 2020	10
BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

At its meeting on 28 September, the Committee established a cross-party working group comprising six members, with four from the leading group together with two opposition members, who would be responsible for producing a council submission incorporating the proposed numbers of councillors going forward to the Boundary Commission. This piece of work is subject to the final approval of the council at its meeting on 7th December.

The following members were subsequently nominated to the Working Group and have participated in the four meetings which have taken place over recent weeks, namely Councillor Buckley (Chairman) and Councillors Green, Nulty, Oades, Singleton and Small.

The Working Group has completed this piece of work and this is attached for review.

RECOMMENDATION

1. To commend the submission to the council for approval at its meeting on 7th December 2020

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Establishment of a cross-party working group – 28th September 2020

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

REPORT

1. Members are reminded of the programme of work of the Local Government Boundary Commission on its forthcoming review work. The review timetable is set out below in table one.
2. Members are reminded that the work is dealt with in two distinct phases. The first of which is around the council size going forward in terms of the number of elected members, with the latter part focusing on warding patterns. This first phase of work involves consultation and engagement with the political groups across the council and the second phase a wider consultation programme with both the council and its communities.

Table One – Review Timetable

Draft council size submission	2 December 2020
Final council size submission <i>including checklist document</i>	16 December 2020
Receive electoral forecasts	5 November 2020
Council size Commission meeting	19 January 2021
Warding patterns consultation opens	2 February 2021
Warding patterns consultation closes	12 April 2021
Commission meeting to agree draft recommendations	15 June 2021
Draft recommendations consultation opens	29 June 2021
Draft recommendations consultation closes	6 September 2021
Commission meeting to agree final recommendations	16 November 2021
Final recommendations published	30 November 2021

3. At the meeting of the Committee on 28th September, it was agreed to establish a cross-party working group of members in order that a submission could be prepared for the Local Government Boundary Committee with respect to the council size. This was in order to establish the council's position with respect to a proposed number of councillors going forward and to address and provide a range of information being sought by the commission.
4. The following members were subsequently nominated to the Working Group and have participated in the meetings which have taken place over recent weeks 8, 22 October and 6, 13 November namely Councillor Buckley (Chairman) and Councillors Green, Nulty, Oades, Singleton and Small.
5. The draft submission is attached based on the template provided by the Boundary Commission which establishes its key lines of enquiry with respect to the first phase of its work. This is based on the following:
 - Overview of the local authority profile
 - Outline of the proposed governance model going forward
 - External partnerships overview
 - Commentary on community leadership role
 - Casework approach/analysis
 - Comparison with others
 - Summary of the council size position
6. The submission is attached together for review. The narrative is also guided in part by the responses provided by elected members to the survey of all members which related to their community leadership role and casework analysis. The intention is to edit the submission into a tidier narrative report for final presentation to the council.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	No direct implications at this stage
Legal	
Community Safety	No implications
Human Rights and Equalities	No implications
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No implications

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Tracy Manning	Tracy.manning@fylde.gov.uk Tel 01253 658521	13 November 2020

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Draft submission and enclosures		Council office or within committee papers

Attached documents

Appendix 1 – Council Size Submission Template

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Council Size Submission

Fylde Borough Council

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How to Make a Submission

1. It is recommended that submissions on council size follow the format provided below. Submissions should focus on the future needs of the council and not simply describe the current arrangements. Submissions should also demonstrate that alternative council sizes have been considered in drawing up the proposal.
2. The template allows respondents to enter comments directly under each heading. It is not recommended that responses are should unduly long; as a guide, it is anticipated that a 15 to 20-page document using this template should suffice. Individual section length may vary depending on the issues to be explained. Where internal documents are referred to URLs should be provided, rather than the document itself. It is also recommended that a table is included that highlights the key paragraphs for the Commission's attention.

About You

3. The respondent should use this space to provide the Commission with a little detail about who is making the submission, whether it is the full Council, Officers on behalf of the Council, a political party or group, or an individual.

7T

Reason for Review (Request Reviews Only)

4. Please explain the authority's reasons for requesting this electoral review; it is useful for the Commission to have context. *NB/ If the Commission has identified the authority for review under one of its published criteria, then you are not required to answer this question.*

7T

Local Authority Profile

5. Please provide a short description of the authority and its setting. This should set the scene for the Commission and give it a greater understanding of any current issues. The description may cover all, or some of the following:
 - Brief outline of area - are there any notable geographic constraint for example that may affect the review?
 - Rural or urban - what are the characteristics of the authority?
 - Demographic pressures - such as distinctive age profiles, migrant or transitional populations, is there any large growth anticipated?
 - Are there any other constraints, challenges, issues or changes ahead?

Fylde Borough Council was formed in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, by the merger of the borough of Lytham St Annes, Kirkham Urban District, and Fylde Rural District with 49 elected Members. A review carried out by the LGBCE in 1999/2000 resulted in a council size of 51 Members.

Fylde has a variety of local communities in diverse urban and rural settings, each distinct in character and population spread. The western seafront includes the seaside resort of Lytham St Annes with a large rural hinterland that includes the market town of Kirkham. There is a good rail connection through Kirkham linking urban settlements which sit close to the M55. Weeton has the largest number of armed forces personnel in the county, Warton being home to BAE Systems, with more rural picturesque villages to the North and East and hamlets spread out among attractive green space and farmland.

BAE Systems and Westinghouse Springfield Fuels Ltd are the major large employers, however there is a low equivalence of small to medium enterprises within the borough. Inward employment migration to serve the large sites increases the workday population above the fixed resident population. Fylde has a high jobs-density rate, with an above-average employment rate a result of 43,000 people in work in 3,295 active enterprises, and average earnings are above the national average when measured by place of work. There are two Enterprise Zones: the Lancashire Enterprise Zone with a site in Warton, and the Blackpool Enterprise Zone on the Blackpool and Fylde boundary at Blackpool Airport which ceased commercial passenger flights in 2014 but remains operational for general aviation traffic and business and is located in Fylde.

There are good links to the motorway network with access to the Manchester and Liverpool city regions from the M55, however, movement is hindered being positioned at the end of the M55 with an overburdened road network and most of the Borough coastal and rural in nature. Commuting outside the area is challenging with an underdeveloped rail infrastructure resulting in the fastest method of travel being by car.

Fylde is one of the smallest districts with 79,770 people in 39,330 dwellings, with a similar number of people per km² to the national average. Most residents (63%) live in Lytham St Annes resulting in the largest percentage of council spend in the urban area which also contains the coastal tourist resorts. Investment and service delivery is demand-led with the greatest demand from the urban coast, however, infrastructure investment and housing are spread across the borough.

A higher than average number of elderly residents presents additional challenges in terms of access to social care, health services, loneliness and isolation. Young people get a good education, leave the area for university, then secure employment elsewhere further distorting the demographic balance with most unable to afford to return to the area during their early career. The average age of the population is 45, compared with the national average of 39, over 65s account for 27%, with 32% living alone. Deaths exceed live births, under 16s make-up 16% of the population and 23% of dwellings having dependent children. Fylde residents are 51% female, 49% male and the percentage of the population who identify as Black or Minority Ethnic is 3%.

There is a strong sense of community, volunteer groups and charity organisations play a big part in making the borough a great place to live, work and visit. Fylde has the highest rate in Lancashire of second, or holiday, homes at 45 per 1,000. Deprivation levels are low, ranked the 120th least deprived from 317 authorities in England and out-of-work benefits are far lower than the national average of 2.3%, at 1.4%. Fylde has the second-lowest crime rate in Lancashire and is one of the safest areas in the region. Residents are technology minded with 85% online and 78% of adults have the five Basic Digital Skills. Not accounting for mobile data, only 1% of households in Fylde do not receive broadband of any kind.

Data source for this section: [Appendix A - Fylde-District-Area-Profile-2019](#).

The report ([Appendix B - A Lancashire Combined Authority](#)) outlines the current position with a Combined Authority and local government re-organisation in Lancashire. The Leader of Lancashire County Council advised Lancashire authorities on 28 July 2020 that he will be writing to the Secretary of State to request an invitation to submit proposals for the creation of three unitary authorities in Lancashire ([Appendix C - Combined Authority Letter](#)). Preston City and Blackburn with Darwin made similar requests to the Secretary of State to invite local government re-organisation across Lancashire. If an invite is made for re-organisation proposals a timetable could be set that runs parallel to the LGBCE review.

Council Size

6. The Commission believes that councillors have three broad aspects to their role. These are categorised as: Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership. Submissions should address each of these in turn and provide supporting evidence. Prompts in the boxes below should help shape responses.

Strategic Leadership

7. Respondents should provide the Commission with details as to how elected members will provide strategic leadership for the authority. Responses should also indicate how many members will be required for this role and why this is justified.

Topic	
Governance Model	<div data-bbox="398 1187 577 1369">Key lines of explanation</div> <div data-bbox="600 1187 2094 1369"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What governance model will your authority operate? e.g. Committee System, Executive or other? ➤ The Cabinet model, for example, usually requires 6 to 10 members. How many members will you require? ➤ If the authority runs a Committee system, we want to understand why the number and size of the committees you have represents is most appropriate for the authority. </div>

	Analysis	<p>Fylde Council will operate a committee system; it is bound to do this until 2025 as a result of a governance referendum that was held in 2014. For this reason, it is not possible at all to consider a Cabinet model of governance. Post Boundary Commission review, the authority intends to refine its current arrangements, the committee system currently comprises 4 programme committees and the authority has previously determined to opt-out of scrutiny. However moving forward, the authority intends to opt back into scrutiny for the reasons articulated in other sections of this submission. The committee system will have 1 singular overarching policy committee which deals with a cross-section of issues, thereby allow its membership to build up a broad corporate perspective of the workings of the local authority as opposed to working in silos as has been the case under the current system. It is also intended that a number of members on the policy committee will be nominated lead members with special responsibility positions held. These members will lead on specialisms or corporate themes thereby ensuring that appropriate support is offered to the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee so as not to overburden them and share responsibility more broadly.</p> <p>At present, the policy committees meet 5 times per year, and this can leave significant gaps within the calendar in terms of meeting dates which can elongate decision making and for this reason a single issue policy committee that was able to meet more frequently (10 times a year) would expedite decision making. If a single policy committee met 10 times a year (maximum) it is 10 fewer meetings than present and provides twice the opportunity to deal with business than a to present.</p> <p><u>Appendix C, D, and E are three example Policy Committee agendas, created from 3 cycles of the current programme committees.</u></p>
Portfolios	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How many portfolios will there be?</i> ➤ <i>What will the role of a portfolio holder be?</i> ➤ <i>Will this be a full-time position?</i> ➤ <i>Will decisions be delegated to portfolio holders? Or will the executive/mayor take decisions?</i>
	Analysis	
Delegated Responsibilities	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What responsibilities will be delegated to officers or committees?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in taking major decisions?</i>
	Analysis	<p>It is intended that the scheme of delegation will mirror what exists already with respect to delegation to officers with the scheme of delegation being rephrased to reflect the revised committee system.</p>

Accountability

8. Give the Commission details as to how the authority and its decision makers and partners will be held to account. The Commission is interested in both the internal and external dimensions of this role.

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	The scrutiny function of authorities has changed considerably. Some use theme or task-and-finish groups, for example, and others have a committee system. Scrutiny arrangements may also be affected by the officer support available.
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How will decision makers be held to account?</i> ➤ <i>How many committees will be required? And what will their functions be?</i> ➤ <i>How many task and finish groups will there be? And what will their functions be? What time commitment will be involved for members? And how often will meetings take place?</i> ➤ <i>How many members will be required to fulfil these positions?</i> ➤ <i>Explain why you have increased, decreased, or not changed the number of scrutiny committees in the authority.</i> ➤ <i>Explain the reasoning behind the number of members per committee in terms of adding value.</i>
Analysis	<p>When the council changed its governance structure to a committee system in 2015 it was given the ability to either opt-in or opt-out of scrutiny, at that time it decided to opt-out of scrutiny. Five years hence and in light of this LGBCE review, Members have had the opportunity to reconsider the position with respect to scrutiny. When scrutiny committees previously existed in the council, two of the scrutiny committees had the ability to consider cross-cutting issues which gave the ability for the members on the scrutiny committees to build up a holistic picture of the work of the council. As the council's current programme committees have been channelled to consider particular aspects of council business, this has meant that the ability to consider the holistic picture has been lost. For example, a member on the Tourism and Leisure committee would have no cognisance of a matter on a Finance and Democracy committee, and vice versa. Therefore, within the revised governance structure, it is the intention of members to opt-in to scrutiny. Also, the ability to work in task and finish groups in more detailed pieces of analysis is seen as a positive way of fostering good cross-party relations and teamwork.</p> <p>For these reasons, an Internal Affairs Select Committee will be established to fulfil this role. However, members are also cognisant that a local authority must work with a myriad of different partnerships as</p>

		<p>evidenced by the collective response which has been required to the recent health pandemic. It is felt that emphasis should also be given to these external partnerships and relationships and in light of this, it is also intended to establish an external Community Focus Scrutiny Committee. Examples of the types of work that this outwardly facing scrutiny committee would undertake are: reviewing partnership response to community safety issues, partnership approach to flooding across the borough, keeping an overview of external organisations for which the council provides external grant funding, and dealing with any services that require an outwardly facing public consultation to shape their future service delivery.</p> <p>There will be total separation between the members on the Policy Committee and the members on either Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>A current and proposed committee chart is Appendix G – Committee Structure Chart</p>
Statutory Function		This includes planning, licencing and any other regulatory responsibilities. Consider under each of the headings the extent to which decisions will be delegated to officers. How many members will be required to fulfil the statutory requirements of the council?
Planning	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>What proportion of planning applications will be determined by members?</i> ➤ <i>Has this changed in the last few years? And are further changes anticipated?</i> ➤ <i>Will there be area planning committees? Or a single council-wide committee?</i> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on the planning committees?</i> ➤ <i>What will be the time commitment to the planning committee for members?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The planning committee has had as many as 22 and now has 12 members (and 10 substitutes), which is considered the minimum in order to adequately represent both urban and rural areas of the borough.</p> <p>The planning committee is one of the busiest committees on the council, in 2019/20 the committee met 16 times and is due to meet 17 times in the 2020/21 cycle. Since the Local Plan has been adopted the number of speculative applications has reduced and so the length of meetings has also reduced from an average of 51 hours to 39 hours and 32 minutes.</p> <p>Members of the planning committee, and a pool of substitutes, receive training for their role. The quality of debate has improved recently with more unanimous decisions and less polarisation. Again, the adoption of the Local Plan has played a large role in this improvement.</p>

		<p>Around 90% (1420 decisions were issued of which 1272 were delegated 89.6%) planning applications are delegated to officers and this is considered the right balance. On most occasions, when applications are referred to the committee, the officers' recommendations are followed but the public debate surrounding these recommendations are valued by members who consider it important that decision making is transparent, inclusive, and democratically accountable.</p> <p>The council's planning committee will have a dual role in that it will act as local planning authority and deal with all planning control functions, and it will also have a role in considering all related development management policies including the formation of Local Plans. The thinking in having a single committee to fulfil both these functions is that the same members who take decisions on local planning control functions need to be cognisant of the formulation of the relevant plans which lead to the formulation of decision making with respect to applications. This means that the Planning Committee will continue in its current guise.</p>
Licensing	Key lines of explanation	<p>➤ How many licencing panels will the council have in the average year?</p> <p>➤ And what will be the time commitment for members?</p> <p>➤ Will there be standing licencing panels, or will they be ad-hoc?</p> <p>➤ Will there be core members and regular attendees, or will different members serve on them?</p>
	Analysis	<p>The committee only meets as a full committee to approve policy. Panels of 3 members, drawn ad hoc from the full committee would hear licensing applications and reviews. To date in 2020, there have been 7 licensing panels, compared with 4 in 2019, the call on member resource is expected to remain minimal. The opportunity for different members to sit on panels is provided by inviting different members on each occasion, however, availability has led to some members being able to attend more than others.</p>
Other Regulatory Bodies	Key lines of explanation	<p>➤ What will they be, and how many members will they require?</p> <p>➤ Explain the number and membership of your Regulatory Committees with respect to greater delegation to officers.</p>
	Analysis	<p>Under the revised framework there will be a number of regulatory committees which will comprise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Committee • Licensing Committee • Public Protection Committee • Audit & Governance Committee • Standards Committee

		<p>The Audits and Standards Committee currently consists of 9 Members, meeting 7 times per year and has proved enough. It has been decided to separate out the work of Audit and Governance from that of Standards and establish two committees to deal with these important issues. There is need for the Audit Committee to meet on a more regular basis whereas standards related matters only occur in general as and when issues arise. In recent years, this has meant that items relating to standards matters are less frequent and it is therefore felt that a smaller group of 5 elected members meeting on a less frequent basis would be sufficient to deal with this area of expertise. The council's additional 3 Independent Persons would advise members of the standards committee and attend these meetings but in a non-voting capacity. The councils Audit Committee will continue to focus its work on keeping an overview of audit activity across the authority and well as keeping the council's regulatory framework, including the councils constitution, under review. It will also have the important role of liaison with the council's external auditors.</p> <p>As with the current structure, there will be two separate committees one dealing with licensing and the other dealing with public protection issues. The membership of the Public Protection Committee is currently broadly the same as the Licensing Committee, it has 11 members and politically balance, the committee meets 3 times per year. Going forwards both the committees will have 12 common Members, dependant on council size and political balance. The thinking in that the members of these two areas of responsibility will be a common membership is that the quasi-regulatory framework of these committees, which is based around hearings and determination of appeals, is common across both areas of work. The result of this is that whilst the areas of work invariably have a different focus there is a common set of skills that members will need to employ to fulfil their role in these areas.</p> <p>In terms of the balance of responsibilities, delegation this has already been commented on elsewhere in this document.</p>
External Partnerships		<p>Service delivery has changed for councils over time, and many authorities now have a range of delivery partners to work with and hold to account.</p>
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Will executive members serve on decision-making partnerships, sub-regional, regional or national bodies?</i> ➤ <i>How many councillors will be involved in this activity? And what is their expected workload? What proportion of this work is undertaken by portfolio holders?</i> ➤ <i>What other external bodies will members be involved in? And what is the anticipated workload?</i>

Analysis	<p>Members will continue to represent the council on outside bodies, these will be reflected with relationships that exist post the LGBCE review, but a list of current partnerships that the council is represented at is attached as an appendix.</p> <p>The council is represented on a wide variety of outside bodies, members are appointed to these positions annually by the council and members are requested to submit regular reports, as laid down in the constitution, to the respective programme committees on key issues faced by these respective organisations in order that the council can be aware and respond to ongoing issues as necessary. Going forward it is envisioned that this imp areas of work will also be overseen by the council's community focus scrutiny committee, giving this important area of work a higher focus and more coordinated overview.</p> <p>Appendix H Outside Bodies Appendix I - Protocol for Members on Outside Bodies</p>
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Community Involvement

9. The Commission understands that there is no single approach to community leadership and that members represent, and provide leadership to, their communities in different ways. The Commission wants to know how members are required to provide effective community leadership and what support the council offers them in this role. For example, does the authority have a defined role and performance system for its elected members? And what support networks are available within the council to help members in their duties?

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	Key lines of explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>In general terms how do councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</i> ➤ <i>Does the council have area committees and what are their powers?</i> ➤ <i>How do councillors seek to engage with their constituents? Do they hold surgeries, send newsletters, hold public meetings or maintain blogs?</i> ➤ <i>Are there any mechanisms in place that help councillors interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, and/or other minority groups and their representative bodies?</i> ➤ <i>Are councillors expected to attend community meetings, such as parish or resident's association meetings? If so, what is their level of involvement and what roles do they play?</i> ➤ <i>Explain your approach to the Area Governance structure. Is your Area Governance a decision-making forum or an advisory board? What is their relationship with locally elected members and Community bodies such as Town and Parish Councils? Looking forward how could they be improved to enhance decision-making?</i>
	Analysis	<p>The Council does not have area committees and does not intend to under the revised governance model. Members engage in community leadership through a variety of means and in order to build up a holistic picture of this, a Members survey has been undertaken in which 34 anonymous responses were received.</p> <p>53% of respondents had served on the Fylde council for less than 5 years, with 21% serving 6-10 years, 12% serving 11-15 years, 3% serving 16-20 years and 12% serving over 20 years. This compares to the <u>national census of Councillors in 2018</u> which showed "on average, councillors had served for 9.2 years in their current authority; 47 per cent had served for up to 5 years while 11 per cent had done so for more than 20 years".</p> <p>Positions of responsibility (Chairman, Vice Chair, Mayor etc) are held by 50% of members who responded, similar to the national average of 54%.</p> <p>The headline results from the survey indicate that Members on average spend between 49 and 84 hours per month on Council business, with the majority of time spent on attendance at committee meetings, engaging with constituents, dealing with casework, and preparing for meetings. This compares to a national average of "22</p>

		<p>hours per week (spent) on council business, the largest chunk of which was on council meetings (8 hours)”.</p> <p>Just over half of Members stated that they spend more time on Council business than expected when they became a councillor and over recent years almost three quarters stated that they spend more time on Council business than they used to. It is worth noting that the challenges of the current coronavirus health pandemic have had a significant impact on workload, and due to social distancing measures, it has led to an increase in remote communications rather than face-to-face interaction. Other reasons provided for an increase in hours spent on Council business include easier communication and accessibility between constituents and Members via social media; becoming more well-known in the community the longer a Member is appointed; the change from a Cabinet to Committee system of governance; increased responsibilities; becoming double or triple-hatted (representing constituents at Parish and County level); greater pressures on councils from central government; and, reacting to more objections, activism, and misinformation via social media. The issues from constituents that have been highlighted as increasing the workload are complexities in planning applications, flooding, speeding, parking, dogs, green, and environment. A number of members also commented on their appointment to outside bodies which will also impact the amount of time spent on council business.</p> <p>With respect to member development there is a cross party Member Steering Group that considers all the training and wellbeing needs of elected members and it is envisioned that this group will continue under the new governance framework with recommendation being made direct to the overarching policy committee. The ultimate purpose of the work of the Steering Group is to champion learning and to ensure that all members are provided with opportunities for training and development which allows them to work effectively as a local community representative and member of the council. Members at Fylde adopt the LGA definition of the role and it is also defined in Part 2 of the constitution 2.03. Members are trained in their role at induction, provided with a mentor, and regular training sessions are made available including digital transformation with incentives, wellbeing support, and leadership skills. The group has achieved the North West Elected Member Development Charter Level 1 and 2.</p> <p>Appendix J - Member Development Plan Appendix K - Members Survey Results</p>
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>➤ <i>How do councillors deal with their casework? Do they pass it on to council officers? Or do they take a more in-depth approach to resolving issues?</i></p> <p>➤ <i>What support do members receive?</i></p>

		➤ <i>How has technology influenced the way in which councillors work? And interact with their electorate?</i>
	Analysis	<p>Members deal with their casework in a variety of ways, including by referring for help and advice to a relevant officer or department at the Council; training material provided by the Council; fellow ward Councillors; community organisations; the MP; or, fellow party association members. It is commented that helpful and timely support is received from officers and other Members of the Council. Issues are usually followed through directly with the constituent, sometimes collectively with other ward Members, and contact may be face-to-face, telephone, email, or meetings; depending on the complexity of the case. Casework does not come in at a regular pace so is often in peaks and troughs, which are dealt with as and when needed.</p> <p>Members communicate with their constituents in a variety of ways; however, the Members survey showed that predominantly this is through telephone and email. Almost a third of respondents spend no time using social media, and over half do not send letters. Eleven Members stated that they hold surgeries and twenty-four stated that they send newsletters. The majority of councillors spend between 1% and 40% of their time dealing with constituents face-to-face.</p>

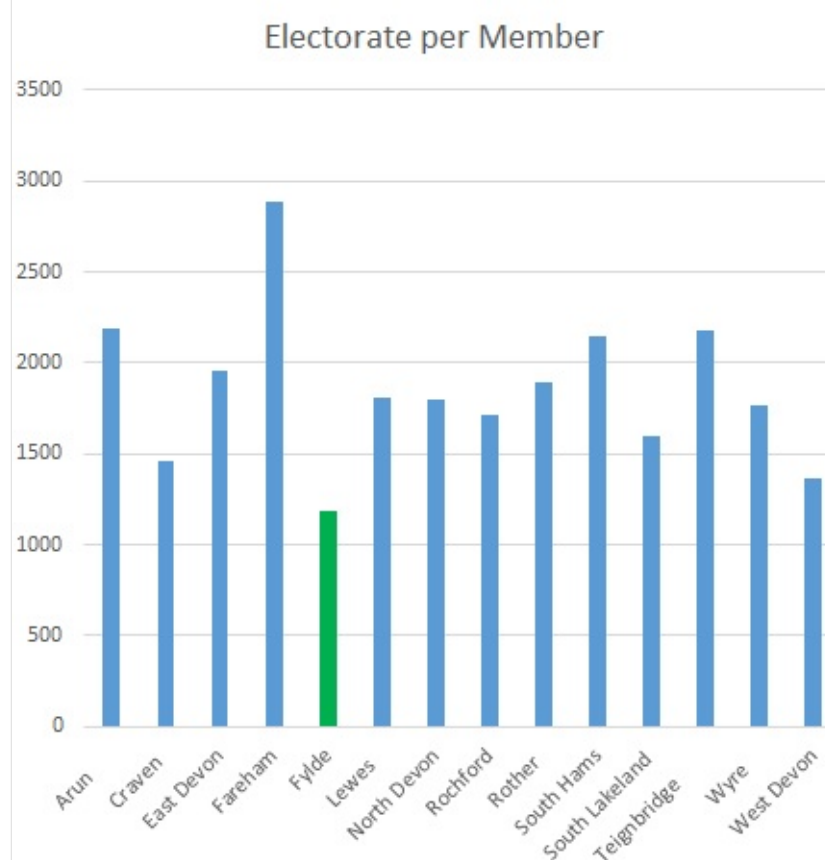
Other Issues

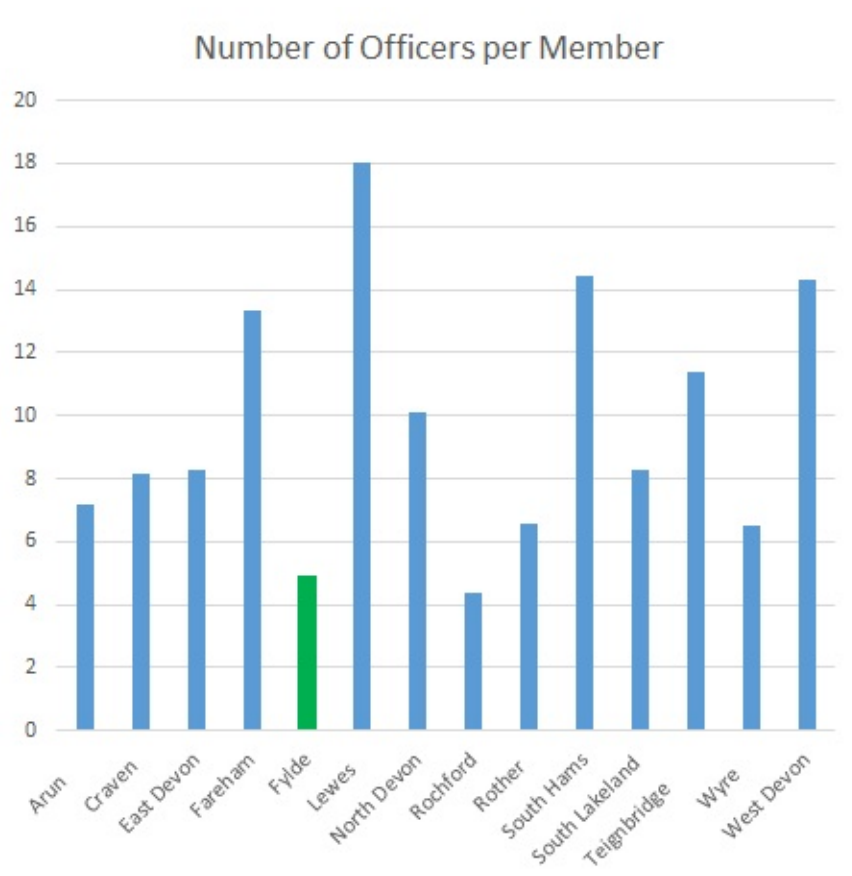
10. Respondent may use this space to bring any other issues of relevance to the attention of the Commission.

Comparison with others

It is useful to compare against the CIPFA family group (the authorities most like Fylde) to provide context, [click this link to view the raw data](#). When comparing the number of members by almost all metrics Fylde is an 'outlier' in the family group with a disproportionately high number of elected members (see graphs below).

The average number of registered electorate per member in the CIPFA family group ([Appendix L - CIPFA](#)) is 1,960, Fylde's is currently 1,225 (lowest in the family group), the [two-tier district council average for the country is 1,972 and the average for all local authorities is 2,917](#). If Fylde was to have the average number of electorates per member in 2026 (based on the forecast of 69,001 registered electorate [Appendix M Polling District Forecasting Tool](#)) as the CIPFA family group or the district council average there would be 35 members, if the average for all local authorities was taken there would be 24 members. Whilst this is a simplistic comparison it provides the context that places Fylde as an 'outlier' in the data sets.





Summary

11. In following this template respondents should have been able to provide the Commission with a robust and well-evidenced case for their proposed council size; one which gives a clear explanation as to the number of councillors required to represent the authority in the future. Use this space to summarise the proposals and indicate any other options considered. Explain why these alternatives were not appropriate in terms of their ability to deliver effective Strategic Leadership, Accountability (Scrutiny, Regulation and Partnerships), and Community Leadership.

In coming to the recommendation for an optimum number of councillors for Fylde, particular consideration has been given to the following:

1. Average number of electorate per councillor in the CIPFA family of councils which demonstrates that Fylde Council is an outlier in terms of representation
2. The adoption of a streamlined governance structure which maximises member involvement in decision-making at a strategic level
3. The present community involvement of members in terms of their engagement with residents and their workload as informed by an all-member survey in comparison with the LGA National Census

In summary, members propose that there are 37 council seats going forward. Based on discussions around the governance model this would give every councillor the ability to sit on 2 committees each in theory. This has the advantage of giving a clear signal to those standing for office in the future of the expectation in terms of their input into participating in the council's decision-making framework. It is also anticipated that the Policy Programme Committee, together with the Internal Affairs and Community Focus Scrutiny Committees will each have a membership of 12 on each committee. This will ensure that every member will have a role in the council's governance structure in terms of membership of either the Policy Committee, or a role on one of the two scrutiny committees (bar the Mayor who maintains more of a politically neutral role in their year of office), as well as a role on one of the other committees within the decision-making structure. All members will fulfil a role on full Council also.

[Appendix N Members per Committee](#)

The other option available to the council was to continue with its existing governance model. It has been rehearsed why this proposal is preferable within the body of this submission but it is broadly based on the perception that a single programme committee will aid more focused decision-making against a back-drop of those involved having a better rounded position in terms of strategic leadership and overview. Cross-party working through scrutiny is seen as a means of fostering improved team working between councillors and political groups.